

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Zoom: 12:30-1:45 pm

Present: Katherine Branch, Don Burns, Mary Dodge, Andrea Landsberg, Michael Sheridan, and Kristina Sargent.

Called to order at 12:31

Recording Secretary: Andrea Landsberg

Old Business:

- **CC Blog:** Andrea reported that she and Kristina are meeting on June 27th to finalize the roll out plans for the blog. Will host a brief Zoom session on July 12th at 11am to show the navigation of the site, etc to the CC.
- **Land Conservation interviews:** Katherine reported she has completed 3 'illuminating' interviews so far and will schedule more when she is back in state. Some people have requested to have certain or all information 'anonymized'. Sunrise Orchard has agreed to host an event in the fall and a VLT representative could be invited to attend. The information collected will be used in multiple ways: write up on each property in the CC section of the town newsletter; host events on the properties where landowners are amenable; and aggregate / anonymize all information to share with CC and beyond. A longer write up on each property could be included in a blog post and the CC website.
- **Emerald Ash Borer Meeting with SB & Survey:** Mary summarized the meeting for CC members who were not present. Subsequent to this meeting, Sue and Stu Johnson volunteered to take on the task of inventorying ash trees along town ROW. Andrea recommended that we pursue the training residents on EAB and what they can do on their property (and in the future other insect and plant pests). Ideally would do the EAB training in late March and possibly plan for a 'fun' and educational event on Asian Longhorned Beetle in September/October.
- **Swamp Activities and Brochure:** Swamp walk with ANR staff is scheduled for September 8th, 5:30-7:00 pm. Kristina is hoping to pin down a date for a second Swamp hike when methane quantities are good. Progress is being made on the brochure – Kristina shared a mock-up and is working with Rose Watts and others on a format for eventual printing. Kristina shared a potential photo for brochure map. There was a discussion of whether a different image would be better. Some ideas: are there older maps that might show more detail from TNC; check on Wetlands Inventory Maps from Department of Environmental Conservation; check with Andrew L'Roe or John Van Hoesen at Addison County Regional Planning Commission; historical maps from prior years; different seasons or B&W might show more detail.
- **Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park Visit:** Don and Katherine will be visiting on July 7th to plan the event. Don eventually reached the lead ranger at the Park and is still hoping to meet with her or an associate on the 7th. Ranger noted the Billings Farm and Museum might have a better facility to handle a bigger group; only a 12 person facility at the Park. There are group discounts available for groups >10 at Billings Farm.
- **Trail Camera Project:** Mary talked with ANR Wildlife Biologist Jens Hilke, about the lack of good data to assist the CC in review of DRB submissions. Unfortunately, the trail camera project information falls short of providing the needed information on wildlife corridors/connectivity. The project has, however, made clear we have abundant wildlife in Cornwall. Mary suggested having Jens come to a CC meeting in Sept/Oct to discuss our options for next steps so we can support the clause on this included in the draft Town Plan update. All agreed this is needed.
- **Planning Commission:** The draft plan was submitted to the state to meet the grant deadline. The PC has scheduled one more informational meeting on July 27th to focus on education and other sections as well as the Plan Implementation section before the next public meetings. This section has one conservation related clause so would be good for some members of CC to attend. Don and Katherine were asked to provide information on this section beforehand if possible.
- **DRB:** Two sketch plan meetings have been held for a major subdivision on Bardon Road off RT 30. The area doesn't show up on state corridor maps, however, it does appear to be a wildlife connectivity

area as demonstrated via trail camera project data and local residents reports. The CC has submitted ecological reviews at both meetings detailing the importance of key forest and shrub land areas in the property for wildlife use and movement.

- **Newsletter:** Katherine has volunteered to compose the newsletter. She suggested the following content.
 - Swamp parking lot cleanup
 - Swamp walk (Kristina will try to have a date for hers)
 - Brief summary of EAB presentation to SB meeting
 - Mention of Marsh Billing visit with possible dates of Oct 1st or 2nd
 - "Teaser" on the blog
 - Sunrise Orchard conservation highlights
 - Amphibian crossing summary and photo

New Business:

- Program request – Invasives workshop with Travis Hart from Fish and Wildlife was held recently in Monkton. The Monkton CC got a grant and purchased plant removal tools that were demonstrated. CCC agreed this would be a good to do in Cornwall and that we should look into getting some tools to demonstrate and then have them available to be lent out via the Cornwall library. Mary will find out when Travis might be available and Katherine offered to help with planning the event.
- Follow-up on Geology Talk – There had been an initial discussion with Will Amidon about a guided driving tour of the key Cornwall geological sites. This would require car travel and parking multiple cars and may not be feasible. Mary will follow back up with Will to discuss possible alternatives including a short walk in one place or a brochure that would guide people to do this on their own.
- Mark your calendars: The AVCC (Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions) will be offering its 2022 annual summit at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, VT on October 15th. Registration fees will be covered.
- Conservation Bookshelf - Mary would like to have books from library out on the table to encourage folks to check them out and asked for us to submit titles to recommend making available. Katherine also has started a list of existing library conservation titles that she will share.
- Tabled until a future meeting: AVCC handbook remaining topics:
 - Andrea - term limits on CC membership, incompatible offices, diversity of CC membership
 - Don - discussion of rules and process

Meeting adjourned -1:42 PM

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 20, 2022 (12:30-1:45): In person.

Newsletter: July '22 (June), October '22 (September), January '23 (December), April '23 (March)