



Minutes

Conservation Commission Meeting
10:15 a.m. Saturday, January 10th, 2025

Present

Chris Steel, Chair
Jane Hoffman (Remote), Treasurer
Emma Palumbo, Clerk
Peter Watkinson, Member
Will Marlier, Member
JoAnn Hanowski, Member
Erika Karp, Member
Betsy Youngman, Member
Emily Cayer, Advisor

Absent

Liza Kiesler, Member

Members of the Public

Saul Costa
Colin Netzley
Lily Dunbar

1.) 10:15 am - Meeting Commences

Chris Steel called the meeting to order and formally welcomed Betsy Youngman to the Conservation Commission. Emma reviewed the meeting agenda and Will recommended moving Saul's item earlier in the agenda. Chris agreed and suggested exchanging Saul's time slot with the agenda item titled *Process for Out-of-Meeting Correspondence*.

2.) Chris Steel: Review & Approve Minutes of the Meeting on November 8th, 2025

a.) Progress on Actions

Peter reported that he has not yet been in contact with the owners of the knotweed site on North Shore and recommended removing this item from future agendas; Chris agreed. Chris also noted that he emailed MacNeil to express support for The Nature Conservancy's acquisition of the Miller Property, which had been discussed at the previous meeting. Jane reported that she has updated the members' contact list with accurate addresses. Chris stated that Liza plans to use pollinator plugs from her own garden for the pollinator bed due to difficulty finding available stock. Emily reported that she removed identifying information from the wildlife camera video and that it has been uploaded online. Liza has not yet posted to Front Porch Forum regarding the Natural Resources Inventory, and this item will be carried over to the next meeting. Emma reported that all meetings for 2026 have been scheduled.

3.) Jane Hoffman: Treasurer's Report

Jane reported that there have been no significant changes since the last meeting, as there has been no new income or expenditures.

4.) JoAnn Hanowski: Town Plan- GCC Contribution

JoAnn provided an update on her work on the Town Plan and presented four proposed SMART goals, beginning with a goal focused on water quality. She identified potential partner organizations for lake and water quality efforts including the Land Trust, the Dam Task Force, and the Watershed Stewards(Greensboro Association). Will suggested also including the Eligo Lake Association, as it falls within Greensboro. Members discussed limitations to water quality monitoring, with JoAnn noting that DEC cutbacks have reduced the frequency and volume of sampling. Betsy recommended creating a chart identifying partner organizations and their roles for inclusion in the Town Plan.

JoAnn introduced the next goal: “*Identify, protect, and steward locally and regionally important natural resources*”. Erika expressed concern about the lack of specificity in the goal, noting in particular the need to define invasive species. Will provided a definition of invasive species and suggested incorporating this definition into the goal. JoAnn proposed identifying two initial priority invasive species to clearly communicate focus to residents without overwhelming them with an extensive list.

The Commission discussed concerns regarding milfoil in Eligo Lake and affirmed a commitment to preventing its spread to Caspian Lake. The discussion then shifted to strategies for developing a comprehensive inventory of invasive species. Will encouraged use of the iNaturalist app to document and report invasive species locations. Chris noted that Elinor Osburne of Craftsbury has launched an iNaturalist project and stated he would follow up with her to learn more about its progress.

Chris further suggested coordinating with the Greensboro Land Trust and utilizing the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI), supplemented by field-based research conducted by Jesse Mohr, to establish a more complete inventory.

Will proposed a potential invasive species bioblitz as both an educational event and a means to encourage public participation in reporting species. There was also discussion of potential future investment in creating a visually engaging map once sufficient data layers are established. The Commission agreed to remove the action item related to producing flood mapping, as this work is largely completed by the state and falls outside the primary responsibility of the town.

JoAnn introduced the next goal: “*Promote sustainable resource management*”. Members expressed concern regarding what specific actions fall within the Commission’s capacity to advance this goal. JoAnn stated she would reach out to Jared Nunery, Orleans Country Forester, to seek any guidance he can provide.

JoAnn introduced the final goal: “*Greensboro citizens will be informed and engaged in protecting their natural resources*.” Members agreed this goal is important for increasing public engagement in the conservation of our town and supporting the GCC in our work.

Betsy suggested sharing updates through local media outlets like the Hardwick Gazette. Will noted that wildlife is considered a charismatic resource for many residents and could serve as an effective means of engaging the public in the Conservation Commission's work.

The Commission discussed challenges in estimating costs, noting variance due to reliance on partner organizations and the difference between volunteer and contracted work. Chris asked whether soliciting private donations should be included as a formal strategy in the Town Plan. Will supported this approach and noted additional grant opportunities, including Vermont Fish and Wildlife. Peter emphasized the need to clearly define how donations would be used to build donor confidence.

JoAnn will incorporate the feedback and convene a meeting with 3 GCC members to revise the goals.

5.) Jane Hoffman: **Anti- Coagulant Rodenticide Resolution**

Jane will ensure the flyer is posted in all usual places around town. Jane will forward the flyer to Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, President of the Greensboro Association (GA) who had volunteered at the last meeting to promote the resolution through all GA channel. Jane asked members to print and distribute copies to friends and family. Jane also shared that the Hardwick Gazette published her letter describing work on the pollinator and anticoagulant rodenticide resolutions. Betsy offered to post the flyer to Front Porch Forum in advance of town meeting.

6.) Saul Costa: **Bee App**

Saul introduced himself as the founder of Shock, an organization that builds technology to encourage real-world engagement. He described Shock's app, *Bee*, a place-based platform that allows users to discover and participate in local initiatives such as volunteer opportunities and community events through a map-based interface. Saul noted that the

app is relatively new and that adoption and user networks are still in the early stages of development.

Saul explained that Shock primarily collaborates with conservation organizations, such as Mad River Valley, and has also engaged in the food security sector. He expressed enthusiasm for engaging with schools and providing opportunities for young people.

Saul outlined ways the GCC could integrate the *Bee* app into the Commission's work, suggesting it would be useful to highlight areas where *Bee* aligns with the town plan goals. Saul requested a copy of the finalized GCC goals for inclusion in the Town Plan to better identify opportunities for the app. He also described how Shock has built brand recognition in local communities, with growth and marketing teams supporting participating organizations by providing resources and promotional materials, including merchandise related to topics like invasive species and trails.

Will recommended the *Bee* app for GCC adoption, noting its simplicity, intuitiveness, and potential for supporting volunteer management and events. Members discussed piloting the app within the town, with the possibility of other committees adopting if successful. Chris asked for a point person to coordinate with Saul, and Will volunteered. Saul concluded by sharing future plans, including a desktop version of the app, the origin of the app's name, and funding opportunities like the Vermont Bee Fund.

7.) Will Marlier: **Invasives Program**

Will provided an update on his actions from last meeting. He is awaiting responses from the Smiths' owner regarding direct payment and from Jef Feffer on his volunteer list. A written proposal has been requested from Abraham Ames; costs will vary based on product type and permitting.

Will updated the Commission on public correspondence regarding the pilot project. He responded to concerns from Zoryan Ivakhiv-Gray (Pollinator Free Greensboro), clarified the Commission's position, and invited correspondents to public meetings. Following the

publication of an article on Invasive Plant Management referencing the GCC in the Hardwick Gazette, Chris wrote a letter to the Editor correcting some inaccuracies in that article.

Will reported that a 2000 Glyphosate study published by Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology had been withdrawn. The GCC agreed to monitor any change of guidance concerning glyphosate and invasive plant management that may be issued by the EPA and / or the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation as a result. Chris clarified that the Commission does not support widespread glyphosate use or residential Roundup sales; its focus remains on professional stem-injection treatment of invasives, as recommended for knotweed management. Will highlighted that the increased attention on the GCC could bring additional opportunities and resources.

Chris stated that he had been asked by Paul Fixx, Editor of the Hardwick Gazette, to provide a GCC comment on a knotweed management article by Elinor Osborn of Craftsbury Conservation Commission that was posted on Facebook in December and that he plans to publish in the Hardwick Gazette. Chris also noted that he had discussed knotweed management with Elinor previously and they had both participated in a knotweed management workshop with the Mad River team last Summer who, despite showing good progress by manual means after a number of years, stated that they saw herbicide as an important part of the long-term solution to the environmental challenge presented by knotweed.

Erika stated her concern that the pilot projects were a waste of time as we all knew glyphosate would work and, given public concern, she recommended that the GCC should cancel the projects. Will responded by highlighting the rigorous research and expert consultation involved, and outlined the project's benefits, including demonstrating native species recovery, cost-effectiveness, and volunteer effort required. Other members agreed, noting that delaying or avoiding the project would neglect the GCC's responsibility to steward natural resources. Chris added that the GCC will continue to stay informed and follow guidance from scientific authorities. Chris also stated that he recognized that there were people in our community that were concerned about the

course of action that the GCC had voted to take but at the same time other members of the public had communicated their support.

The discussion then moved to public comment, where Saul asked about volunteer effort for mechanical removal. Members explained that past mechanical removal efforts have been time-intensive and volunteers have been hard to find. Colin Netzley spoke to concern over how glyphosate breaks down but stated he recognized the utility of this one use case. Will shared a list of potential educational speakers on the issue and will circulate a Google form to gather GCC members' preferences.

8.) Emily Cayer: **NeighborWood Watch Program**

Emily provided an update on the NeighborWood Watch Program, noting 15 cameras are currently operating across 10 participants, with two new participants from the Moose Program. She reported that actual project costs were \$1,000, exceeding the initial \$700 projection. Chris proposed a resolution as follows: assuming the GCC gets the tiny grant, we spend an additional \$300 on cameras for the wildlife camera program. Will second, all members present approved. Emily also shared information about a three-minute video she created for GCC members and outlined her future vision for the program, which will be sent to JoAnn for inclusion in the town plan. During public comment, Colin Netzley shared information on new University of Minnesota research on potential solutions for the Emerald Ash Borer.

9.) Chris Steel: **Process for out-of-meeting GCC Correspondence**

Chris thanked Will for drafting the GCC communication policy, noting that it had been reviewed by David Kelly for legal and conservation considerations. Chris addressed questions regarding the policy and then moved the following resolution: *The GCC approves the drafted communication plan.* Will seconded the motion. The resolution was approved with seven in favor and one abstention (Erika). Erika stated that while she did not disagree with the policy she still did not see why we needed it after the discussion.

10.) Liza Kiesler: **Pollinator Pathway Report**

This item will be carried over to next meeting.

11.) Emily Cayer, Jane Hoffman & Liza Keisler: **Summer Speaker Program**

Jane suggested postponing this discussion since Emily and Liza are both absent and they are still nailing down wildlife options. Chris shared on behalf of Liza that they have not yet had successful contact with Charlie Reinertson.

12.) **Schedule Next Meeting & Other Business**

Chris introduced a plan to hold a conservation leaders' summit in Greensboro this summer, including participants from the Greensboro Land Trust, Greensboro Conservation Commission, Watershed Stewards, Vermont Land Trust, and The Nature Conservancy.

The next meeting is **March 14th, 2026 at 10:15 am** at the Greensboro Free Library.

13.) 12:57 pm - **Adjourn**