

Hartland Conservation Commission  
Monthly meeting 3/12/2025  
Damon Hall, with one attendee by Zoom

Attendance: Commissioners: Anderegg, Barney, Crosby, Hill, Waite.  
Dan Gottsegen, candidate for the Commission; all in person.  
Andrea Ambros, joined partway through via Zoom.

Meeting opened at 7:04 by Chair Anderegg with a quorum.

Brief introductions of Commissioners to candidate Gottsegen.

I. Minutes from 2/12/2025, and Treasurer's report. Treasurer Doug Hill advised of a correction to the information he had submitted for the last meeting. Minutes were amended to reflect that the actual balances were \$1430 in operating budget, not \$930. He found that the allocations for our full year operations budget of \$3000 includes \$2500 for professional services and \$500 for supplies. The Conservation Trust Fund balance is \$10,294.75. Since last meeting, there have been no expenditures for the Commission. Minutes from February meeting were approved with the incorporation of the amended balance in the Treasurer's report.

II. Planning/Brain storming for suggestions related to two public lands.

A. 17 Acre Woods-- Access plan. Jennifer has been in contact with folks from the school, and is preparing a list of next steps to get ready for a public event this spring to celebrate the completion of the accessible trail. These will include work to avoid erosion, install signs, and amend the agreement between the school and the Town to define allowable uses and guidance for timing of public access. The dedication event might fit well with National Trails Day, the first Saturday in June, and could include additional activities, perhaps with visits from the state legislators. The school hopes to arrange with the Town for a more permanent shelter for the outdoor classroom. Beyond the accessible trail, there is potential for a walking loop along the wetland to the south,

following an old road. This additional trail could become a future project for the Commission.

B. Pohl Property—closing on the property deal was completed, paving way for development of programming and improvements.

The Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) retains overall charge of the property, through their stewardship committee, and will control decisions around parking, signage and the like. Our Commission can submit suggestions we think would be helpful. Current plan is that some sections will grow up as young forest, while hayfield areas may in part be managed for grassland birds, with cutting delayed until the end of the breeding season. Rob will ask that mast producers such as nut trees and native plants be included in the design of the young forest area. Access for parking may be from Lover's Lane, perhaps with acquisition of adjoining property. There are hopes for a four season trail from Lover's Lane into town, maybe around the ag field, perhaps with creation of both a long and a shorter loop option. Rob will suggest that UVLT contact Upper Valley Trails Alliance for help designing and building trails on the site. We hope to keep open communication between UVLT and the Commission, potentially co-developing events. Rob can also suggest an ecological assessment and inventory of the property, in preparation for developing a more detailed management plan. We could also suggest they coordinate with Vermont Center for Ecostudies and with VINS, to see if the site may be amenable for ongoing projects and programs, such as adding nest boxes and surveying invertebrates. We can help publicize events at the property, as we aim to increase awareness of Hartland's public lands. Once the snow is gone, we could ask UVLT to assess whether we should include a contingent to the Pohl property on Green-up Day, if there is significant litter. People who do not use the Winter Trails may not know how to reach the property.

III. Town meeting follow up. Andrea Ambros was surprised and pleased by the conservation award. Rob highlighted a couple interesting items in the Town budget. While the Tree Cutting line item used to be \$8K, it was raised to \$10 K for FY 22-25, and has been raised again to \$15K going forward.

Presumably this reflects recognition of our survey data that documents the tremendous eventual impact of Emerald Ash Borer on trees along our roads.

The Commission's annual budget for \$3K was approved. There was a separate Town budget item of \$1350 for Sumner Falls, including \$750 for maintenance & repairs, and \$600 for supplies. Last year a picnic table was replaced, and there would have been fees for the Port-a-Potty. As the Commission continues developing plans for Sumner Falls, we might recommend a stepwise sequence such as adding parking at the entrance, moving the gate, and creating space for off season parking, & learn what expenses the town line item covers.

IV. Amphibian Assistance—As temperatures warm, but snow cover continues in many areas, we will be watching for the emergence of amphibians on wet nights. Training will come up, likely in next 2 weeks, Tina will post to list serve when the Hartford Salamander Team announces its training, and the post can also go onto FB page

#### V. Updates

A. Nature's Best Hope—Rob appreciates the comments from Commissioners on his drafts, and he has received positive feedback from readers of the List Serve.

B. Commission Openings—Will Moore needed to resign, as he moved out of town. He is still willing to help with the plan for the Town Forest. Rob will double check that any material Will used in preparing the original plans has been returned.

C. Legal Trail Bill—The purpose seems to reinforce the fact that the Select Board makes the rules about what happens on legal trails, not the landowners whose property the trail goes through. Rob sent legislators a letter of support, that may become part of the written testimony about the bill. The bill underscores that legal trails are public ways. Kingdom trails may have been dealing with conflicts related to claims of landowner controls.

D. Educational Presentations. Tina will host a spring bird walk. Rob will work with the new solid waste representative to set up a presentation for recycling guidelines. Hannah wants to do Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) reprise, later this spring. There may need to be a new presentation on Elongate Hemlock Scale, which was detected in Ludlow, though it's not yet found in Hartland. Tina may offer a mud season slide show on the Uganda trip, free, at the library, if scheduling allows.

E. Proposed cell tower—there has still not been an application filed at Public Utility Commission (PUC), so no official public comment period has started. Rob was at a meeting where the company (ITW) stated there was a 4 mile gap in coverage in the area, which their tower would address along route 12. However, there are other towers proposed by other companies, who have already submitted applications, which could potentially fill in the coverage gap. When and if the ITW does file an application with the PUC, the Town will alert us to the start of the comment period.

## VI. Other business

A. Hartland Newsletter—First issue has been printed. Rob would like us to write something for each issue. Their plan is to publish monthly, and it includes a calendar, which could be a place for us to publicize events; it may reach folks not on the List Serve. Copies will be available at the town office and the Library. Donations are welcome, through Hartland Community Arts.

B. Town Forest Census—UVM wants to collate information on all "town forests". They are alerting Towns and Conservation Commissions, and want to include town properties that have significant forested components, even if they are not specially designated "Town Forests". In Hartland, this could include 17 Acre Woods, Sumner Falls and the Jenne Town Forest.

C. Invasive species Gathering-May 8 (or 9th?) Jennifer will go to Montpelier for this event. Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, plus invasive species management, on a Friday.

D. Tick study done by Vermont Center for Ecostudies is in draft status, not yet ready for official release. Once published, we can publicize the results regarding efficacy comparisons among yard treatments. (We may also want to address stories of Tea Seed meal, which had also been promoted for control of jumping worms, and which may be toxic to other worms and amphibians.)

VII. The Commission entered Executive Session to discuss personnel matter at 8:22 PM. Discussion and vote allowed end of Executive Session three minutes later. A decision was reached to send a recommendation to the Select Board, for consideration at their 3/17/25 meeting.

VIII. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tina Barney, scribe