

Meeting Agenda of Norwich Conservation Commission
Tuesday, 16 June 2026, 7 pm
Norwich Historical Society (277 Main St)

1. Additional Agenda Items
2. Public Comments
3. Outreach
4. Blood Brook Riparian Project update
5. Milt Frye Nature Area Subcommittee Report
6. Bat houses/Blueberry patch at Huntley
7. Bear hunting comment
8. Trails Subcommittee Report
9. Emerald Ash Borer Subcommittee Report
10. Recruitment of new member
11. Approval of May Minutes

Join Meeting by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88177465553?pwd=kp8WNbSnAsaD0kEC8vshD6Cx20cxeE.1>

Meeting ID: 881 7746 5553

Passcode: 288671

Agendas, Minutes, Links, and More:

<https://norwichconservation.org/meetings>

Notice of upcoming bear hunting regulation discussion by F&W Board and example response by Greensboro Conservation Commission.

Hello Conservation Commissions

Your help is needed to secure a prohibition against the killing of mother bears with cubs during bear hunting season. 80% of other states that hunt bear have this prohibition on the books.

CURRENT LAW

Deliberately shooting mother bears with cubs is currently legal in Vermont. Cubs are orphaned and either starve to death or, if found, are brought to the beleaguered Killham Bear Center in NH.

EGREGIOUS EXAMPLES OF NOT HAVING A LAW

2 (of several) egregious examples of the deliberate killing of sows with cubs

- Hunter in Stowe last October who worked in a condo development where everyone saw a mother with multiple cubs (as many as 3) all summer, then about the first week of hunting season, he brought his rifle to work and shot her, posting the kill a short time later on social media.
- hunter in the Mad River Valley was unwittingly captured on a security camera shooting a mother bear near a house in the presence of her cubs, one of which was found dead from exposure and starvation just weeks later.

These hunters received no penalty.

FWD DEPARTMENT DOES NOT SUPPORT SUCH KILLS

The Department has publicly stated that it does NOT SUPPORT killing mothers with cubs.....not as a legitimate hunting method and not as a method of population control.

Here are some statements by the Commissioner

- The intentional harvest of sows with cubs is “unconscionable.”
- The Department feels pressures “from the legislature ... the hunters, the non-hunters, the advocates, the wildlife lovers, that is Vermonters in general. That is probably most important.”
- “I know that the Department could likely manage it (a prohibition).”
- “I know that there is a significant portion of society that would love to see this. I feel like we could manage it”

HOW ACHIEVE A PROHIBITION

At first, the Department adopted the posture that education alone could engineer a prohibition. Later, they changed their mind: in [February 2026](#), FWD recommended a prohibition to the Board: “*our intention is to create a regulation that only applies to situations where a hunter knowingly harvests a sow with cubs present*”

The Department had moved beyond an “education-only” posture and now wanted a regulation.

THE SURPRISE [MAY 20](#) BOARD MEETING

But, by the [May 20](#) Board meeting, the prohibition had mysteriously disappeared from the list of bear rule change recommendations that FWD submitted to the Board. FWD gave no explanation for this omission.

In the days before the [May 20](#) Board meeting, Board members received 100+ public comments opposing the killing of mothers-with-cubs. And at the meeting itself, every single 2-minute comment made by the considerable number of in-person and virtual attendees, supported the prohibition.

At the meeting, the Department failed to raise the issue. However, several Board members, savvy to the existence of, and support for, the policy recommendation, raised it themselves and forced a vote to keep the mothers/cubs rule change alive for discussion at the [June 17](#) Board meeting.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

At the [May 20](#) meeting, with your help, we were successful in getting hunting-bear-over-bait-piles removed from the recommended rules changes. We need your help again to oppose the killing of mothers-with-cubs.

Several board members commented favorably on hearing from Conservation Commissions. They recognize your impact.

Please attend the [June 17](#) meeting in person or virtually (see link below) and briefly state your reason for opposing the killing of mother-with-cubs.

Or send a short email to your FWD board member (see below)...just a couple of sentences would suffice.

Many thanks.....

FWD link:

<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/about-us/fish-and-wildlife-board>

FWD Board members:

(NOTE: if **vacant**, pls send to chair Paul Noel)

Vacant-Caledonia County (Hardwick, VT)

Richard Craig-Lamoille County (Morrisville, VT)ANR.FWBoardLamoille@vermont.gov

Robert Patterson-Addison County (Lincoln, VT)ANR.FWBoardAddison@vermont.gov

Ryan Kilborn-Orange County (East Orange, VT)ANR.FWBoardOrange@vermont.gov

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Paul Noel-Orleans County (Irasburg, VT)ANR.FWBoardOrleans@vermont.gov

Heather Furman-Chittenden County (Jericho, VT) ANR.FWBoardChittenden@vermont.gov

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Jon Valsangiacomo-Washington County (Barre, VT) ANR.FWBoardWashington@vermont.gov

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Beth Deimling-Grand Isle County (Grand Isle, VT)ANR.FWBoardGrandIsle@vermont.gov

Nicholas Burnham-Windsor County (Hartland, VT)ANR.FWBoardWindsor@vermont.gov

From: Greensboro Conservation Commission

To: The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and Members of the Fish & Wildlife Board

Re: Intentional Killing of Sows with Cubs

**Please vote to prohibit the intentional
killing of a sow with cubs**

The majority of states with bear hunting prohibit killing mothers with cubs. Notable exceptions are New Hampshire, Alaska, Maine, and Vermont.

Bear cubs are completely dependent for two summers and many mother bears keep their cubs in a safe place, like up a tree, while they go off and forage. Therefore, her cubs are not always present.

Consequently, it follows that hunters should not shoot a bear without knowing what its gender is and checking the area for cubs. Hunters should be able to discern the gender of a bear based on educational materials provided by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife:

<https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/black-bear>

In addition, there are also numerous videos online with expert instruction on how to tell a black bear sow from a boar.

Vermont has no bear rehabber so any orphaned cubs lucky enough to be found to must be sent to The Kilham Bear Center in NH. <https://kilhambearcenter.org/>

Those cubs not found inevitably die from predation, exposure or starvation which is why Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department biologists discourage the killing a sow with cubs.

Allowing the killing of sows with cubs who will not survive without their mother would seem to be counter to the ethical treatment of wildlife and counter to best practices of forest ecology / biodiversity.

Thank you.

Chris Steel, Chair
Emma Palumbo, Clerk
Jane Hoffman, Treasurer
Joann Hanowski
Erika Karp
Liza Kiesler
Will Marlier
Peter Watkinson
Betsy Youngman