

**Hartland Conservation Commission**  
**Approved Minutes of Sept 10th, 2025 meeting**

I. Meeting brought to order 7:01 PM by Chair Rob Anderegg.

Also Attending: Guy Crosby, Tina Barney, Dan Gottsegen, Dan Nelson, and Todd Cross were present in person. Jennifer Waite and Doug Hill joined after the meeting had begun. Olivia Tregubov joined remotely.

II. We welcomed the two new commissioners, Olivia and Todd, and proceeded with brief introductions.

III. Minutes of June 11, 2025 meeting — There were no additions or corrections; unanimous approval of minutes from the June as submitted electronically before the meeting.

III. Review of 2025 goals and activities

A. Ongoing projects we do each year.

1. Water quality testing. Completed in June and July, but scheduling didn't work out to do one in August. By now it's likely no one is swimming, so the group agreed we will not conduct a further testing this year. One site had high counts on two occasions, but no obvious source was identified, and it dropped to safe level.

2. Our Old Home Days booth had good attendance. The Hartland Conservation Award was presented at Town Meeting. Green-Up Day co-coordination was done. Teams went out on Big Night to assist amphibians. Summer Falls clean-up happened on Green-Up Day and is scheduled for Source to Sea on Sept. 27.

B. Guide to Hartland Public Lands/Parks. Some of the 10 sites included have been updated. Rob will send commissioners a list of the ones still needing updates. This Saturday's Hartland Community Breakfast will be talking about trails in Hartland (9/13/2025). They will hand out printouts of the current guide.

C. Water Withdrawal from Lull's Brook—Town Manager John Broker-Campbell connected with an environmental enforcement agent, who contacted the offending company. Company claimed that they were unaware of any issue or any need to register with the state. After discussion of possible recurrence of withdrawals from Lull's Brook, given its convenience, we decided to continue pursuing the issue with the Selectboard. They might agree to put signage at the municipal property stating that commercial use of that property to access Lull's Brook water was prohibited without permission from the Town Manager.

D. Educational presentations. County Forester Hannah Dallas presented on Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), and will update that with a talk via zoom on 10/14/25 beginning at 6 PM. This time it will be recorded and uploaded to Town You Tube channel. Since EAB's spread has been rapid in the months since the first talk, she may offer new comments. She is also willing to talk about Beech Leaf Disease at a future date.

E. Pohl property celebration--Commissioners led walks on birds and invasive species, with a good turnout to the full event.

F. Recycling. Andy Scherer will be presenting an update on recycling at community breakfast on October 11th.

G. Two projects we didn't get to were game cameras and invasive plant patrol walks. Rob has ordered the weed wrench, and he hopes it may live at library as a loanable part of Library of Things. We might work up a presentation to the library on invasives.

H. Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC). Rob, Dan G., and Jennifer remotely attended the annual meeting and noted that the successful projects for Tiny Grants seemed to emphasize public engagement and community involvement components. We might design future applications for Hartland to have a primary focus on outreach and education.

I. Grassland Birds—Vermont Audubon does a lot to promote awareness of these species and their needs. We could invite them to speak with us or do a public presentation.

J. 17 Acre Wood accessible trail. Full celebration hasn't happened, as language to update the use agreement with the town still needs to be worked out to define the times public access is permitted, when the school is not using it. Some Selectboard members have visited. There is not yet a permanent structure for the outdoor classroom.

K. Listserve and Facebook posts. Rob's postings based on Doug Tallamy's book have finished, and have been collected in a single document, which is on our web page.

L. Christmas Bird Count—Tina will check with Dean Greenberg, who has worked on this with a group in Woodstock. She'll see how to get Hartland people to participate, whether we can register with Woodstock or start our own group.

M. Host community hikes on public lands—We led Pohl property celebration walks. We may organize a sledding day at Summarsell this winter. This might need some waiver language for safety issues.

N. Public policy —Continuing work on the water withdrawal from Lull's Brook.

O. EAB survey. After discussion of the dubious impact our inventory has had, though the tree removal budget has increased somewhat, we decided that counting along the remaining public rights-of-way was not useful. We have already had one resident injured when a tree fell on a car in Brothers Road, so the public is aware that the risk is real. (That may have been a maple that came down in a storm, but dead ash could create a similar risk.). Vermont League of Cities and Towns suggested that each town should have a policy for identification and removal of high-risk trees. We could see whether that has been drafted for Hartland. We know the budget for the town is tight and faces many demands. We can be vigilant about reporting hazard trees, though

response time varies. We have no direct link to the road crew that may be responsible for tree removal.

P. Vernal Pools—There was a presentation at AVCC meeting today. The Vermont Center for EcoStudies (VCE) is reviving the Vernal Pool Atlas, a map online of known and possible vernal pools. Hartland has about 75, but not all are verified. We would need landowner permission to examine the pool, and spring confirmation that key species breed there. Additional pools aren't on the list. We could encourage folks to report the potential pools on or near their property. Importance is to aim to identify a barrier extending 400 feet from the center of the pool, to keep that land out of development. This would allow the breeding amphibians safer and easy access to and from the pool as they complete their different life stages.

Next steps: Ask Kevin Tolan of VCE to present to the Commission or the Town on vernal pools and associated animals. Identify a Vernal Pool Lead on the Commission, who could coordinate and follow up. If Planning Commission begins to discuss zoning, we would want to include vernal pool buffers to be considered as a component in zoning rules.

Q. Wetlands Inventory. State designation of Eshqua Bog was completed. No clear new target for this item.

R. Conservation Projects. As opportunities arise, we can continue to advocate for conservation easements, and help with initial surveys and connections when people voice an interest in creating easements. We might also publicize opportunities for landowners to adopt conservation practices on their land, with funding support from Natural Resource Conservation Services' programs. Given cutbacks to such funding, we will need to see what will be available in the future.

#### S. Public & Protected Lands

Sumner Falls: The new trails are nearly complete. We still need stakes and rope at cellar holes, and we may need to drop a tree as a barrier to prevent anyone accidentally going over the edge of the washout.

Town Forest: Rob will check with Hannah on when she may do next steps.

Pohl Conservation Area: To assist in long-term planning, we may need to publicize how to contact the land trust to add input during their public comment period.

#### IV. Treasurer's Report

So far, we have spent \$1280 of the \$3,000 for current fiscal year, so \$1720 remains. \$10,455.22 in the trust fund. Expenditure of \$615 went for water testing. In accordance with our advance approval for expenditures over the summer, we were able to allocate all but \$69 from the prior fiscal year by June 30, 2025. The \$69 was rolled into to the Trust Fund. The only pre-approved items that were not purchased before July were the landscape fabric and weed wrench. The wrench is on order but not yet received, so not yet invoiced. Sumner Falls trail work is done and paid.

Our budget benefitted from another donation of \$1,000, which is currently resting in a general fund and will be reallocated to the Commission, so it does not yet appear in the numbers above.

V. Source to Sea Clean-up. Before we found out that the Ledyard Canoe Club had signed up to clean Sumner Falls, it was announced in the Hartland Voice that we would meet at Sumner Falls as part of the Clean-up. To avoid confusion, we will still plan to be there, coordinating with the Canoe Club and focusing on parts that they may not be working on, such as along the new trails. We could also do some invasive plant removal.

VI. Updates—covered in the review of progress on goals above.

VII. Other business.

A. Community Breakfast—The first one is this Saturday, focused on trails. We might consider submitting as a possible topic for 2026, leading or coordinating a talk on vernal pools.

B. The Hartland Voice newsletter is also a source for outreach. Commissioners should feel free to write articles of 150 to 200 words to submit.

C. Budget. Martin asked us to submit budget request for fiscal 2027 by the end of September. Discussion focused on whether we should ask for a budget increase, since we have relied on donations to complete our work these past two years. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that we submit our budget request for \$3500, with the \$500 increase earmarked for improved access to trails, including parking. The Upper Valley Trails Alliance has been very helpful at Sumner Falls, and might have experience with strategies for parking access, since they may run into parking issues at many of their sites.

D. Admin note: During our October meeting, Tina will be away, so we will need another scribe that month.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Tina Barney, Scribe