

CONSERVATION PROJECT ASSISTANCE

The Thetford Conservation Commission (TCC) exists for a variety of purposes directly related to the protection and conservation of the Town's natural resources. As such, the Commission is both eager and willing to lend support to landowners who wish to conserve their land. This support can and does take a variety of forms.

Types of Support that the Thetford Conservation Commission can provide:

- **Oral** – appearance at Development Review Board, Select Board or other meetings (e.g. neighborhood meetings) to lend support for the project.
- **Written** – letters of support for fundraising, grant proposals or other project purposes.
- **Community education** – the organization of walks and/or talks or the preparation of written materials to enlighten community members about the virtues of the project.
- **Financial** – a donation from the Conservation Fund (see attachment)
- **Fundraising** – active fundraising effort under the guidance of the agency that will hold the conservation easement.

Procedure

Before agreeing to participate in a Financial or Fundraising capacity, the TCC requires the following:

- 1) *Written description of the project including:*
 - a) *Physical description of the property*
 - b) *Map or other identification of the parcel*
 - c) *Summary of the restrictions that will protect the characteristics of the property*
- 2) *Site Visit – tour of the project for members of the Thetford Conservation Commission.*
- 3) *Summary of the project financing including appraised value(s) and sources of funding.*
- 4) *Completion of the Thetford Conservation Priority Matrix (to be completed by TCC members).*

Once Steps 1-4 have been completed to TCC's satisfaction and requisite materials have been reviewed, the level and type of participation, including any disbursements from the Conservation fund in the project will be determined by a vote of TCC.

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Conservation Fund

History

A local conservation fund is a dedicated fund set up by the municipality to be used to conserve land and waters for conservation purposes. Uses of a fund may be to conserve land for agricultural, forest, wildlife, scenic, recreational, or natural area use. The real estate to be conserved may be bought outright via a fee acquisition or protected by the purchase of development rights (quoted from Local Conservation Funds: Information to assist towns in establishing and administering local conservation funds by Virginia J. Rasch, Executive Director, The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, March 2001).

Thetford's Conservation Fund was established by the TCC in its capacity to "receive money, grants or private gifts from any source" for conservation purposes (24 V.S.A. Chapter 118 §4505 – Powers and Duties of Conservation Commissions).

Purpose

To help conserve Thetford's natural, agricultural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources in a sustainable manner for the long-term benefit of future generations. The real estate to be conserved may be bought outright via a fee acquisition or protected by the purchase of development rights.

Uses

The TCC may authorize disbursements from the Conservation Fund to:

1. Purchase land for conservation purposes
2. Purchase options, rights of first refusal, or long-term leases on land for conservation purposes
3. Contribute to the cost of the purchase of a conservation easement (generally these will be held by a 3rd party such as the Upper Valley Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust or the Vermont River Conservancy).
4. Offer support for technical assistance in conservation projects including:
 - a. legal work,
 - b. surveying,
 - c. mapping,
 - d. appraisal,
 - e. closing costs,
 - f. easement stewardship costs, and
 - g. other associated costs.

Such funds will be reimbursable by the landowner to the Fund if conservation is not achieved.