

Meeting Minutes of Norwich Conservation Commission

Tuesday, 19 May 2026, 7 pm

Norwich Historical Society (277 Main St)

Members in attendance: Lynnwood Andrews, Craig Layne, Andrew Torkleson, Alex Gottlieb, Peg Merrens (Zoom), Chris Rimmer (Zoom), Cody Williams (Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 7:08PM.

1. Additional Agenda Items

Lynnwood mentioned a request from ANR about mapping conserved lands in Vermont and soliciting a 9th member of the Commission. Both items were added to the end of the agenda.

2. Public Comments

No members of the public were present.

3. Outreach

Lindsay has put up a “No Mow May” post office display.

Lynnwood suggested making a Norwich Conservation Commission-specific email list to reach people not on the Norwich listserv. Alex suggested adding a sign to the NCC post office display encouraging people to reach out to be added to the list. Craig is going to create a Google Form to collect e-mails and put a QR code on public postings to link to the form. Lynnwood is going to ask Brie Swenson about including information about the NCC email list in one of her Recreation Department emails.

4. Blood Brook Riparian Project update

Riparian planting project was approved by the condo board. Lynnwood volunteered extra tree tubes and driveway markers for the project. Zoom call to discuss project and site visit from NRCD to come.

5. Projects

Lynnwood solicited ideas for new projects.

Craig mentioned the Blood Brook Riparian Project, which will be coming up later this year.

Chris and Peg shared that EAB subcommittee members would be quite busy with ongoing removal and further inventorying.

Lynnwood suggested creating demonstration plots of native plantings for landowners considering converting their lawns, as well as a demonstration of Japanese knotweed management.

Alex mentioned ongoing monitoring of the deer enclosure plots. Craig suggested adding a spring survey.

6. Milt Frye Nature Area Subcommittee Report

Members of the public had reported potential blue cohosh in the deer enclosure plot. NCC members will keep an eye on it through the growing season.

Lynnwood reported that the chervil seems to be under control on either side of the streambed but remains a problem in the streambed itself. Craig said that the site is due for a follow-up visit from Redstart.

Lynnwood gauged interest in ordering leatherwood plants for establishing a shrub layer in Milt Frye and potentially other town properties. Lynnwood is going to reach out to a wholesale nursery that supplies them.

7. Trails Subcommittee Report

Cody reported a work day on the Ballard Trail 3 weeks ago to reset stone stream crossings. Another work day is planned for 31 May.

Another protective coating for the Gile Mountain fire tower treads is planned for the summer (date TBD), which will make the tower unavailable for a few days.

The big stone staircase on the Ballard Trail needs repair. The Trails Committee received a grant from the Norwich Women's Club to hire a contractor to reset the stones over the summer.

The wooden bridge between St. Barnabas and Milt Frye is also due for replacement. Upper Valley Trails Alliance has volunteered labor, funding for materials is still not secured.

Andy mentioned another staircase on Ballard in poor shape. Cody will investigate before next meeting.

8. Emerald Ash Borer Subcommittee Report

Chris reported that the town has selected a contractor (Wilcox Tree Service) for ash tree removal. More inventorying to prioritize future removals is planned for the summer.

9. Agency of Natural Resources Mapping

ANR is seeking information from local conservation commissions to fill in gaps in their Protected Lands Database. Peg shared that UVLT and other conservation organizations regularly provide updates to the database, so the request likely pertains to town-owned lands. Clarification will be sought.

10. Finding a 9th Member for the Commission

Members will brainstorm people who might be interested and reach out.

Lynnwood also mentioned that she would be resigning from the CT River Joint Commission in July, so a Norwich representative position will be opening up.

11. Approval of April Minutes

Andy moved to approve April minutes. Lynnwood seconded. Unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12PM.