

Strafford Conservation Commission

Minutes

April 23, 2024

201 Justin Morrill Mem Hwy (Colbeck house) 7-8 PM

Attending: Micki Colbeck, Courtney Potter, Mike Hebb, Steve Faccio, Erin Yunger, Kate Bass, Anne Fayen, JT Erbaugh

1. Approved minutes from February 27, 2024, meeting.
2. What are you seeing in the woods right now? Ramps, leatherwoods, the eclipse, new population of Jefferson Salamanders, spring ephemerals in the woods, spring beauties, hepaticas, trout lilies, bloodroot, mosses, falcons, bald eagles.
3. Discussed faulty septic systems on the river and what we can do when we detect one. It was advised to first talk to the landowner, then, if it continues, to tell the selectboard and Steve Marx, the town health officer.
4. Discussed invitation to join neighboring conservation commissions in the Upper Valley focused on biodiversity and deer control. *Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Declining Biodiversity in Upper Valley Forests*. They are sponsoring talks to educate the public about deer browsing and the damage to forests. We decided we are already fully engaged in local projects and do not have the bandwidth to participate.
5. Updates on SCC guided hikes:  
  
Kate won't be able to do her next hike, but Micki will take it over with Tii McLane.  
  
Mike and Kate will lead a September hike up to the Elizabeth Mine. Kate can help with kids' day, maybe we switch to the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>. Suggested that Levi Smith can help lead a hike.
6. Micki found loupes that will cost around \$20 a piece. Decided we will buy six loops to share during our hikes. We voted and all approved. Micki will purchase them.

7. Village to Village hike/bike trail discussion. The Recreation board is working on a biking trail that widens the road. Mike has worked on a hiking trail that does not follow the road, but he has run into some obstacles with a couple of properties. Micki will summarize where we are now with Bryan Kovalick and the 10-year capital projects.

8. Other business:

- Jennifer Byrn native edible tree sale is this weekend.
- Who is taking care of Old City Falls? John Freitag was doing it. Kate will find out.
- Kiosk: waiting to decide where to put it. Possibly at the red barn or the park and ride. Agreed that the red barn would be a good place. The Rec department is in charge of that area. Anne will ask them if it would be ok. Would be used for nature/conservation uses only and we will take turns updating it.
- Declassifying upper Wetmore rd. to a trail, discuss the other town roads that are questionable. Suggest going to the selectboard to ask.

9. Officer elections. All officers agreed to stay on in their positions for another term. Was put to vote and approved by all.

10. Next meeting

May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Courtney Potter