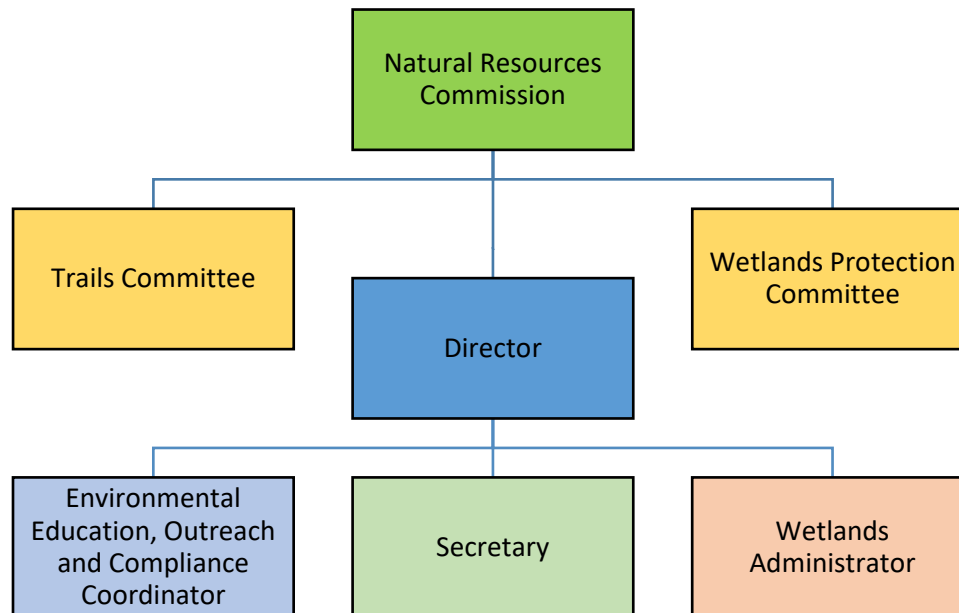

Natural Resources Commission



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Natural Resources Commission to provide stewardship of, education about, and advocacy for the Town of Wellesley's parks, conservation, recreation and open space areas so the full value of the Town's natural assets can be passed onto future generations.



Department Description

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) consists of five elected members with staggered terms of three years. The Natural Resources Commission appoints the 5-member Wetlands Protection Committee (WPC) for three-year terms and the 11-member Trails Committee for one-year terms. The Commission also appoints other ad hoc committees as required.

The department is currently staffed by 4 full-time employees including the director, wetlands administrator, secretary and environmental education outreach and compliance coordinator.

Office of the Natural Resources Commission

The NRC is charged with the statutory responsibilities of *Park Commissions, Conservation Commissions, Tree Wardens, Shade Tree and Pest Control Officers, and Town Forest Committees* under Massachusetts General Laws Chapters 40, 45, 87, 131 and 132. The NRC appoints and oversees the Wetlands Protection Committee and the Trails Committee.

The NRC, serving as the Conservation Commission for the Town, delegates to the five-member Wetlands Protection Committee (WPC) the power and authority to administer and enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and the Town Wetlands Protection Bylaw. The WPC is supported by the Wetlands Administrator.

The Wellesley Trails Committee promotes, develops, and maintains the town's trail system. There are 47 miles of trails in Town, 28 of which are marked and have accompanying descriptions. Departmental staff support the Trails Committee in an administrative capacity.

Representatives from the NRC also serve on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), the Trails Committee, the Playing Fields Task Force, the Mobility Committee, and the 3R Working Group.

Accomplishments

The NRC is proud to report on progress made by the NRC, WPC, Trails, Town Departments and partner organizations in the following areas:

Active and Passive Recreation

- Reviewed and approved plans for lighting, sound, restrooms and concessions at Hunnewell Track and Field
- Explored solutions to address demand and impact of pickleball
- Participated in ongoing Moses Pond Beach restoration planning and design
- Trails Committee made maintenance and improvements, including:
 - Enhanced outreach for guided trails walks and kids trail day; planned for expansion of Charles River Reservation Trail and John G Schuler path; refurbished trail signage.

Climate Change

- Evaluated inclusion of Climate change in wetlands regulations
- Participated in the Charles River Watershed Climate Compact to prepare for and mitigate stormwater and flooding issues, develop flood model, and implement priority restoration sites

Preservation of Tree Canopy

- Continued the annual tree planting program for residents and on parkland
- Enhanced outreach for tree planting in areas with lower tree canopy cover

Sustainable Landscapes: Protecting Public Health through eco-friendly landscaping practices

- Supported Grow Green Wellesley's "Pollinate Wellesley" initiative to promote biodiversity through the planting of native species
- Supported State-wide pesticide reduction bills
- Continued the Town's Organic Integrated Pest Management policy on Town-owned lands, including playing fields and playgrounds
- Completed design and installation of Habit to Habitat Lawn Conversion at Simons Park
- Restored Church Park landscape

Education, Outreach and Compliance

- Continued environmental educational outreach to schools, organizations, and the public through innovative programming, including outdoor learning classes and self-guided lessons
- Executed two popular town-wide Citizen Science projects
- Facilitated projects with Boy and Girl Scouts for program advancement, including invasives species management and path construction
- Created Wetlands protection educational materials (video and mailing) for the public as well as properties under jurisdiction
- Follow-up and resolution on wetland violations and encroachments

Warrant Article Requests

The NRC does not anticipate submission of any new Town Meeting Warrant Articles for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

FY2025/6 Goals

The following goals were identified at the NRC's annual retreat, held on June 1, 2024.

1. Develop Long-Term Active Recreation Capital Improvement Plan
2. Complete Sound Policy
3. Complete Night use Policy for Hunnewell Track and Field
4. Develop Storage Protocol/Plan
5. Refine Process for Tree Hearings
6. Develop Proposal for Private Tree Planting Initiative via Tree Bank Funds
7. Explore Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Regulations
8. Zero Waste Policy for Playing Fields
9. Evaluate Permitting policy and Permit Fees

Each of these goals relates to Action and Policy recommendations explicitly outlined in the Open Space and Recreation, Unified, Municipal Vulnerability or Climate Action Plans, including promoting protection and enhancement of the tree canopy, managing properties to promote habitat and biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and raising public awareness about landscape best management practices by public and private property owners.

The FY26 Capital and Operating Budget requests allow the NRC to meet its statutory requirements as Park and Conservation Commission, including the enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act and bylaw. The funds will also enable the Commission to educate the public about the importance of Wellesley's natural resources and support efforts to protect them through the *Grow Green Wellesley* campaign, allow regulatory advocacy including legislative and grass-roots support of environmental policies (waste reduction, gas leak repair, tree protection), and fund landscape and watershed improvements (public shade trees*, well-maintained trails®, pesticide-free and pollinator friendly parks+, and ecologically healthy and recreationally functional watersheds). The NRC will also leverage these funds and grant opportunities associated with the Town Forest Stewardship and Bird Habitat Plan®, the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness campaign: *Wellesley Will*, and grants such as the Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant Program. The NRC also manages the Morses Pond Capital® and Operating budgets, as outlined below.

Operating Budget Summary

The NRC has made every effort to minimize budget increases. The NRC Operating budget total increase of 2.17% includes an assumed 2-3% increases for all staff members, and modest increases in 3 expense categories (programs and activities, travel and trails improvements.)

Similarly, the FY26 Morses Pond Operating Budget includes modest increases in all expense categories to account for increased supply and labor costs. The total budget increase of \$4,000 results in a 2.31% increase from FY25 to FY26.

Revenue

The NRC receives filing fees for Administration of the Wetlands Protection Act and Wellesley's local Wetlands Bylaw. The revenue received depends on both the number and type of permits submitted. The Department anticipates approximately \$15,000 in revenue for FY26.

Out of Guideline

Both the NRC and Morses Pond Operating Budget requests are within guidelines for FY26.

*FY26 Capital Request of \$55,000 for Tree Planting and Management. This item is listed as a key action in the Unified and Climate Action Plans, and tree planting and protection will likely be a critical step in achieving the Town's greenhouse gas reduction goals.

+FY25 Capital Request of \$25,000 for Natural Landscape Development, which includes Organic Integrated Pest Management Program, Pollinator Corridor landscape improvements and Invasive Species Control in Fuller Brook Park. These action steps support one of the three critical Actions listed in the MVP Summary of Findings: Implement a Sustainable Landscape Program. These actions also protect Human and ecological health within the community.

⊗Request of \$15,000 for Park Path, Sidewalk and Parking Lot Repairs. This is used as an urgent maintenance item and is the most cost-effective method to ensure the Town's parklands are safe, stable and accessible.

^oThe major Capital Expenses for FY26 is a request of \$100,000 for Fuller Brook Park Knotweed Removal Design and Implementation, where an initial pilot site at Cottage Street was restored in FY25 with promising results, and these funds will be used to expand the removal efforts elsewhere. The other primary request is for \$150,000 for a supplemental Feasibility Study for the Morses Pond Beach project, which may be CPC eligible.



Town of *Wellesley*

FY2026 Budget Request

Natural Resources Commission Operating Request

Department: 171

Department Head: Brandon Schmitt, Director Natural Resources

Approved 11-7-2024

| DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURES | FY22 Actual | FY23 Actual | FY24 Actual | FY25 Budget | FY26 Request | Variance FY25-26 | % Change FY25-26 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Personal Services | | | | | | | |
| Director | 103,656 | 105,884 | 110,009 | 115,457 | 117,766 | 2,309 | 2.00% |
| Clerical | 34,985 | 47,758 | 51,124 | 55,737 | 57,414 | 1,677 | 3.01% |
| Other Professionals: Env. Ed, Compliance | 31,036 | 61,115 | 64,303 | 67,819 | 69,176 | 1,357 | 2.00% |
| Para-professional | 65,666 | 70,759 | 75,400 | 82,266 | 83,910 | 1,644 | 2.00% |
| Wetlands Support | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.00% |
| Reclassification | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.00% |
| Unemployment Compensation | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.00% |
| Subtotal, Personal Services | 235,342 | 285,516 | 300,836 | 321,279 | 328,266 | 6,986 | 2.17% |
| | | | | | | | |
| Expenses | 14,610 | 13,710 | 23,140 | 35,300 | 36,350 | 1,050 | 2.97% |
| Encumbrance | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.00% |
| Subtotal, Expenses | 14,610 | 13,710 | 23,140 | 35,300 | 36,350 | 1,050 | 2.97% |
| | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | \$ 249,952 | \$ 299,226 | \$ 323,976 | \$ 356,579 | \$ 364,616 | \$ 8,036 | 2.25% |

| PERMANENT STAFFING (FTEs) | FY22 Actual | FY23 Actual | FY24 Actual | FY25 Budget | FY26 Request | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Position Titles: | | | | | | |
| Director | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | |
| Wetlands Administrator | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | |
| Secretary | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | |
| Education and Outreach | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | |
| Total Number of Positions | 3.5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 benefit eligible |

Natural Resources Department FY26 Operating Budget Request

| Org | Object | Account # 01-171 Account Title | FY22 Actual | FY23 Actual | FY24 Actual | FY25 Budget | FY26 Request | \$ Variance FY25-26 | % Variance FY25-26 |
|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| PERSONAL SERVICES | | | | | | | | | |
| 01171100 | 511010 | Senior Administrator | \$ 103,656 | \$ 105,884 | \$ 110,009 | \$ 115,457 | \$ 117,766 | \$ 2,309 | 2.00% |
| 01171100 | 511220 | Other Professionals | 31,036 | 61,115 | 64,303 | 67,819 | 69,176 | \$ 1,357 | 2.00% |
| 01171100 | 511260 | Wetlands Administrator | 65,666 | 70,759 | 75,400 | 82,266 | 83,910 | \$ 1,644 | 2.00% |
| 01171100 | 511370 | Clerical | 34,985 | 47,758 | 51,124 | 55,737 | 57,414 | \$ 1,677 | 3.01% |
| 01171100 | 569570 | Wetlands Support | - | - | - | - | | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171100 | 575120 | Unemployment Compensation | - | - | - | - | | \$ - | 0.00% |
| | | PERSONAL SERVICES SUBTOTAL | 235,342 | 285,516 | 300,836 | 321,279 | 328,266 | \$ 6,986 | 2.17% |
| EXPENSES | | | | | | | | | |
| 01171200 | 517040 | Tuition Reimbursement | - | 55 | - | - | | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 530900 | Other Professional Services | 486 | 856 | 7,681 | 8,000 | 8,500 | \$ 500 | 6.25% |
| 01171200 | 534010 | Postage, Printing | 2,280 | 631 | 2,018 | 2,250 | 2,250 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 534030 | Advertising- General | 456 | 426 | 423 | 1,500 | 1,500 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 534035 | Advertising- Employment | - | - | - | - | - | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 534050 | Telecommunications | 1,079 | 756 | 1,081 | 1,400 | 1,400 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 542010 | Office Supplies | 649 | 2,258 | 2,361 | 3,000 | 3,000 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 543030 | Computers Supplies | 2,332 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 549090 | Other Food Service Supplies | 15 | - | 363 | 250 | 250 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 552085 | <i>Fowl food</i> | 105 | - | - | 250 | 250 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 557010 | Programs and Activities | 662 | 640 | 449 | 1,000 | 1,000 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 555070 | Electronic Media | 73 | - | - | - | - | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 571010 | Travel - Mileage | 507 | 1,188 | 1,668 | 1,000 | 1,250 | \$ 250 | 25.00% |
| 01171200 | 571120 | Conf. Meetings-Prof Staff | 1,326 | 835 | 1,158 | 2,000 | 2,000 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 571190 | Conf. Meetings-Others | 100 | - | 310 | 750 | 750 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 573020 | Dues-Professional Staff | 379 | 395 | 425 | 500 | 500 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 581512 | Encroachment Markers | - | - | - | 1,000 | 1,000 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 581513 | Porous Pavement Maintenance | 1,453 | 769 | - | 1,700 | 1,700 | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 581661 | Trails Improvements | 2,707 | 4,901 | 5,203 | 8,700 | 9,000 | \$ 300 | 3.45% |
| HISTORICAL EXPENSES | | | | | | | | | |
| 01171200 | 534040 | Printing & Mailing Expense | | | | | | \$ - | 0.00% |
| 01171200 | 578015 | Late Fees/ Interest Chgs | | | | | | \$ - | 0.00% |
| | | EXPENSE SUBTOTAL | 14,610 | 13,710 | 23,140 | 35,300 | 36,350 | 1,050 | 2.97% |
| 01171200 | 570000 | Other Charges and Expenses | | | | | | \$ - | 0.00% |
| | | DEPARTMENT TOTAL | \$ 249,952 | \$ 299,226 | \$ 323,976 | \$ 356,579 | \$ 364,616 | \$ 8,036 | 2.25% |

Wetlands Projected Revenue*

* Note that these revenues can only be spent on Wetland related expenses including committee training, mileage and supplies, etc.

| Natural Resources Department FY26 Operating Budget Request | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | FY26 RATE REQUEST | | | | | |
| Job Title Employee Name | FY25 Rate as of 6/30/2025 | Group - Step | FY26 Starting Rate 7/1/2025 | Step Adjustment Date | Adjustment Rate | Total Budget Request |
| NRC Director Brandon Schmitt | \$ 2,211.81 | 59 | \$ 2,256.05 | N/A | N/A | 117,766 |
| Wetlands Administrator Julie Meyer | \$ 1,575.96 | 55 | \$ 1,607.48 | N/A | N/A | 83,910 |
| Secretary (Full Time) Steph Tunnera DOH 1/5/22 | \$ 1,067.85 | 45-6 | \$ 1,099.89 | N/A | N/A | 57,414 |
| Education and Outreach Administrator Lisa Moore | \$ 1,299.22 | 53 | \$ 1,325.20 | N/A | N/A | 69,176 |
| Total Salary | | | | | | \$ 328,266 |
| Additional Wetlands Support/Scribe | \$ 25.00 | 7 hr/wk | \$ 125.00 | N/A | N/A | 6,500 |
| Wetlands Fund Offset | - | | | N/A | N/A | (6,500) |
| Total Salary | | | | | | \$ - |



Town of *Wellesley*

FY2026 Budget Request

Morses Pond Operating Request

(Joint Request from NRC, Board of Public Works & Recreation Commission)

Department: 172

Department Head: Brandon Schmitt Director Natural Resources

| DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURES | <u>FY22 Actual</u> | <u>FY23 Actual</u> | <u>FY24 Actual</u> | <u>FY25 Budget</u> | <u>FY26 Request</u> | <u>\$ Variance FY25-26</u> | <u>% Variance FY25-26</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Personal service | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | 0% |
| Expenses | 137,011 | 145,798 | 149,330 | 173,000 | 177,000 | \$ 4,000 | 2.31% |
| TOTAL | \$ 137,011 | \$ 145,798 | \$ 149,330 | \$ 173,000 | \$ 177,000 | \$ 4,000 | 2.31% |

Morses Pond Management FY25 Operating Budget Request

| Org | Obj | Account # 01-172 Account Title | FY22 Actual | FY23 Actual | FY24 Budget | FY25 Request | FY26 Request | \$ Variance FY25-26 | % Variance FY25-26 |
|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|

PERSONAL SERVICES

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------------------|------|------|------|------|--|---|-------|
| 01172100 | 511260 | Watershed Education | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | | - | 0.00% |
|----------|--------|---------------------|------|------|------|------|--|---|-------|

EXPENSES

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 01172200 | 530750 | Project Management Services | 45,477 | 47,986 | 49,101 | 49,500 | 50,000 | 500 | 1.01% |
| 01172200 | 530900 | Other Professional Services | - | - | - | | | - | 0.00% |
| 01172200 | 588519 | Plant Harvesting | 64,072 | 62,607 | 68,000 | 85,000 | 87,000 | 2,000 | 2.35% |
| 01172200 | 588520 | Phosphorus Station | 22,045 | 27,956 | 24,230 | 30,500 | 31,000 | 500 | 1.64% |
| 01172200 | 588521 | Phosphorus Monitoring | 5,416 | 7,250 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 9,000 | 1,000 | 12.50% |
| | | | 137,011 | 145,798 | 149,330 | 173,000 | 177,000 | 4,000 | 2.31% |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 570000 Other Charges and Expenses | - | | | | | - | 0.00% |
| | | | \$ 137,011 | \$ 145,798 | \$ 149,330 | \$ 173,000 | \$ 177,000 | 4,000 | 2.31% |