

DRAFT CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
July 1, 2019
Craftsbury Town Hall

PRESENT: John Brodhead, Farley Brown, June Cook, Susie Houston, Stephen Moffatt, Diane Morgan, Elinor Osborn, Heidi Rich, Steve Wright

ABSENT: Carol Maroni

MINUTES: May 27, 2019 minutes approved as presented.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER: On behalf of the commission, Stephen welcomed new member Heidi Rich.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Knotweed Eradication Demonstration Project: Elinor reported that on June 15, 20, and July 1, Phase II of the demonstration project was completed with smothering of knotweed shoots which have emerged. Black plastic was laid down and anchored with logs. Elinor will send Steve's pictures and work summary to the State. The project demonstrates what a landowner can do to eradicate knotweed infestations.

Phase III is in limbo as to whether any more eradication efforts will continue. Phase III of project with chemical injection needs to be reconsidered. Phase I of chemical injection was closely monitored and done with licensed applicator. Phase II was smothering of shoots. Work remaining is planting area with species that will prevent knotweed from regrowing. Barbara Alexander offered to plant lupines.

Elinor reported that objection to further chemical injection was raised by Barbara, who offered to cut and pull knotweed to control; however, the land is State land. Commission project was done in collaboration with the State; volunteers working and activities at the site would need to be State sanctioned.

If area left barren, knotweed will regrow. Knotweed may have grown originally with soils placed as a protective berm by the town after a serious accident. The berm was placed there to avoid motorists going into the river. Knotweed may have migrated from neighboring property to the site.

Demonstration Project shows one method of eradication. Chemical injection was successful when comparing regrowth of demonstration area to surrounding untreated areas. The commission will continue to monitor the site through the summer.

Gardening for Wildlife: Heidi Rich reported that Edith Dunn was welcomed as new addition to committee. The Community Green Space has been officially designated as a Wild Life Habitat. Carol Fairbank of WonderArts reported the designation is now official. Plans are to expand hedge row with additional plants, i.e., red osier, juniper) for diversity. WonderArts has funding to buy plants. Farley noted Sterling College has a community work day in October and could assist with weeding and/or planting.

Craftsbury Conservation Fund: Diane reported the sub-committee has been meeting to write a guidance document for the Fund which covers an explanation, criteria for selecting projects, application form, etc. Some information from Middlesex and New Hampshire was used to draft the document, which is in 3rd revision. Draft will be sent to members week before next meeting with most of next meeting devoted to document.

ATV Signage Update: Signage has been put on hold by Select Board as ATV Ordinance is in flux. Steve will go to board meeting and pursue signage for the river crossings discussed over the last two years. River crossing signage is not connected to ATV Ordinance.

School Woodlot Policy: Question about Conservation Commission involvement and what should its role be. Commission could be involved and supportive but needs guidance on how best to serve. Town has a Municipal Forest Committee. Farley would like commission to focus on activities, such as bike trails, and treating woodlot as natural area. Commission could weigh in on the final plan and give input then.

Town Road Crew Invasives Policy: Diane traced the history of the Commission's research into the State's Department of Transportation Recommended Best Management Practices in 2014. At that that time, we created a simplified list along with flyers on the roadside non-native invasives in Craftsbury in a loose-leaf notebook to aid the town road crew in identifying the invasives and how to avoid their spread. Susie reported that Curtis Mellett has expressed interest in the gravel pit being a potential location to bury invasives. There would be a fee involved.

Recent work at West Hill resulted in soils excavated being taken to a private landowner for fill. If the excavated soils harbor seeds, roots, or cuttings of invasives, it would be spreading onto private land.

Other Business: Volunteers can help at Antiques & Uniques Festival and donate their hours donated to the Craftsbury Conservation Fund. Information of where to volunteer and who to contact is not clear.

Farley reported the Black River has claimed 2 feet of the Silva's backyard since 2014. Mitigation efforts are underway but complex as it involves town water supply.

Heidi asked that conservation efforts for Chimney Swifts could be discussed at a future meeting. Chimney Swifts, once prevalent in Vermont, are in deep trouble. An effort could include creating nesting towers and educational outreach.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held Monday, July 29, at 7:00 p.m. in the town hall. (Did we decide to meet at 6:30 p.m.???)

Submitted by June Pichel Cook
Secretary