

**TOWN OF TOPSFIELD  
CONSERVATION ADMINISTRATOR  
JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Position Purpose:**

The purpose of this position is to perform professional, administrative, supervisory and technical work assisting the Conservation Commission in gathering information, researching issues, making recommendations and implementing the Commission's policy and organizational goals while coordinating and acting on (e.g. issuing) all decisions. The Administrator provides the Commission with all information necessary to facilitate its decision making, implements the Commission's decisions and interacts with numerous professionals on behalf of the Commission. The Administrator oversees management of the Town's Conservation Lands, and manages conservation land management goals and objectives. These include organizing volunteers, hiring and supervising professional workers or working with student interns. Performs all other related work as required. Position requires considerable independence, responsibility and an active commitment to maintaining a good understanding of town, state and federal environmental laws, regulations and guidelines. A fundamental understanding of the legal process is also required.

**Supervision:**

*Supervision Scope:* Performs varied and responsible duties requiring the exercise of considerable judgment and initiative in coordinating Commission operations, providing important background information for policies and decision and relieving the Commission of administrative duties not requiring their official attention.

*Supervision Received:* Work is performed under the administrative direction of the Conservation Commission Chair and in accordance with state and local laws and regulations. Employee establishes own work plan and completes work in accordance with established departmental policies and standards; only cases involving statutory interpretation or clarification of policies are referred to the supervisor.

*Supervision Given:* Supervises department employees, developing job direction, assigning tasks and instructions. Also supervises interns and various seasonal and temporary assistants.

**Job Environment:**

Administrative work is performed in an typical office environment. Field work is performed outdoors with exposure to all weather conditions and temperature extremes, difficult terrain, wet or flooded conditions, as well as insects, wild animals and dogs. Required to attend regular evening Commission meetings. Attendance at relevant training sessions and professional meetings is expected.

Operates an automobile, soil auger, shovel, sampling equipment and other field equipment, computer, calculator, copier, facsimile machine, telephone and other standard office equipment. Computer skills are essential for documents, charts, and photographs.

Maintains frequent contact with other town departments/boards/committees; local, state and federal agencies/organizations, lawyers, wetland scientists, landscapers, engineers, court officials, applicants for wetlands permits, non-profit organizations, contractors, developers and the media, and daily contacts with the general public.

Has access to department-related confidential information such as court case documents, bid proposals and negotiating positions, which requires the application of appropriate judgment, discretion and professional protocols.

Errors could result in reduced levels of service, cause confusion and delay, poor public relations for the town and have financial and/or legal ramifications.

**Essential Functions:**

*(The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.)*

Acts as an agent for the Conservation Commission, representing the Commission's interests at Senior Staff meetings, committee meetings and other interactions with officials, and the public.

Drafts legal documents for issuance by the Commission, with findings, conditions, and other important details critical to the validity and effectiveness of the permits (e.g. Orders of Conditions and Certificates of Compliance that are recorded as attachments to property deeds at the Registry of Deeds). Also, prepares findings and testimony for appeals and court cases.

Supports the Commission in staying current on any significant developments in the Conservation department in Town, State and Federal environmental news, and other matters of importance, such as updates from MACC, examples of amendments that could be made to the numerous laws and regulations the Commission is charged to uphold, etc.

Advises applicants of Resource Areas on or near their properties, the process to obtain any Conservation Commission permits needed, how to manage invasive species, how to reduce flooding, and legal requirements for special projects, etc.

Responsible for Commission meeting preparation including posting meeting agendas, written administrative comments and reports, signature pages, documentation for cases, meeting setup and take down, and arranging for special guest speakers. Works with the Minutes Secretary to document and obtain approval of meeting minutes to be posted on the website.

Reviews submitted filings, plans and data for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with State and Topsfield laws and regulations. Ensures filing fees are calculated correctly.

Conducts onsite inspections related to Resource Area delineations and/or applications before the Commission under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and/or Topsfield's General Wetlands Bylaw and Regulations, for projects in process and monitoring.

Generates and maintains electronic department documentation, including permits, budget information, computer files for correspondence, filings and communications.

Provides technical expertise and support, research, field reports, background information, summary of laws and legal cases, precedent setting decisions, relevant cases, etc., to assist the Commission in their decisions.

Prepares documents for the Conservation Commission to include the Annual Report, Draft Annual Budget, educational materials, and application instructions.

Manages department budget and at least five departmental funds in coordination with the Town Accountant.

Updates and edits documents and draft postings by the Administrative Assistant and Minutes Secretary.

Responds to urgent/emergency requests including off-hours, e.g. related to environmental violations or threats, usually with a site visit and report; sometimes with enforcement (e.g. cease and desist) action.

Prepares presentations for public education, e.g. PowerPoint slide show, talk, posters, library, LID demonstrations, etc.

Supports the documentation and management of Conservation lands under Conservation Commission oversight.

Communicates and coordinates with other department heads and staff on projects with overlapping interests and jurisdiction, e.g. subdivisions in development.  
Performs similar or related work as required, directed, or as situation dictates.

**Recommended Minimum Qualifications:**

**Education, Training and Experience:**

Bachelor's degree in environmental science, forestry, botany, environmental law, water and resource management, or other related field; Master's Degree desirable; plus two years of experience in wetland management, land conservation or five years' related specialized field experience; or any equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Requirements:

Possession of a valid driver's license.

MACC Certification and Courses and DEP trainings desirable.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill:

*Knowledge:* Knowledge of wetland functions and values. Working knowledge of the methods of protecting and preserving natural resources. Familiarity with or ability to learn soils science, wetlands botany, wildlife habitat evaluation/vernal pool certification procedures, rivers morphology, floodplain terminology, sedimentation/erosion controls/BMPs, stormwater management techniques, etc. Thorough knowledge of the management of conservation lands including conservation management plans and conservation restrictions. Complete knowledge of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G. L. Ch.131, §40 and Regulations 310 CMR 10.0 et. seq. Knowledge of the importance, implementation, and general contents of a wetlands bylaw and how a bylaw typically differs from the Act. General knowledge of the Uniform Procurement Acts, Public Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Conflict of Interest Law and how to conduct public hearings.. Familiarity with numerous other environmental, municipal, state, and federal laws, especially those related to land use and development.

*Ability:* Ability to analyze, critique, and make recommendations on matters before the Commission. Ability to work independently with little daily supervision. Ability to supervise office staff and conservation land contractors. Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with professionals and the general public. Ability to enforce the department's rules/regulations/state laws impartially. Ability to read and interpret engineering plans, development proposals, engineering evaluations, peer reviews, and legal documents. Ability to deal with the public in a courteous and tactful manner. Attention to detail. Ability to meet legal time deadlines. Proficient prioritization and organizational abilities are essential.

*Skill:* Skill in computers and appropriate software applications including familiarity with GIS. Skill in working with numbers and attention to details.

Physical Requirements:

*The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

This position splits its duties between an office-based job in a municipal setting, and off-site field work to conduct inspections, initiate enforcement actions, and the like. Field work is conducted under varying conditions with exposure to some occupational risks, and requires local travel. Moderate physical effort required while conducting field work; must be able to access all areas of inspection site, which frequently includes hard-to-reach areas or areas of limited space. Lifts/moves objects weighing up to 30 pounds. Must be able to walk and/or

stand outdoors for extended periods of time. Must be able to operate a keyboard at an efficient speed. Vision and hearing at or correctable to normal ranges.

*(This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.)*

**Approved September 2019  
Town Administrator**