

DRAFT

**TOWN OF WATERFORD
FY2025 BUDGET REQUEST
Conservation Commission**



FY 2024/25 PROPOSED CONSERVATION COMMISSION BUDGET

The Waterford Conservation Commission serves as the Inland Wetlands Agency; reviewing applications, issuing permits and enforcing activities affecting inland wetlands and watercourses in accordance with the Waterford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses regulations and CT General Statutes 22a-36 through 22a-45. The Conservation Commission also carries out the statutory responsibilities of a municipal Conservation Commission, maintaining a survey of natural resources, reviewing land use proposals and making recommendations to other Boards and Agencies on natural resource identification and protection, and Open Space preservation.

The Conservation Commission conducted 21 regularly scheduled meetings and 2 special meetings in FY 2022/23 and rendered decisions on 21 applications to conduct activities in and adjacent to inland wetlands and watercourses. Inland Wetland permits authorized the permanent loss of 0.22 acres of wetland, and the temporary disturbance of 0.96 acres of wetland which are required to be restored following completion of construction.

FEES – Application Fees Generated from Inland Wetland Permit Applications

Fiscal year	Total Fees Collected
FY 2019/2020	\$ 1,100
FY 2020/2021	\$ 800
FY 2021/2022	\$ 700
FY 2022/2023	\$ 1,600
FY 2023/2024 – 4 months	\$ 350

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The Waterford Conservation Commission requires an additional fee when public hearings are required. The fee off-sets the cost for the two legal notices of public hearing required by State statute.

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The professional services account is used to obtain professional technical reviews, retain expert witnesses, chemical laboratory analyses and other professional technical assistance unavailable at the municipal or State level which are needed to conduct the duties of the inland wetlands agency and the Conservation Commission. These services may include assisting the Commission with technical expert reviews of application documents, investigating complaints of wetland, soil or water quality impacts, documenting violations of the inland wetlands and watercourses regulations, providing expert testimony in court proceedings, or assisting the Commission in preparing natural resource surveys.

To carry out the responsibilities of the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Act, it is critical that the Commission have the ability to retain expert witnesses for determination of impacts to wetlands and watercourses in order to reach and maintain defensible decisions. Court case law has established that the finding of adverse impacts and justification for conditions of approval requires technical expertise and expert evidence in the application record. The Commission uses the expertise of staff members, and regional and state technical offices when available, however specific technical expertise may be required during the application process within a limited time frame. Having sufficient funding available to procure services when expert review is needed is essential in consideration of the strict time frames established by State Statute for rendering decisions on inland wetland applications.

The fee schedule for Inland Wetland permit applications allows the Commission to charge the applicant for third party expert reviews and technical evaluations deemed necessary to assist in the review of complex permit applications. However, the Commission continues to require funds for obtaining professional expertise on items not associated with complex permit applications. Expenditures under this item are difficult to predict and are related to the number and complexity of permit applications, public hearings, enforcement proceedings and technical needs of the Commission. The requested amount will fund an estimated 25 -35 hours of professional service at a rate of \$100 - \$150/hr.

The requested budget amount is consistent with that approved for the prior year.

PLANNING SERVICES LINE 10114-52031

\$ 12,000 REQUESTED

The Conservation Commission conducts a water quality monitoring program of freshwater streams and ponds in Waterford. Samples are collected at 30 locations in the early summer and late fall of a calendar year to track water quality over the growing season and monitor changes in quality over time. Sampling is conducted on Jordan Brook, Nevins Brook, Fenger Brook, Hunts Brook, Stony Brook, Oil Mill Brook and its tributaries, Millstone (Beebe) Brook, Green Swamp Brook and a tributary stream to Goshen Cove. Water quality parameters monitored include total coliform, e. coli and enterococci bacteria, chemical oxygen demand, chloride, pH, suspended solids, and nutrient loadings from nitrogen compounds and phosphorus.

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seminars regarding inland wetlands to keep informed of changes to State Statute or case law affecting application review practices, public hearing records and decision-making for Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Regulations application. The Commission satisfies the minimum required training recommended by CT DEEP for inland wetlands agencies.

The Commission is requesting the same amount for this item as the previous fiscal year to maintain the level of training of its members.

PRINTING LINE 10114-52060

\$ 25 REQUESTED

Expenditures under this line item include printing of oversized documents, maps and colored copies, which cannot be printed or are unavailable at Town facilities. As a result of changes in court procedures, some printing funds may be necessary to reproduce, in paper or digital format, large documents and files. The amount requested under this line item is the same as the prior fiscal year.

OTHER SUPPLIES LINE 10114-53020

\$ 500 REQUESTED

Funds in this account are used to purchase and maintain environmental testing/monitoring equipment, safety equipment, survey flagging, and Conservation Easement and Non-Encroachment Boundary Line markers for field markings. This equipment allows the Conservation Commission with its professional staff to perform wetland identification, water testing, natural resource inventory and conservation easement boundary marking that would otherwise require contracting for outside professional services.

The amount requested under this line item is the same as the previous year.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Richard Muckle , Chair	Ivy Plis - Alternate
Tali Maidelis, Secretary	2 - vacancies
David Lersch	
Matthew Keatley	
Geneva Renegar	
Wade Thomas	
1 - vacancy	