

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)
Meeting Minutes: May 22, 2024
Meeting held in person at the Town Offices

Present: Commission Members: Bob Hedges (Chair), Ted Cooley (Vice Chair), Harry Pease. Alternates: John Miller, Emily Bryant.

The meeting came to order at 6:32 pm. Emily and John were seated as a members.

1. **Minutes:** *Motion (Harry/Ted)* to approve the minutes of April 2024 as written. The motion carried.
2. **Water testing:** Harry collected the first water tests of the season from the 3 beaches (Indian Pond, Upper and Lower Baker Ponds) on 5/20. John reported that the results looked good. The next tests will be taken on June 3 at Dublin Road, Creamery Bridge, and the Heritage Center (along Jacobs Brook), as well as the three beaches. Beaches are to be done every week, and Jacobs Brook sites every month with follow-up the next week if needed. Emily started a historic record of the water tests and should add these to it.
3. **Hike Orford!:** We had a successful hike up Sunday Mountain on May 18, with 17 people participating. Bob has PR contacts lined up now (Upper Valley Trails Alliance, Upper Valley Land Trust, Daybreak, listservs.) Next Hike to be held June 15 (rain date June 16) at Tom Thomson's lupine area above Quinttown. Harry and Bob will be meeting with Tom to finalize the details.
4. **Mowing at the Orford Conservation Land:** Harry mowed the trail that starts on the lower field. We need to get someone to mow the parking area and the path on edge of the upper field. Emily will ask Zach Parker if he would be interested in mowing it for what we have been paying (\$40 per time, done every other week). We will finalize our mowing program at the next Conservation Commission meeting. There was discussion of jumping worms and do they spread on mowing equipment and is there anything to do about it.
5. **Orford Heritage Trail trail work program:** Harry, Bob, and Paul Goundrey recently hiked it from the Grimes Hill Rd end. On the hike, they concluded that there is a lot of trail work to be done. One major challenge is the 20' wide and 15' deep canyon that divides the trail at one point. It might be best to reroute the trail rather than trying to rebuild the canyon. We will have to check with Andy Schwaegler about doing work on the trail. The trail easement with the Town might have to be amended to reroute the trail. Money in the conservation fund might be able to be used for this. A hearing would be required. Bob suggested having a series of workdays on the trail this summer: first do chain saw work (perhaps in June or July), then cleanup, then loppers, etc. Bob will talk with Sean Ogle of Upper Valley Trails Alliance about getting his assessment of the trails and how to get the heavy work done later. We hope to launch this project later this summer.
6. **Japanese knotweed:** An Orford resident, Brynne MacMurtry, was in touch with OCC with concerns about the knotweed on Archertown Road in the construction area. We should be in touch with the Selectboard about these knotweed concerns and perhaps through them with the engineer working with the phase 2 construction. We need to coordinate with Ted Nutter, the new road agent, on knotweed. There was discussion that the problem with knotweed control is the disposal of plants

that have been cut. Suggestion was that cut-and-drop-in-place might be the most practical approach.

7. **OCC Website/social media:** Bob volunteered his willingness to draft items and updates; others will help put them up on the website, Facebook, "X" (aka Twitter). Bob just needs to get to his retirement date in August to free up the time.
8. **Upcoming Rivendell Trails Association meeting:** Meeting to be held on June 2 at 4:00 PM. Bob plans to attend. RTA is contemplating dissolving for lack of participation.
9. **Recruiting:** Several potential new Commissioners were identified. Reach-out calls are to be made by Bob, Ted, and Harry.
10. **Invoices:** There were no invoices to pay this time. We voted previously that the OCC chair (now Bob) has authority to approve invoices in between meetings if they aren't too big.
11. **Other business:**
 - a. John had materials about "Sustainable Lebanon" and suggested we should think about starting a "Sustainable Orford", e.g. have a local location for collecting plastic or Styrofoam to make it easier for people to recycle.
 - b. Ted mentioned that long-time OCC member Tom Bubolz passed away, and suggested that the OCC send a sympathy card. Harry will check for the address.

Motion: (Ted/Harry) to adjourn. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

Minutes taken by Emily Bryant.