

# CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## NEWSLETTER

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## WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT VERNAL POOLS



Vernal pools are ephemeral wetlands which fill annually from precipitation, runoff and rising ground water. They are covered by shallow water for variable periods from winter to spring, but may be completely dry for most of the summer and fall. During a single season, pools may fill and dry several times throughout the year. Some pools may not fill at all.

Vernal pools provide fish-free, temporary habitat for numerous amphibian and invertebrate species, such as mole salamanders, wood frogs, and fairy shrimp. Vernal pools are productive hatcheries for these species as well as providing water sources for other wildlife. Eliminating a vernal pool can

wipe out an entire local population of amphibians and jeopardize threatened species.

The public can help protect vernal pools through involvement in local governments such as conservation committees, planning boards, and similar regulatory groups. You may also become involved with regional and nationwide environmental or biological organizations that promote environmental protection of species and land preservation. Any land use decisions should protect the vernal pools, their buffer zones, and the migratory pathways used by the species that inhabit the pools.

## JOIN US FOR THE SPRING WOODCOCK WALK

Saturday, April 7, 2018 at 6:30pm  
Rain Date: Sunday, April 8, 2018

Please join Brian Harris, Conservation Land Manager, at the parking lot of Cow Common. Brian will be available for questions and can provide information regarding the birds he has observed on the property..

In particular, the American Woodcock is primarily seen at this property. This area has some of the better places in the state to witness the woodcocks perform their spring courtship displays.

## ALL ABOUT THE COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Wayland Community Gardens provide a beautiful and active public space for community members to grow produce and flowers.

Applications are available on our Conservation Department website or can be picked-up in the office.

Gardeners can begin submitting payment for plots starting March 19th. New gardeners will receive their plot numbers beginning the first week of April. The gate will open on April 1st.

Any new gardener is encouraged to visit our website to learn more about the garden rules and guidelines



## WHAT TO DO WITH A FALLEN TREE

With all the recent storms, a large number of trees and limbs have fallen. Removal of fallen trees within resource areas are under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission and require a permit for their removal. Trees located in wetland buffer zones require approval from the Conservation Administrator through an administrative approval process. Not all trees need to be removed because they provide wildlife habitat.

If you notice a down tree on conservation land, please report it's location to the Conservation Department.

## SPOTLIGHT: ROWAN HILL CONSERVATION AREA

Comprised of 20.79 acres, Rowan provides a short walk through a juniper meadow and coniferous forest. During the wetter months of the year, the back field floods out and remains wet until the drier months. In total, Rowan consists of .4 miles of trail. The loop around the juniper field is .15 miles. The trail from the end of Juniper field over a small wooden bridge to the property line is a straight .1 miles. The loop through the coniferous forest is .2 miles.

Parking for Rowan Conservation is located at the end of Coolidge Road. A sign and trail markers are easily visible from the road.

Rowan is a good place to observe American Woodcocks when they display at dusk during spring. Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallows and Black-capped Chickadees all use the nest boxes provided around the juniper field.

## THE BOBOLINKS AT HEARD FARM

Bobolinks build their nests in late May and early June on the ground in a dense cover of grasses and wildflowers in hay fields, pastures, old fields, and wet meadows. Breeding dates typically range from May 25 to July 5. Unlike many other grassland birds that require large grassland tracts, bobolinks will breed in grasslands as small as five acres.

By late July, large groups of birds can be seen perched together on stalks of wildflowers as they prepare for their journey south.

In Wayland the largest concentrations of nesting bobolinks are found at Heard Farm and Wash brook Marsh.

Bobolinks usually do not nest in pure legume/alfalfa fields; they prefer a mixture of grasses and wildflowers.

Bobolinks occasionally linger through mid-October at the community garden.

Unlike the situation in nearby states, this once declining species has managed a stable increase of its breeding range in Massachusetts,

