

Cornwall Conservation Commission  
Feb. 18, 2016 Meeting minutes

Present: Rene Langis (RL, chairing), Michael Sheridan (MS, secretary), Bethany Barry (BB), Marc Cesario (MC)

Sadly missed: Brian Howlett (BH), Mary Dodge (MD), Marc Lapin (ML)

The minutes from the 1/21/16 meeting were approved. “Spectacular!” raved one CCC member.

Reports / updates of ongoing activities:

- 1) Cornwall School Wildlife Tracking project. MS and RL met with Cornwall School 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Mindy Harvey to discuss her recently awarded grant from the Otter Creek Audubon Society (OCAS, the application for which was written with CCC input). The grant will support the development of a Wildlife Tracking unit as part of the Cornwall School 3-4-5-6 grades science curriculum. OCAS has loaned the school a really impressive tracking kit with lots of rubber sample tracks, plaster of paris, and track identification books. The students will learn to make plaster casts, identify animals from photos and tracks, and plot the data on maps. MS, RL, and Ms. Harvey discussed where to place wildlife cameras and sandboxes on the wildlife movement corridors identified in the Cornwall Ecological Inventory. We will build wooden frames for plastic-lined sandboxes at one to three roadside sites. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these sites are all on land owned by or otherwise accessible to CCC members (MS, MC, and RL). MS will meet with Ms. Harvey and the students on 3/31/16 to construct the first sandbox.
- 2) Community Values Mapping Forum – we discussed the report from BH on Planning Commission support for this project. The next steps are for the CCC to contact other Cornwall town committees and networks, such as the Energy Committee and the town’s farmers, to coordinate and plan for an event in the summer months. The PC is considering having a public forum about town zoning, and worried that a Community Values Mapping Forum might conflict with it. The CCC agrees with BH that it would make sense to combine these events because ‘zoning’ is just another word for ‘values mapping’.
- 3) Community Forest project – BB has been researching other Vermont towns’ community forests. They are usually for educational, recreational, and conservation purposes, and must have public access. Most town forests get established as deeded gifts to the town, or as town funded land acquisitions to conserve particularly valuable landscape features. BB will continue to research what other towns have done.
- 4) Wildlife Corridor Documentation project – we discussed the INaturalist website, <https://www.inaturalist.org/places/cornwall-vt-us>, which now has a site for the town of Cornwall, and town residents are already uploading data about town flora and fauna. The Cornwall School project (#1 above) will also feed its data into this site. We discussed ways to promote our INaturalist site by announcing it at Town Meeting and via Front Porch Forum.
- 5) Conservation Fund – we discussed how thankful we are for SelectBoard support.
- 6) Guided Expeditions project – going on a hike this spring all depends on the weather and the state of ice/water/mud in Cornwall Swamp. The second project will be a ‘Spring Paddle’ on the Lemon Fair, likely from the Rt 74 put-on point north to Rt 125, on the

weekend of April 9-10. We discussed how this works in terms of insurance and liability, and Sue advised us that any events organized by the town (= us) are covered by town insurance.

- 7) Town Meeting 2/29. Ideas for announcements:
  - a. INaturalist and the Wildlife projects #1 and 4 above
  - b. Announce the grant for Cornwall School (although likely to be announced by the school in the school meeting as well just before Town Meeting)
  - c. Announce that the Conservation Fund now exists, we are 'moving forward' with it. But not asking for money.
  - d. Report on success of guided tours (Ledges, Swamp and upcoming spring Lemon Fair paddle.
  - e. Announce a Spring 2016 tour of MC's farm for town residents to learn about farming and riparian area conservation (in this case, Beaver Brook)

Reminder – March 23, 7-9 pm, Salisbury School social gathering of multiple Conservation Commissions.

Next meeting date: 3/31 at 7 pm. Ask Brian Kemp and John Roberts if they'd like to join us?