

FINAL

**LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
[LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/live)
Thursday, September 9th, 2021
6:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ernst Oidtmann (Chair), Sarah Riley (Vice Chair), Erling Heistad, Donald Lacey (remote), Susan Almy, Chris Johnson, Bruce James, Barbara Hirai (Alt.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Darla Bruno (Alt), Suellen Balestra (Alt.)

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator)

1. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Oidtmann called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 12th, 2021

Mr. Heistad MOVED to approve the August 12th, 2021 Minutes as presented in the September 9th, 2021 agenda packet and amended.

Seconded by Ms. Almy.

Amendments:

Page 2, Line 17, 19, and 20 Change “LaHaye” to “Lahaye”

Page 2, Line 22 Add “and” after “area,”

Page 2, Line 33 Move the word “plant” in front of “species”

Page 2, Line 40, Remove “piece of property” and replace it with “project”

Page 2, Line 44 Remove “of” after “in-lieu”

Page 3, Line 25 Add “Section 5A of” after “read”

Page 3, Line 25 Remove “Planning Board” and replace with “Manager”

Page 3, Line 28 Change “Preserve” to “Reserve”

Page 3, Line 29 Change “Preserve” to “Reserve”

Page 3, Line 36 Change “tress” to “trees”

~~Page 3, Line 46 Remove the apostrophe after “places”~~

Page 4, Line 3 Remove “was” and add “trail were”

**** The Vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (7-0).***

3. PERMIT REVIEW: None

4. STUDY ITEMS:

Item 4B was taken out of order from what listed on the agenda. Items below are listed in the order they were discussed.

B. Linking Lands Alliance: Organization's web site for additional information-

<https://www.linkinglandsalliance.org>: Mr. Lacey spoke to Karen Dauville who is a longtime, former member of the Hartford Conservation Commission. She had always been interested in the concept of connecting large areas of habitat and creating the next generation of folks interested in natural history. She left the Conservation Commission and helped to start Linking Lands Alliance. They have done mapping of habitat blocks and they also have developed materials for schools. They have all been vetted and approved for VT educational standards and NH accepts those standards as well.

She was contacting NH Conservation Commissions to support the endeavor to get the educational material into the local schools. Mr. Lacey thought Ms. Hirai could pass the information on to some teachers in Lebanon.

Discussion was had among the Conservation Commission members about how to get these educational materials into the local schools. Co-Chair Riley said she would pass it on to the 4th grade teachers and Ms. Hirai said she could pass the information on to the Lebanon High School. Mr. Lacey will give Mr. Goodwin the contact information for Karen Dauville to pass on to the Commission members.

A. Goodwin Conservation Property Bridge Update-Mr. Goodwin talked about the bridge that was constructed by the snowmobile club in the late 1970's or early 1980's. It washed out in 2012. There had been talk about replacing it for about a decade. He spoke to the conservation ranger who has experience with bridges on trails and a design was discussed that was closer to \$2,000.00 to build the bridge. The design exists on the Colette Trail in Enfield, NH. That money was still more than what was in the maintenance conservation budget. He reached out to Paul Coats and David Brooks and asked if they might have some money in their budget to help with the bridge and they indicated it could be a possibility. Mr. Goodwin was asking for the Conservation Commission's input on the idea. He also explained that he was an advocate for the project because the purpose of the Goodwin Conservation area, per the deed, was for the land to be actively used.

Mr. Lacey left the meeting at 7:00PM.

The Conservation Commission discussed the bridge project among themselves. Ms. Hirai suggested that they look at the Goodwin Conservation area in more detail at the next Conservation Commission meeting. She was very concerned about bicycles having increased access from the Route 120 side of the Conservation Area because the trails on the far side of the brook are subject to erosion. She asked if the bridge would allow bicycle traffic across it or not?

Mr. Johnson pointed out that perfect is the enemy of good enough and if it is an ordeal to get the funding for the simpler bridge, estimated at \$2,000.00 he thought that was something to think about. Commission members asked questions and Mr. Goodwin answered them. The bridge width was 55 feet from abutment to abutment.

Mr. Goodwin stressed to the Commission that if a decision took too long to be made the opportunity may pass them by. Mr. Johnson said he thought that they should not let this opportunity go by, especially if it meant it could be years before the opportunity came again. Ms. Hirai wanted it to be a pedestrian bridge only. Mr. Heistad suggested signs could be posted not allowing bicycles on the trail.

Discussion continued among the members about building the bridge and what kind of bridge they were interested in. Co-Chair Riley confirmed that the Conservation Commission would discuss the Goodwin Conservation Area in more depth at the October meeting.

D. ADA Discussion- Ms. Almy discussed an article about another Conservation Commission in NH making some paths ADA compliant. It was suggested that maybe the loop at Cole and Two Rivers could be made ADA compliant. She asked the Commission members to think about the different Reserves that could have some ADA compliant trails.

C. Cole Property Overview Discussion-Ms. Hirai stated that in 2017 the Conservation Commission changed the names of several properties to reflect that they are conservation areas, not parks. One of these name changes was from the Alana Cole Park to the Alana Cole Conservation Area.. She went on to give an overview of the Cole property. It was purchased on December 15th, 1989. The Connecticut River Watershed Council was instrumental in the project. The purchase was funded by City appropriations, private donations, Federal funding, the Conservation Commission's Boston Lot timber harvest funds, the Land Conservation Investment Program, and an owner donation. The purchase was of 16 acres of land for \$305,764.00.

The purpose of the purchase was to conserve the land and the water body of the Connecticut River, the protection of habitat for the ram's head lady's slipper, woodland's hound tongue, Canadian germander, as well as the wildlife habitat.

The features of the land were an esker and a high-yield aquifer. There was a shoreline habitat, a riverbank floodplain forest, and a Hemlock-hardwood-pine forest on the property.

There was an old horse road on the property as well as a rope swing into the Connecticut River, and a firepit. There were also a set of illegal stairs that had been built onto the property and a geocache found on the property.

Discussion was had among the Commission members about what to do with the geocache that was on the steep slope, the log staircase going up the steep bank, and a new trail that has been created to the staircase. The Commission discussed making a new trail to the Horse Road.

Mr. Don Lacey rejoined the meeting at approximately 8:20PM.

The Connecticut River Horse Road, on the property, received historic landmark designation in 2009. The 2009 management plan stated that the neighbors thought there was danger of parking along Wildwood Dr to access the Horse Road, erosion along the bank of the Connecticut River, inadequate parking by the kiosk due to drainage issues, and excessive trash in the parking area. There was also an establishment of, and spread of, invasive species. There was talk of possibly extending a trail north of the property along the river to connect to Chambers Memorial Reserve.

Recommendations that were made in the 2009 Management Plan were: doing a biological inventory and monitoring, bank stabilization, restoration along the steep bank and narrow ridge, along with invasive species removal and revegetation. It was not recommended to continue a trail from Alana Cole to Chambers Memorial Reserve due to potential erosion issues.

Issues that were considered and discussed were the parking area and condition of the road, stairs on the north slope, trail from the loop to the stairs, trail connecting to Chambers on steep slope, whether the rope swing was a liability to the City of Lebanon or not, the Horse Road, bank erosion, invasives, and renaming the East Wilder Boat Launch.

The Commission agreed to rename the East Wilder Boat Launch property to the East Wilder Conservation Area. Mr. Goodwin suggested this would be a good winter activity because it could involve updating Chapter 52.

After discussion of the stairs that were illegally built on the property, it was decided that a letter needed to be sent to the abutting property owners who might have built the staircase. Commissioners also agreed that the stairs would need to be left in place, to prevent erosion of the slope, and a sign should go up telling people the trail up the stairs was closed. The trail would also be closed at the loop.

Ms. Riley MOVED to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Heistad.

**** The Vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (7-0).***

The Commission agreed that the geocache should be moved, and Ms. Hirai would work on that. They agreed that there would not be a trail created to connect to Chambers Memorial and any perceived trail there would be closed off and signs put up.

The Conservation members were concerned that the rope swing on the property could be considered a liability to the City. Mr. Goodwin informed the Commission that owners of land could not be held liable for things such as the rope swing on the property unless they had created it.

The Commission members discussed the Horse Road and what they would like to do with it.

Ms. Riley MOVED to extend the meeting by 10 minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Heistad.

**** The Vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (7-0).***

They discussed whether to create trail access to the Horse Road or just use it as a historic area to teach about the history of Lebanon.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Conservation Lands Monitors: Chair Oidtmann discussed the Mascoma River Clean-up that was coming up on September 25th from 9:30AM to 12:00PM. The people who want to participate in the clean-up will meet at the CCBA pavilion. There will be dumpsters, pizza, donuts, and coffee provided. People can bring their canoes and kayaks.

Co-Chair Riley explained the NH Bio-blitz was where people could get outside and document all living things on public lands through the month of September.

B. Lebanon Biodiversity Group: None

C. Workshops & Educational Opportunities: None

6. OTHER BUSINESS: Chair Oidtmann asked about the current use report. Mr. Goodwin said that would be on next month's agenda.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

8. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: None

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting automatically adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara R. Higgins
Recording Secretary