

## NORWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING DRAFT MINUTES: 21 JUNE 2022

Members Present: Craig Layne (chair), Lynnwood Andrews, Cheryl Asa, David Hubbard, Suzanne Leiter, Cody Williams

Guests: Bob and Lisa Holley

Meeting convened at 7:13 PM

1. Public Comments. Craig asked for any public comments on topics not on the agenda, but there were none.
2. Dealing with Deer Over-browsing. Bob and Lisa Holley presented concerns about the effects of too many deer on Norwich forests, especially their impact on the understory and on tree re-generation. In the absence of natural predators, hunting is the primary means for controlling deer numbers. However, landowners may not realize that posting their property to prevent hunting can contribute to deer overpopulation. The NCC will consider developing various types of outreach programs and educational materials designed to raise awareness about the problem and to encourage responsible hunting.
3. No Mow May report. Although there was no official count of the number of Norwich residents who participated, NCC members noticed many uncut yards that contained numerous types of wildflowers. Suzanne provided yard signs to anyone who requested them.
4. Forest Field Trip report. 10 people participated in the program led by forester Tii McLane in the Woody Adams Conservation Forest. Suzanne said she received positive feedback from attendees.
5. Trails Committee report. Cody reported that the last Trails Committee meeting focused primarily on discussions about projects to tackle and on setting trail work days. On Father's Day, volunteers rebuilt the last of the Ballard Trail bridges that needed repair. The Upper Loveland Trail was recently damaged by the contractor laying fiberoptic cable, so the trail drainage work completed last year will have to be re-done. Improvements are planned for the Gile Mountain treadway and the Tucker Trail quagmire. Craig described some work that has been completed and more that is planned for the Woody Adams Conservation Area.
6. Milt Frye Nature Area update: Lynnwood reported that the kestrel box is still empty, probably because it was installed too late in the breeding season. She continues with removal of invasives, focusing near the stream. Brie said her campers should have time to help pull invasives. The trees and plants that went in around the vernal pool are doing well except the sugar maple. The water level is down in the vernal pool, but frogs are still present. Brie reported on plans for the school's outdoor classrooms in the Nature Area. An ADA compliant trail will be built in the forest, but it's not yet designed. There was discussion about proposing a limited number of outdoor classrooms so less forest would be disturbed,
7. Community Outreach. Cheryl suggested posting relevant information and announcements on the Norwich listserv with links to the NCC website. For example, our information on living safely with black bears would have been useful recently after residents posted sightings of bears in and around town. She will work with Cody to provide material for the website.

Lynnwood moved to approve the May 2022 minutes, Cheryl seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM

Minutes compiled by Cheryl Asa