

**GRANTHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**300 Route 10 South  
Grantham NH 03753**

Grantham Planning Board  
300 Route 10 South  
Grantham, NH 03753

November 13, 2012

**VIA HAND-CARRY**

Re: Submission of Wetland Inventory Report & Recommendations

Dear Planning Board:

The Grantham Conservation Commission (GCC) is pleased to submit the final report of the Grantham Wetland Inventory & Assessment Project, together with the Conservation Commission's report and recommendations for achieving permanent protection of our Town's vital water and wetland resources. GCC requests that discussion of this submission be placed on the agenda for the Planning Board's regular December meeting.

The final report by Dr. Rick Van de Poll of Ecosystems Management Consultants (**Attachment 3**) and Conservation Commission Report and Recommendations (**Attachment 1**) are the result of a two year study of Grantham's wetlands that was mandated by Chapters III and X of the Grantham Master Plan, adopted by the Town in 2005. The findings and recommendations fulfill the Master Plan direction to the GCC to "...prepare a local wetlands inventory and evaluation, and consider the designation of prime wetlands".

The GCC engaged the services of Dr. Van de Poll in January of 2011 to complete a wetland inventory and assessment of Town wetlands. With the help of 16 volunteers and 6 GCC members and the cooperation of 87 landowners, 54 wetland evaluation units were identified and evaluated using the revised "NH Method" (Method for the Inventory and Evaluation of Freshwater Wetlands in New Hampshire). The goal was to identify and evaluate the highest value wetlands in order to designate prime wetlands in accordance with RSA 482-A:15 and DES Env Wt Rules Chapter 700. Completed in October 2012, Dr. Van de Poll's study recommended that 12 very high and high value wetlands be considered for prime wetlands designation.

Upon receiving Dr. Van de Poll's final report, the GCC measured the evaluation results and the recommendations in the final report within the framework of four wetland characteristics considered most important to meet the Master Plan mandates: 1) flood storage capability; 2) contribution to water supply; 3) contribution to water quality; and 4) wildlife habitat. In addition, the GCC focused on determining the best way to achieve the least restrictive, but most protection of these valuable resources that balances the needs and rights of the property owner with the demands of public interest and safety in resource protection. We sought to avoid, where possible, duplicating State and local restrictions that are currently in place. Using these guidelines, the GCC determined that at present, 8 of the 12 wetland units recommended by Dr. Van de Poll should be nominated to NHDES as prime wetlands.

Based on the above, the GCC recommends that the two warrant articles at **Attachment 2** be voted on at the Grantham Town Meeting in March 2013 as the first step in a two year process to achieve permanent protection of the Town's valuable water and wetland resources. If adopted by the Town, the wetlands listed in the warrant article will be submitted to DES for adoption by the State in accordance with the RSA and Administrative Rules cited above.

In addition, to achieve permanent State and local protection of the Town wetlands, the GCC will work with the Planning and Zoning Boards to establish a Wetlands Overlay District in the Town Zoning Ordinances for adoption at the 2014 Town Meeting.

In order to implement the foregoing recommendations related to the 2013 Town Meeting, the Commission requests that sometime in December 2012, the Planning Board hold a duly noticed public hearing regarding the proposed prime wetland designations, and that thirty (30) days prior written notice of the public hearing is given to all affected landowners and abutters of each proposed prime wetland, as required by RSA 482-A:15. These notices should include a copy of the boundary delineation map for the applicable proposed prime wetland, which maps can be found in **Attachment 1** to this letter.

Finally, the GCC would be pleased to assist the Planning Board in meeting the procedural requirements of RSA 482-A:15 regarding designation of prime wetlands.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Hocker  
Chair

cc: Board of Selectmen

Attachments (3):

1. Grantham Conservation Commission Wetland Inventory Report & Recommendations
2. Proposed Wetlands Protection Schedule and Warrant Articles
3. Ecosystem Management Consultants Grantham Wetland Inventory & Assessment Project Final Report