

Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission
Meeting June 14, 2022
ADOPTED Minutes

Members present: Craig Heindel [Chair], Jen Cirillo, Amy Dohner, Karen Pettersen, Tyler Steff, Barry Estabrook, Don Dewees, Matt Gorton [by Zoom]

Members not present: Joe Nelson

Craig opened the Zoom meeting at 7:05 p.m.

The May 10, 2022 meeting notes were moved to be accepted as amended.

1. Bat Monitoring: Amy noted that FCC will handle coordination of volunteers at the three Ferrisburgh sites [Kingsland Bay State Park, Rokeby Museum, Ruddy Feed Barn]. Counting dates will be chosen by us, within the period July 11 to 30. Alyssa Bennett, state bat biologist, requested that, if at all possible, the same person count at the same station on all four nights – to provide as much consistency as possible. We agreed that the following CC members would be the coordinators for the sites: Amy Dohner, for KBSP; Dean Leary would be asked to coordinate at Rokeby; and Craig Heindel, for Ruddy Feed Barn.
2. Abenaki site visit, with Judy Dow: Jen reported that a date for this has not been set yet.
3. Town Forest, Hemlocks impacted by spongy moth: Don Dewees, Joe Nelson and Chris Tan inspected the defoliated hemlocks in the town forest on June 3. Here is Joe's report that he emailed to Craig after the site visit, edited for clarity:

Chris, Don and I met up and toured the town forest on Monday, June 3. Thanks to Chris for making that happen. We looked at the hemlocks and they are dead or dying, and the culprit is spongy moth. The most significant damage seems to be on the drier, south-facing slopes. We did see hemlock that was only partially defoliated, and some that had no damage. There is also plenty of oak being hit hard, and it's hard to say what the long-term outcome will be. It depends on the length of the infestation. So for now there is nothing to do except monitor the trees. Attached is a picture of the general defoliation and a hemlock branch with the insects munching away.

We also found a tree with a tree stand. Chris thinks this is a different tree than what he saw earlier, so it looks like at least two trees with stands. It looks like the stand has been there for a while, as the screw in steps are partly grown over with bark. Don took a few photos. Our recommendation is to reach out to the community and see if the owner of the stands would be willing to remove them.

That's all for now, except it sure would be nice to get better access to the property. We discussed, and agreed with Joe's recommendation that nothing other than monitoring should be done; no harvesting of dead or dying trees; they will provide ecological value as snags. We agreed that monitoring should start soon if possible, and good records should be kept. Craig volunteered to meet with the Selectboard about our suggestion for how to deal with the tree stands. Craig will also check with Cindy Schultz and Tom Aldrich about possibly re-routing the steep eroding section of the access trail on their property that goes up the steep hill near the southern boundary, to make it safer and less erodible.

4. UVM Natural Resources 206 summer class, regarding Town Forest Management Plan: We brainstormed that the following topics to be studied by the class would be helpful to our updating of the Town Forest Management Plan: ash tree inventory, and connection with Abenaki craftspeople; Indiana bat habitat and/or rare, threatened and endangered species; management for bird species diversity; hemlock survey, spongy moth defoliation. Matt and Don will connect with the UVM professor and/or last spring's students regarding their slide deck from their presentation and report details, and Don will coordinate project details.
5. EAB workshop: Nothing known.
6. Pierce Lane subdivision: Nothing new has been received, regarding this topic.
7. ZBA/PC applications: Nothing new has been received regarding these applications [J. Sullivan; Kimball Dock Rd.; Buskey; Braeside Pl; Kerr; Bogg; Sullivan].
8. Cornerstone and Markowski applications: Nothing new has been received regarding these applications.
9. Trails Committee: Amy updated us; the committee is working on a map to document existing trails in town. Craig will check his digital files for possible maps.
10. Wildlife sightings database: Amy noted that her database is now up to date. Barry offered to assist in keeping it updated; Jen offered to assist with Google Drive format.
11. New Business:
 - A. Presentation about water quality updates: June 13, at DAR State Park.
 - B. Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions [AVCC]: we are now a member.
 - C. Corrections to April 2022 minutes: Karen reviewed; we voted to accept these corrections; Karen will update the posting.

Next meetings:

- No July or August 2022 meetings, unless an urgent topic arises.
- So our next meeting is Tues. Sept. 13, 2022.

No other business was discussed, and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectively submitted,
Craig Heindel, Chair