

Draft Minutes

Norwich Conservation Commission

7 pm, August 19, 2025

Norwich Historical Society

Members Present

Craig Layne (chair), Alex Gottlieb, Lindsay Putnam, Chris Rimmer, Cody Williams

Guests

Bob Fisken

The meeting began shortly after 7:00p.

Trails Subcommittee Report

Discussion of the trails subcommittee was moved up in the meeting agenda. Bob Fisken from the Trails Committee presented a memo and budget (attached) outlining the need to add a bridge to span a section of the Upper Ballard trail which washed out after severe flooding events earlier in the summer. There was some discussion of the proposed bridge and a possible anonymous donation (pending approval from the Selectboard per their recently passed Gift Policy).

Craig made a motion to allocate up to \$800 to fund the materials for the bridge, Cody seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Cody reported on the growth of invasive buckthorn and nightshade along the Schmidt Bog bog bridges while he was there clearing a downed tree. Volunteers made significant progress in clearing invasives a couple of years ago but without recurring maintenance, will likely continue to proliferate. Another work day to remove invasives could be a possible fall project.

Outreach

Walktober

Sarah Rooker of the Norwich Historical Society is organizing a series of walks as part of a Walktober event. The committee brainstormed some possible hikes members of the committee could lead. Schmidt Bog, Warner Meadow, Vernal Pools on Parcel 5, woods cemeteries, and a kid friendly hike in Milt Frye Nature Area were possible suggestions.

Warner Meadow

Chris discussed the upcoming field workshop on managing invasive plants being put on by the Warner Meadows Association, the White River NRCD, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, and the Norwich Conservation Commission on August 26 from 9a–noon. Will be hosted by Mike Bald and focused on non-chemical management of invasive plants. Attendees are encouraged to register with the NRCD here: <https://www.whiterivernrcd.org/2025-08-26-manual-mechanical-management-strategies-for-common-invasive-plants-in-our-local-watersheds>

Emerald Ash Borer Subcommittee Report

Peter Butler completed a series of 16 inoculations about 3 weeks ago on various town properties: Foley Park, Huntley Meadow, Barrett Meadow, and the transfer station. Have spent about half of the amount available for inoculations, still about \$500 short from the matching grant, will be seeking targeted asks for donations. The funds will be especially useful for subsequent biannual inoculations.

Are in the process of completing inventory using a new, simpler, ANR Rural Roadside Ash Inventory tool. The subcommittee is focused on prioritizing trees with the greatest risk to public safety along the major roads and public spaces in town. Hoping to complete the inventory by the end of the month and start drafting a removal plan and begin cutting the highest risk trees in late fall or early winter.

Milt Frye Nature Area Subcommittee Report

No updates. The committee discussed a recent article about a pollinator garden in Thetford.

Melendy Parcel Updates

Boy Scouts are applying finishing touches on the newly installed kiosk.

Lindsay has been in contact with John Moody about wording for the newly installed kiosk. Craig will follow up about the addition of some wording from the land trust and offered to laminate the material once wording and design has been finalized.

Deer Exclusion Plots

Alex and Craig completed an inventory but have not yet compiled the data.

Approval of June Minutes

It was decided to hold off approval of minutes until next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22p.

8/19/25

To: the Conservation Commission

From: the Trails Subcommittee

Re: Ballard Bridge Proposal

At its Aug. 6, 2025 meeting the Trails group discussed the need for a new bridge over a washed out section on the upper end of Ballard Trail, approximately .4 mi. from the Tucker Hill Rd. trailhead. Minutes from that meeting reflect approval for the project with the cost estimate supplied.

A specific materials list and cost is included here.

With the passage of a Select Board Handbook 8/13/25, the Trails Subcommittee makes note of the following **charge** which describes our activities:

“Under the umbrella of the Conservation Commission statutory duties, and in conjunction with Town Manager approval as necessary, it is the charge of the Trails Subcommittee to maintain and repair town trails and public-access trails on private land, with landowner permission recorded to the satisfaction of the Town Manager. To that end, the Trails Subcommittee will clear existing trails of fallen trees and other natural obstructions, using the Town’s Financial Policies to request any necessary funds. With Conservation Commission funds, the Trails Subcommittee will update and publish trail maps and signage, to be posted as allowed by law or recorded landowner agreement. As needed, the Trails Subcommittee will advise the Conservation Commission of the need to consider and implement beneficial trail reroutes as needed, and will coordinate and oversee work of trail volunteers for approved trail work. “

With approvals from the Conservation Commission, the Land Management Council, which has a controlling interest in the parcel involved, and the Town Manager, the subcommittee will conduct a workday 9/23/25 to construct the bridge.

Some questions remain about the source for funds. This commission can designate expenses from their account line 01-5-650630 (currently at \$1800) for trail upkeep. An anonymous donor has offered to give \$600 for this project. To apply this to the bridge expense, members of the subcommittee have initiated the procedure for town acceptance of this donation under a newly passed Gift Policy (May 2025), by meeting with the Town Manager. We will also make arrangements with the town Finance Director for involvement in procuring materials from two local lumber yards and one online supplier of stainless steel hardware. The Director said reimbursement forms should be filled out and signed by the Conservation Commission Treasurer.

Material List: N. Ballard New Bridge

Bridge structure

5 stringers	PT 2x12x20	5	\$68.13	\$340.65
And 5 of 8 13" blocks				
2 3' end plates & 3 blocks	PT 2x12x10	1	\$25.00	\$25.00
deck boards	PT 2x6x40"	40	\$0.00	\$0.00
	in stock, on hand			
deck screws	#10x3" box/400	1	\$40.97	\$40.97
structural screws for dbl string	1/4"x3 1/8" box 50	1	\$23.44	\$23.44
Head LOK screws	4 1/2"	1		
for blocking and plate	box 50		\$46.00	\$46.00
end support timbers 48"		1		
	PT 6x6x8		\$36.28	\$36.28

Railing structure

per side				
4 Posts @ 4x4x52"		1		
and 4 12" blocks	PT 4x4x10'	1	\$18.42	\$18.42
	PT 4x4x12		\$23.00	\$23.00
16' railing:		1		
2x6 top	PT 2x6x16	1	\$17.26	\$17.26
2x4 under top	PT 2x4x16	1	\$13.36	\$13.36
2x4x16 mid rail	PT 2x4x16	1	\$13.36	\$13.36
16' curbing	PT 2x4x16		\$13.36	\$13.36
		4		
3/8x10" through bolts (12)	3x8" SS threaded rod 3'		\$13.75	\$55.00
3/post, 4 posts 4 3' rods				
SS nuts, reg & fend washers	24 sets w/shipping			\$36.09
		Stainless	subtotal:	\$91.09
	1 rail and curb		sub total:	\$189.85
	(with one railing)		Total:	\$702.19