



Minutes

Conservation Commission Meeting
10:15 a.m. Saturday, May 16th, 2026

Present

Chris Steel, Chair
Emma Palumbo, Clerk
Jane Hoffman, Treasurer
Will Marlier, Member
Betsy Young, Member
JoAnn Hanowski, Member
Peter Watkinson, Member
Erika Karp, Member

Absent

Emily Cayer, Advisor
Liza Kiesler, Member

Members of the Public

Rick Ely
Anne Stevens
Nicole Mann
Nancy Hill, Remote
Janet Long, Remote
Jane Metcalf, Remote

- 1.) 10:17 am - **Meeting Commences**
- 2.) The commission held a minute of silence to remember Clive Gray and his contributions to service and leadership in Greensboro and especially the Conservation Commission.
- 3.) Emma Palumbo: **Review & Approve Minutes** of the Meeting on March 14th, 2026

a.) Progress on Actions

Will introduced a motion to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2026 meeting. The motion was seconded by Jane. All members present voted in favor, with the exception of Erika Karp, who abstained.

Chris announced he is leading a bird walk tomorrow morning at the Highland Lodge. JoAnn will host a bird walk at her Bear Glen Trails property next weekend at 7:00 AM. Chris also shared that he had been invited back to the 4Cs(Craftsbury Community Care Center) to deliver a talk on Conservation in the Northeast on June 5th.

4.) Jane Hoffman: **Treasurer's Report**

Jane highlighted an upcoming webinar on May 20th regarding the use of Front Porch Forum to publicize community events and encouraged all members to attend. She then presented the treasurer's report which indicated net balances of \$2784.45 as of May 2026.

5.) Chris Steel: **Open Meeting Law Training Feedback**

Chris shared that he felt there were a couple of areas where we needed to tighten up our process following the Open Meeting Law Training:

The Commission must always conduct a formal vote to approve minutes from previous meetings. Items requiring a vote may be discussed in an executive session, but the final vote must be cast in a public session. Formal motions are required both to enter and to exit an executive session.

JoAnn requested clarification on sub-quorum rules. Chris stated that as long as our Communications Policy on the website was complied with a sub-quorum of GCC members could meet to discuss GCC business.

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

Will provided a summary of the work the GCC has done with invasive management up to this point. He first started this project in 2022 and since then has worked to provide educational public outreach materials on invasive species, including working with VRNC to identify species and educate landowners. Past educational presentations were held in Fall 2023 and Fall 2024 (featuring Mike Bald). Will and Mike Bald previously conducted site visits at the Highland Lodge and a private property in Greensboro Bend. Over the past 3–4 years, GCC volunteers (specifically Chris and Will) have managed these sites mechanically via hand-pulling and tarping. Chris and Will have met with various professionals to identify best management methods. Following consultations with professionals, stem injection of herbicide was identified as an effective method for controlling heavily infested sites. Will explained that unlike spraying, stem injection offers precise control over glyphosate application and ensures pollinators do not come into contact with treated plants.

Will has organized an educational panel on invasive species scheduled for Wednesday, July 8th, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM at the GUCC Fellowship Hall. Speakers will include Stephanie Smith (Deputy Director, VT Dept. of Agriculture), Noah Hoffman (Invasive Species Coordinator, VT Dept. of Forests and Parks), and Jared Nunnery (Orleans County Forester).

Will shared that he received a \$1,000 quote from Northwoods Stewardship Center on behalf of the Highland Lodge for stem injection at the Highland Lodge site. This aligns with a previous quote from Abraham Ames. The GCC has offered to contribute half of that cost.

Chris has spoken with Highland Lodge management to ensure the knotweed patch sits entirely on their property and is currently awaiting final boundary verification at the suggestion of Erika. Chris will update at the next meeting.

JoAnn emphasized that the project's core objective is to preserve local biodiversity against aggressive invasive plants. Erika voiced concerns regarding the site's location and proximity to a stream. Chris clarified that the selected product, Aquamaster, is specifically formulated and recommended for ecologically sensitive areas near water. Will offered to generate a map for Erika to clarify the exact treatment locations.

The discussion moved to public comment.

Nicole Mann inquired if the Commission had considered other methods such as mechanical mowing. Will and JoAnn clarified that while mowing has limited utility, it fails to eradicate knotweed because it does not destroy the root structure. Furthermore, mowing frequently exacerbates the infestation by spreading fragments and rhizomes via the equipment.

Rick Ely shared his 12-year experience managing knotweed on his property in New Hampshire. Rick stated that in his experience while mechanical pulling could help reduce the infestation, the judicious, targeted use of herbicide in conjunction was the best way to fully address the problem. He expressed support for the Commission's judicious, targeted use of herbicide as they see fit.

Addressing subsequent concerns regarding chemical use raised by Janet Long and Anne Stevens, Chris clarified that the GCC does not advocate for large-scale or widespread glyphosate use. Will noted that targeted glyphosate use is a standard best practice utilized

by major conservation groups, including the Vermont Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy to deal with invasives.

7.) Erika Karp: **Jumping Worms Discussion**

Erika distributed copies of an educational infographic on jumping worms and expressed concern over the threat they pose. The Commission agreed that public education is the most effective tool for now. Chris noted that the infographic is available on the GCC website and should be distributed town-wide to help landowners better understand what they can do. Betsy volunteered to post the information to Front Porch Forum.

8.) Will Marlier: **Bee App**

Will reported no new updates on the Bee App. He anticipates future usage of the app once the event calendar begins. Will will provide an update at the next meeting.

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

Chris offered a brief summary in Emily's absence. Earlier this year, Emily applied for a tiny grant from the AVCC to expand the program's camera library. The GCC was awarded \$600 (rather than the requested \$800). Chris moved to accept the \$600 grant from the AVCC in lieu of the original \$800 request. JoAnn seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, with the exception of Erika, who abstained. Jane volunteered to notify the town of the incoming grant funds. Chris to formally accept the Grant offer from AVCC on behalf of the GCC.

10.) JoAnn Hanowski: **Adopt-a-Culvert Program**

JoAnn shared that she was invited to a presentation by the AVCC to speak on the Adopt-A-Culvert program. She requested assistance from the Commission to help manage the program and boost community engagement, noting that volunteer recruitment has been challenging in certain areas of town. Interested members should contact JoAnn directly.

11.) Liza Kiesler: **Greensboro Bend Pollinator Bed Plans and Budget**

In Liza's absence (as she was actively preparing the bed for planting), JoAnn provided a progress report on the Pollinator Bed.

Betsy offered a brief review of the operation at [Van Berkum](#) (the nursery where Liza ordered plant plugs), admiring their quality and recommending the GCC to utilize them for future orders. Betsy suggested making a natural fence around the pollinator garden to prevent foot traffic over the plants.

12.) Jane Hoffman: **Beaver Management**

Jane distributed educational materials regarding beaver dams and provided historical context on a 2023 Selectboard ordinance that prohibits animal trapping (including beavers) on Greensboro town land.

Jane mapped out current flow device locations in town and identified two areas that may require new devices: Craftsbury Road and North Shore Road. Chris noted that he understands the road crew have been manually removing debris to manage water levels. The GCC will need to consult with John Schweizer and neighboring property owners along the brook on North Shore before installing a device. Jane will liaise with John Schweizer to help keep local land-owners informed

Jane shared that she has been in touch with MacNeil and the selectboard is willing to do a contract with Skip Lisle to install flow devices and ensure he is paid promptly. Jane will contact Skip to arrange a site visit to Greensboro this summer.

13.) Jane Hoffman: **Bear Baiting Discussion**

Jane summarized a petition submitted to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board that would permit bear baiting. While the Department of Fish & Wildlife opposes the petition, the final decision rests with the Board. She shared a letter from the Starksboro Conservation Commission strongly urging a vote against the petition. Chris moved a motion that Jane email the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board stating the GCC's formal alignment with and support of Starksboro's opposition letter. JoAnn seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, with the exception of Erika, who abstained. Jane will send a letter to VT F&W on behalf of the Commission and will share contact information for the Board with Commission members so they can write directly as private citizens if they wish.

14.) Chris Steel: **Vice Chair Role Addition**

Chris noted that the Calais Conservation Commission utilizes a Vice Chair role and proposed that the GCC adopt a similar structure to ensure continuity when the Chair is absent. He clarified this is a supportive role, not an automatic successional path to Chair.

Chris moved a motion to establish a Vice Chair within the Conservation Commission. Will seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, with the exception of Erika, who abstained.

JoAnn volunteered for the position. Chris moved a motion to appoint JoAnn as Vice Chair. Emma seconded the motion. All present voted in favor, with the exception of Erika, who abstained.

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

Chris updated the Commission on a letter he sent on behalf of the GCC to the Selectboard regarding their decision to oppose Act 181, emphasizing the importance of town advisory committees providing expert guidance on relevant municipal issues.

He suggested establishing an attendance roster to ensure at least one GCC representative is present at every Selectboard meeting.

Erika raised concerns about how individual members would represent the collective views of the GCC. Will suggested that the attending member simply request that the Selectboard table any relevant decisions until the GCC can review the matter and provide formal comment. The Commission agreed with Will's view and suggested Will to draft a standard script so members are prepared to make this request at future Selectboard meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled for **July 11th, 2026 at 10:15am** at the *Greensboro Free Library*.

16.) 12:22pm - **Adjourn**