

NORWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING DRAFT MINUTES: 19 JULY 2022

Members Present: Lynnwood Andrew (Vice Chair), Cheryl Asa, Alex Gottlieb, David Hubbard, Suzanne Leiter, Andy Torkelson, Cody Williams

Guests: Bob and Lisa Holley

Meeting convened at 7: 08 PM

1. Public Comments. Lynnwood asked for any public comments on topics not on the agenda, but there were none.
2. Dealing with Deer Over-browsing: Bob Holley reported on his discussions with VT Fish & Wildlife Dept. about deer management. They track population numbers by wildlife management units, not by town. Although the management unit that includes Norwich has the 3rd most licenses for antlerless deer (does and young bucks) issued in the state, the deer population here is still considered high. The Dept would like to encourage more hunting to help control deer numbers. There is a lot of information on their website, including an option for landowners to link with specific hunters, to address landowner concern about strangers hunting on their land. NCC members agreed to begin educational outreach about the damage deer do to forest understory and regeneration and how hunting can help control deer numbers. Suggestions for educational programs included a presentation by a deer biologist from VT Fish & Wildlife, an article in the Norwich Times, creation of a fact sheet that could be displayed in the P.O. and distributed at events, a fund-raiser to cover costs of butchering so deer meat can be donated to Willing Hands, and a wild game night at area restaurants. There was discussion about identifying a site for a deer exclusion plot that would demonstrate the effect deer have on vegetation. Cody will post relevant links and materials on the NCC webpages.
3. Norwich Times Article: The next article, on deer over-browsing, will be published in October.
4. Nature Area Updates: The new vernal pool in the Milt Frye Nature Area has dried up, which often happens in vernal pools in late summer. There was no removal of invasive plants during the past month, but it will resume soon. Brush has been cleared from a new trail in the Woody Adams Conservation Forest by volunteers from the NCC and the Trails Committee.
5. Other Commission, Committee, Board, and Department Happenings: It was announced during the Selectboard meeting that the Town has had to withdraw the Woody Adams Conservation Forest from Current Use, because public lands don't qualify for the program.
6. David moved to approve the June 2022 minutes, Suzanne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Minutes compiled by Cheryl Asa