



Office of the  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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*Karen Chapman, Chairman*

*John Stonefield, Vice-Chairman*

*Eric Johnson, Clerk*

*Jennifer Pettit*

*Michele Cannon*

**MEMO**

**Date: April 16, 2008**

**To: Greg Barnes, Town Administrator  
Board of Selectmen**

**From: Conservation Commission**

**Re: proposed Squannacook River Rail Trail project**

The Conservation Commission walked the proposed Squannacook River Rail Trail on Tuesday, April 15, 2008. Following the site visit the Commission discussed the following concerns regarding the proposed project:

- a. All culverts should be inspected, cleaned and/or replaced. Crossings should comply with the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards. A copy of the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Handbook is attached
- b. The Commission noted that approximately 150 feet of the rail bed passes through a section of ledge, resulting in an area having wetland characteristics. We would require an analysis of alternative methods of crossing this area.
- c. There are potential vernal pools in close proximity to the rail bed that must be protected.
- d. The issue of litter must be addressed, so that it doesn't end up in the wetlands and the river.
- e. The Commission agreed that a pervious surface is preferred.

As you may know, the Squannacook River and its tributaries are Coldwater Fishery Resources and Outstanding Resource Waters. The proposed Rail Trail traverses Primary and Estimated Wildlife Habitat, and is included in, or serves as the boundary of, the Squannassit Area of Critical Environmental Concern. While by its own definition the Rail Trail is an already disturbed site, the Commission asks that every effort be made to minimize the human impact to those sections of the Rail Trail located in environmentally sensitive areas.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important project.

Sincerely,

Leslie W. Gabrielska  
Acting Conservation Agent  
Townsend Conservation Commission