

## **The Teams**

The Connecticut Environmental Review Teams (ERT) are a group of environmental professionals drawn together from a variety of federal, state, regional and local agencies to form multidisciplinary environmental study teams to assist municipalities in review of sites proposed for development or preservation.

The ERT program operates with state funding through CT DEP under the guidance of the Eastern Connecticut and King's Mark Resource Conservation and Development Areas (RC&D). The Eastern Connecticut ERT serves an 86 town area and was created in 1969. The King's Mark Team, begun in 1976, operates in Western Connecticut serving 83 towns. Federal, state and regional/local agencies provide their professionals' time and expertise to the Teams. Since the ERT is a public service activity, the Teams are available to serve all towns free of charge.

Specialists on the Teams may include, but are not limited to geologists, wildlife and fisheries biologists, soil scientists, wetland and stormwater specialists, foresters, recreation specialists, archaeologists, historians, and planners. Agencies which have been represented on the reviews include:

- CT Department of Environmental Protection
- USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Regional Planning Organizations
- Conservation Districts
- CT Department of Transportation
- CT Department of Public Health
- CT Department of Policy and Management
- Office of State Archaeology
- University of Connecticut
- Connecticut Historical Commission
- Eastern CT State University

## **Purpose of the Teams**

Meeting the challenge of development requires thorough knowledge of the land, its resources, and the probable effects of development. The growing body of knowledge regarding land and its finite resources has made it difficult for local commissioners and landowners alike to assess the factors that should be considered in land use decisions.

The ERTs are available to assist towns in meeting the challenge by performing environmental reviews of sites proposed for major land use activities. A wide variety of projects have been reviewed by the ERTs including subdivision and condominium developments, commercial, office and industrial parks, excavations, river and coastal studies, open space, recreational projects and outdoor classrooms. The diversity of environmental reviews is indicative of the Teams' broadbase, expertise, and professional competence in addressing a wide array of environmental, planning and development-related issues. It is an adaptable, flexible program that strives for excellence, accuracy, and objectivity.

## **Major Benefits of the ERT Reports**

- Provides comprehensive technical assistance as a public service free of charge.
- Strengthens support for community decisions.
- Increases awareness of natural resources.
- Supplies information not readily available to local decision makers.
- Saves time and money, costly problems may be identified before implementation.
- Reports are non-regulatory and leave all decisions to the town and landowner.

## **Environmental Reviews**

Environmental reviews are conducted in the interest of providing objective information and analyses that will assist towns and developers in environmentally sound decision-making. This is done through:

- Describing and evaluating the distribution, quantity and quality of natural resources on the site.
- Evaluating the probable effects of the proposed project on the environment.
- Evaluating the ability of the site to support the proposed land use.
- Suggesting general management measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects.
- Identifying alternatives to the proposed action.

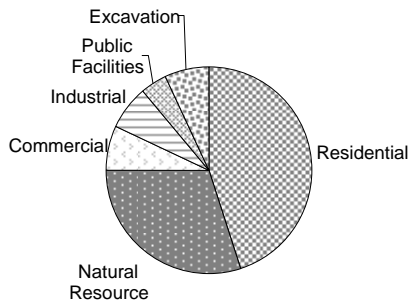
## **Operation of the Teams**

The ERTs undertake a review only after a written ERT Request Form from a town has been received and reviewed by the local conservation district (CD) and approved by the ERT Subcommittee of the CT RC&D Councils. A field review is arranged for an on-site investigation that involves the Team members, town officials, and the developer. After the field review, individual reports are prepared by each Team member, reflecting his or her own area of expertise. A final report is compiled and given to the town. It is important to realize that comments and suggestions presented in the ERT are not intended to compete with private consultants by supplying site designs or detailed solutions to development problems. Rather, the ERTs identify the existing resource base and evaluate its significance to the proposed development. The benefits of the program accrue to both the developer and the general public. The reports are not binding - all final decisions rest with the town and the developer.

## Requesting An Environmental Review

Environmental reviews may be requested by the chief elected official of a municipality, or the chairman of an administrative agency such as planning and zoning, inland wetlands, conservation, parks and recreation or economic development. Environmental Review Team Request Forms are available from the ERT office or on-line at [www.ctert.org](http://www.ctert.org). When the request is reviewed by the local conservation district and approved by the ERT subcommittee of the CT RC&D Councils, the Team will undertake the review on a priority basis. Generally, the ERT can conduct two to three reviews a month. It is recommended that a request for ERT assistance be made as early as possible since the process from request to final report may take several months depending on the number of factors.

### Types of Reviews Conducted 1969 - 2010



All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital or familial status, disability or political beliefs.

## Additional Information

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# The Connecticut Environmental Review Teams



*A unique program  
to assist municipalities  
in environmentally sound  
decision-making.*

## Eastern Connecticut and King's Mark

**A program of the Connecticut  
Resource Conservation and  
Development Areas**