

**Report of the
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

I conceive that the land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless numbers are still unborn. ~A Chieftain from Nigeria

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen:

During the year ending December 31, 2004, the Marion Conservation Commission issued:

- 31 Orders of Conditions (permits approving work in wetland resource areas or their buffer zones);**
- 42 Determinations of Applicability (determines whether a Notice of Intent application will be required for work in wetland resource areas or buffer zones);**
- 10 Extensions to existing Orders of Conditions (renewal permits);**
- 6 Amendments to previously approved Orders of Conditions (allowing minor changes to the scope of work and plan of record);**
- 21 Certificates of Compliance (sign-offs of Orders of Conditions); and**
- 5 Enforcement Orders (for violations of the Wetlands Protection Act).**

These documents were written and approved at the 22 meetings held by the Commission during the year. Prior to each meeting, Commission Members conducted more than 132 Saturday morning site inspections in support of the meeting agenda. Agenda topics were as varied as Marion's geography and citizens. With one exception, the community interaction has been professional and responsive to the Commission's actions.

This year saw one personnel change -- Joel Hartley transitioned from a Commission Member to an Associate Member. Joel was appointed a Member in 1997 and has contributed significant knowledge and expertise to the Commission during his tenure. Joel was replaced by Norman Hills. Jeff Oakes was elected as Chairman of the Commission replacing Bob Merlino.

Several Members of the Commission attended training sessions and conferences in 2004 to expand their education of State requirements,

professional knowledge, and administrative processes. The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions provides these sessions several times a year.

In September the Commission received electronic documentation from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection identifying potential wetlands loss areas. This documentation resulted from a statewide analysis of aerial photographs over the last 13 years using digital enhancement techniques.

The Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of revising the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Regulations, to be issued early in 2005. The details of the changes are still being finalized but it appears that there will be added emphasis on restricting future work in wetlands buffer zones. Statewide, the number of Notices of Intent filed set a record. There is no indication that development pressure will slack or that more developable land will be made. The revised regulations will only contribute to the continued need for community education and awareness.

During the year, many of the basic forms used by applicants to apply to the Commission were revised and the associated fee structure increased. The Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR 10.00), regulations and forms can be accessed on-line under the Conservation Commission section of the Town of Marion's website (www.townofmarion.org).

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Oakes, Chairman
Norman A. Hills
Janice Mendes
Sherman E. Briggs, Jr.
Robert J. Merlino
Horace S. Kenney, Jr., Associate
Joel D. Hartley, Associate