

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Municipal Office Building, Room #1

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Joe Sina.

2. Roll Call and Alternate Appointments

Members Present: Joe Sina, Bernie Gillis, Barry Bernard, David Walls, Cameron Beard, Alan Ponanski, Gary Wilson, and Susan Pagnano.
Members Absent: John Olin
Guests: Ralph Chappell (guest presenter)
Alternate Appointments: Alan Ponanski was appointed for John Olin.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Wilson/Ponanski – Passed Unanimously.

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes from May 6, 2025

Page 6, under Outreach and Promotion, strike the first line and replace it with:
"Mr. Wilson recapped the Master Gardener event when 11 volunteers signed up for future services."
Motion to approve the May 6, 2025 minutes as presented.
Wilson/Ponanski – Passed Unanimously.

5. Guest Presentation – Ralph Chappell

Ralph Chappell led a discussion on safety training procedures, course offerings, and volunteer safety during trail maintenance and conservation activities. He outlined the importance of proper protective gear, awareness of surroundings, and working in pairs when clearing trails or handling equipment. He encouraged the Commission

to establish a set of basic guidelines and distribute them to all trail volunteers and participants in stewardship activities. The Commission agreed this was a timely and valuable initiative and will follow up to formalize safety guidelines. The Commission also reviewed the draft waiver language, and agreed to send it to be reviewed by the Town's Attorney.

6. Chair's Updates

Larger hunting signs will be ordered for installation at kiosks. The Life Forms grant was approved by the Eightmile River Coordinating Committee and will proceed as planned. Ray Sikorski completed clearing work at the top of Hatch Lot, and a work party will be organized for additional cleanup. The apple trees planted last year at Salmon River Overlook are thriving. However, the area has become overrun with knotweed and mugwort. Strategies for knotweed control were discussed, including tarp covering (suggested by Mr. Ponanski) and brush hogging to protect the apple trees (recommended by Mr. Sina).

7. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates

i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis

Trail and property maintenance were completed at multiple sites. At Nichols Trail, a chair was installed, signage was added, and a small bridge was built near a previously constructed bog bridge. Trees blocking the trail were cleared, and trail markings were improved. Roaring Brook also had a downed tree removed, and signs of unauthorized use by bikes or possibly motorcycles were noted. "No Horses on Bridges" signs were posted at Rose Farm Reserve, where the bog bridge was also elevated to prevent flooding. A reroute was flagged for a muddy section of trail at Hatch Lot Reserve, and a tree reported down at Urbanik Property remains to be cleared.

At the Kronberg Open Space property, trails installed by the NEA were found to be extensive and well-maintained, with potential connections flagged to link with adjacent open space and roads. Plans are in place to install a kiosk and signage at the entrance, using the updated state DEEP logo. Ongoing tasks include sign placement, trail rerouting, and monitoring horse access on trails and bridges.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Wilson

An article titled "Reptiles and Knotweed and Bees, Oh My!" was recently published. The article covered seasonal topics including turtles and snakes on roads, the importance of removing roadside knotweed while it's still manageable, and the benefits of "No Mow May" to support pollinators. One member reported

participating in No Mow May by leaving a section of their property uncut but noted a lack of bee activity this season, possibly due to cold, wet weather.

A new article on monarch butterflies is ready for submission, featuring a high-quality photo of a monarch on milkweed. It is approximately 300 words, making it suitable for both the local newspaper and the *Events Magazine*. The previously submitted vernal pool article was not published in the latest *Events Magazine* issue, likely due to space being taken by a large Land Trust article. Members agreed it may be best to hold the vernal pool piece for spring publication next year.

iii. Climate Resilience – Mr. Olin
It was reported that on May 19, the Eightmile River Coordinating Committee approved the Life Forms Watershed Grant, and class presentations for the fall are currently in development. The final CIRCA report on the Succor Brook stream study has not yet been released. A meeting between CIRCA, the Town, and Goodspeed is scheduled for June 16 to discuss further steps with respect to the flooding issues.

b. Liaison Reports
i. IWWC Updates – Mr. Walls
Nothing new to report.

ii. P&Z Updates – Mr. Gillis
Nothing new to report.

iii. Open Space Updates – Mr. Sina
Nothing new to report.

iv. Eightmile Committee Updates – Mr. Beard
Nothing new to report.

v. Sustainability Committee – Mr. Ponanski
The Sustainability Committee led a successful roadside cleanup before Memorial Day, working with local groups like the Scouts. Tanya Bourgoin plans to hold cleanups every two months and encourages families and scouts to help maintain litter-free roads, fostering community pride and ongoing participation.

c. Planting/Existing Garden Updates – Mr. Wilson
Existing gardens are being maintained using a brush cutter and trimming tools. Mulch has been applied to new plants at Patrell and Hatch, along with soluble fertilizer to support growth. Despite invasive species like oriental bittersweet and multiflora rose, more native plants are emerging, possibly helped by birds spreading seeds. Selective trimming rather than broad brush hogging is preferred to protect native plants.

At the community garden, all plots are fully rented and activity is higher than last year. Fertilizer was also applied to highbush cranberry and walnut trees. Grass is being cut around plots to create a neat appearance and encourage participation. The first Master Gardener's table session was held with low attendance; a second session was planned but postponed due to rain.

d. Reserve Monitor Discussion – Mr. Sina
Reserve monitors were reminded to bring clippers and loppers when walking the trails. They were also reminded that power tools are only to be used by trained Commission members.

8. New Business

a. New Bills
The following bill(s) were submitted and reviewed:
• Shagbark: $413.24 for materials
Motion to approve the bill(s)
Beard/Gillis – Passed Unanimously.

b. Discussion from Commission Members
Mr. Wilson announced his intention to resign as a full member of the Conservation Commission after years of service, citing the need for new voices and his desire to pursue other interests. He offered to remain as an alternate member. The Commission discussed the process for his resignation, noting that the senior-most alternate could be promoted to fill his seat, pending approval by the Board of Selectmen. Members expressed appreciation for Mr. Wilson's contributions and wished him well.
Motion to nominate Mr. Ponanski to fill Mr. Wilson's full member position on the Conservation Commission, pending approval by the Board of Selectmen.
Gillis/Beard – Passed Unanimously.

9. Public Comment

No public comments were received via email or in person.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 7:00 PM in Room #1.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 PM.
Ponanski/Walls – Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary