



Approved Meeting Minutes: February 16, 2023

Held in person at the Niles Room in the Town Offices

Present in person: Ted Cooley (Chair) Harry Pease, John Miller (Vice Chair), Craig Putnam, Alternate: Fran Plaisted (Secretary), Commissioner pending being sworn in: Bob Hedges

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Minutes of the January 19th meeting: Reviewed and discussed several wording changes and corrections. Motion was made and approved to accept the updated minutes.

2. Review of Project Status Report: John Miller had prepared and distributed a detailed project status report of the Orford Conservation Commission's current projects. Projects reviewed and their status were as follows:

- *Foreign invasives (Japanese knotweed):* Work is required and ongoing at Tillotson Falls Road as well as along State Highway 25A. Coordination with the Orford Town Road Foreman Steven Williams was noted as being important. The actual work effort is labor intensive. Volunteers are most definitely needed.
- *Jacobs Brook/NH Route 25A erosion:* Considering potential plantings for erosion control. Coordination is required with NH DOT Engineer: Chris Turgeon. Volunteers are needed to do the work.
- *Orfordville Road Bog Culvert:* Construction delayed due to supply chain issues. Delays reported to the Selectmen. Need to transition project ownership to Foreman Steven Williams. Need to address within timeframe of approved permits. Need to coordinate with the Selectmen.
- *Water Testing:* Harry Pease presented a comprehensive draft water testing program for summer 2023. Discussion focused on the priority sites, the time frame of the testing, the need for help in executing the water tests, and the need for an agreement around the responsibility for communicating and posting the test results. There was agreement to start testing pre-Memorial Day as well as continue the testing to the weekend after Labor Day. There was agreement that local residents would be recruited for the posting. In addition, listserv and the Town website would be used for sharing the results. A motion approved to accept the revised Water Testing plan.
- *Orford's Conserved Properties:* A trail maintenance project is being organized for the Richmond Plot. Volunteers are needed to do the trail maintenance work.

In addition to current projects, John Miller reviewed a set of proposed projects needing support:

- *Homegrown National Park Initiative (Pollinator Landscaping)*: Need to promote community awareness and engagement. Volunteers and “instructors” needed. Promotion campaign is required via website, listserv, and word of mouth.
- *Pollinator Garden “Pilot Plots”*: Need to pursue program of education and promotion. Volunteers needed. Need proactive communication and coordination with road mowing.
- *Update Orford Natural Resources Inventory and develop Conservation Plan*: A significant list of Conservation Commission conserved lands as well as additional Town property to be inventoried was reviewed. A large set of projects could potentially be pursued. Volunteers would be needed to do the projects.

The review of current and potential projects as well as the water testing program underscored the need for a program to recruit more volunteers and increase community engagement.

3. Review of Current Roster of Commissioners: Ted Cooley led a discussion of the current composition of the members of the Orford Conservation Commission. Several commissioner slots are open or prospectively open. The need to recruit additional new commissioners was spotlighted.

4. Upcoming community activity/engagement dates: Two key dates requiring promotion and community awareness were noted:

- May 6th, the first Saturday in May, is Orford Town Clean-up Day
- June 3rd is National Trails Day

5. Need for volunteers recruiting efforts: John Miller’s project status report and Harry Pease’s water testing plan both highlighted the need for project volunteers and a sustained effort at volunteer recruiting. There was a group discussion about the need for a sustained effort at building community awareness and interest in volunteering on Conservation Commission projects.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Harry and John. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Minutes prepared by Bob Hedges