

New Handbook for Outreach
Ecological Design, Construction and Maintenance Handbook – best practices for balancing site construction and land protection.

By : Angela Kearney, Conservation Planner, Town of Lincoln Conservation Department

February 25, 2014

(Re-printed from MACC's Quarterly Newsletter)

The Lincoln Conservation Commission continues to explore different ways to reach out to residents and home and landscape professionals to educate them about wetlands protection laws and regulations *before work is done on a property*. Like most Conservation Commissions, we prefer to work with people in a collaborative and pro-active manner rather than a defensive or reactive one. We all know that even a full restoration, required by an enforcement order, does not bring back a habitat once it is lost.

Over the years the Lincoln Conservation Commission has made education and outreach a top priority. In 2006 we started to send a mailing to each new homeowner in town. Our *New Homeowner Packet* includes an introductory letter and a personalized GIS map with the property, wetlands, streams, buffer zones, trails and adjacent conservation land highlighted. It includes a variety of brochures and a postcard that can be returned with boxes a new resident can check requesting more information or a personalized site visit with conservation staff. We continue to send out New Homeowner Packets on a monthly basis, but instead of mailing them, Commissioners hand deliver them to their new neighbors. We found that the personal contact results in greater outreach success.

In the spring of 2011 we sent a letter to all the building and landscape professionals in our database, reminding them of their responsibilities under the Wetlands Protection Act and Lincoln Wetlands Protection Bylaw. We offered a few of our top priorities for ecologically managing the land, including the use of construction and sedimentation control fencing; installation of a riprap apron at the end of the driveway to prevent soil, sediment and chemicals from spreading onto public roads; reduction and reuse of materials onsite and restoring disturbed soils with native, drought tolerant plants.

In 2013 we created another outreach piece – *Ecological Design, Construction and Maintenance Handbook – best practices for balancing site construction and land protection.* In addition to satisfying many of the goals outlined in Lincoln's Comprehensive and Open Space Plans, the Handbook offers simple, best practices for designing, building and maintaining the land. The electronic magazine is a carbon-neutral, on-line publication available through the Conservation Page on the Town's website (www.lincolntown.org) or by following this [link](#). It is an easy to read non-regulatory document that offers links and practices which lead to site-sensitive development and natural resource protection. We hope you will take a minute to look through it and share it with your Commissions, residents and professionals working in your town.