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Norfolk Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 552, Norfolk CT 06058
Regular Monthly Meeting — Minutes

September 14, 2026

Call to Order

Chair Susannah Wood called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Commission Members Present: Susannah Wood (Chair), John Anderson, Becky Eaton, Bill Ticineto,

Also Present: Billy Gridley (member of the public)

Approval of Minutes

Bill Ticineto made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting; John Anderson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence

Chair Wood reported a reminder regarding the upcoming CACIWC meeting in November; she will follow up with Stacey Sefcik to confirm registration, noting the Commission may already share a joint membership with the Wetlands Commission that covers this. A separate, unsolicited inquiry was received from a Cassandra McKenna requesting to present to the Commission on the problem of rodenticides. As the message included no organizational affiliation or other identifying information, the Commission agreed that Chair Wood would follow up to request further information before proceeding.

John queried whether the Commission's joint membership still includes delivery of an associated habitat-related publication was raised; the publication has apparently not been received in some time, and the Commission agreed to look into the membership status.

Action Item: Follow up with Stacey Sefcik regarding CACIWC registration and joint membership status. Also follow up on the missing habitat publication. (Susannah Wood)

Action Item: Respond to Cassandra McKenna requesting identifying/organizational information. (Susannah Wood)

Budget

Chair Wood distributed current budget summaries. Expenditures to date total approximately $1,500–$1,600. A possible outstanding invoice from Margery Winters was discussed; it was unclear whether this had been submitted or paid.

Action Item: Confirm with Margery Winters whether an invoice was submitted. (Becky Eaton)

Public Comment

Billy Gridley thanked the Commission for a recent site visit/event, which was well received.

Invasive Species Management — Botelle School

Becky Eaton reported that, since the last meeting, a small group (Becky, Sophia Nathanson, Sophia's mother Alison Brown, and Daryl Eaton) continued bittersweet and porcelain berry removal on the steep slope opposite the community garden. Mugwort at the site was weed-whacked, tarped, and covered with wood chips (delivered by Troy); runoff from the chips remains a concern, and Becky has spoken with Richard Gundlach at South Norfolk Lumber about timber edging for the spring. In the interim, straw wattles (estimated cost under $100) may be used to control runoff during heavy rain.

Becky also reported at length on the question of herbicide use on school grounds. Contrary to earlier information from Native Habitat, DEEP (per Diane Jorsey) has clarified that an emergency herbicide permit can only be issued for a genuine life-or-death situation (e.g., tick- or mosquito-borne illness risk), not for general invasive management; other herbicide options remain restricted under the school's integrated pest management plan. The Commission discussed mechanical alternatives, including repeated mowing to weaken bittersweet over time, and the possibility of developing a formal grounds-management plan (in coordination with Sean Muzzulin) that would formalize a mowing regime.

Becky reported that she has spoken with Nash regarding the playground embankment, where the plan is to have Sean weed-whack, follow up with agricultural vinegar treatment as regrowth appears, then install landscape

paper and wood chips (delivered by Troy). Nash indicated a number of roses at the site have survived and can be replanted.

Action Item: Provide measurements to Richard Gundlach (South Norfolk Lumber) for timber edging at the Botelle School mugwort area. (Becky Eaton)

Action Item: Coordinate Troy's schedule with Sean to complete the playground embankment work (weed-whacking, vinegar treatment, landscape paper, wood chips, rose replanting). (Becky Eaton)

Invasive Species Management — Winchester Road Bittersweet Event

Bill Ticineto reported on the recent volunteer bittersweet removal event along Winchester Road, near Spaulding Meadow, which drew approximately 10–11 participants working for nearly three hours. A substantial amount of debris was removed; Troy's crew is expected to return to finish clearing. Cut vines were treated with glyphosate by authorized applicators where cutting had occurred.

Becky Eaton noted that the Winchester Road location was chosen because it is an officially designated scenic road, is heavily traveled, and lies adjacent to critical habitat; other major bittersweet infestations exist on Parker Hill and Doolittle Road. The Commission discussed continuing to focus efforts at this single site to demonstrate visible progress, rather than spreading effort across multiple locations, while remaining open to new sites if other neighbors express interest.

Discussion followed regarding more efficient removal strategies going forward, including cutting paths to reach large vines strangling trees, using a heavy-duty brush cutter (Chris Peterson may have one) to open access, and possibly requesting that the Town run its flail mower along the roadside up to the stone wall marking the town property line. It was noted that porcelain berry is visible nearby on an old silo.

The Commission agreed to continue the bittersweet work sessions on a recurring basis, tentatively every two weeks, at the Winchester Road site. Becky is coordinating with the transfer station and the fire marshal re burning the vines with berries.

Action Item: Propose and circulate dates for recurring bittersweet work sessions at Winchester Road. (Becky Eaton)

Action Item: Look into publicizing work sessions through the Weekly Hub/Norfolk Now online, and inquire about print advertising options. (Bill Ticineto)

Action Item: Ask Chris Peterson (and check the Commission's own equipment) about the availability of a heavy-duty brush cutter for path clearing. (Susannah Wood)

Invasive Species Management — North Brook Trail (Mugwort)

John Anderson reported that he cut back the mugwort patch at the entrance to the North Brook Trail, removing seed heads, and arranged for the Town to haul away the debris. Because a substantial root system remains at the site — which is slated for construction — John plans to ask the contractor whether root systems can be dug out during initial site work, and to look into how any remaining material could be contained (e.g., left on site under tarp, or hauled to the town dump).

Action Item: Contact the North Brook Trail contractor regarding removal of remaining mugwort root systems prior to construction, and determine disposal/containment options. (John Anderson)

Roadside Invasive Mapping (EpiCollect5)

The Commission reviewed the roadside invasive species map maintained via EpiCollect5, which now contains over 200 logged points, incorporating Becky's prior knotweed and invasive-mapping data as well as new survey data entered by Sophia Nathanson. Becky noted that not all roads have yet been surveyed (including sections of her own road, Bruey Road, the smaller roads near the proposed cell tower off Route 272, Barry Hill, and South Sandisfield Road, as well as state roads), and that some surveyed sections (e.g., portions of Doolittle Road and on Grantville) showed no invasives and healthy native vegetation. It was also noted that invasive pressure is generally worse in South Norfolk than North Norfolk, likely reflecting differences in historical farming and settlement patterns.

The Commission discussed potential improvements to the data presentation, including a summary table of species counts by location, a layer showing

which roads have and have not yet been surveyed, highlighting of "clear" sections for future monitoring, and an overlay of invasive locations against high-quality habitat maps (as previously discussed with Hank Gruner). Becky plans to meet with Stacey Demming of Housatonic Valley Assoc. to discuss options for analyzing and presenting the data beyond the current map view.

Action Item: Meet with Stacey to identify additional ways to analyze/summarize the invasive survey data (e.g., species summary tables, surveyed vs. unsurveyed roads, habitat overlays). (Becky Eaton)

Action Item: Confirm whether Becky's road and other unsurveyed roads (Bruey Road, roads near the proposed cell tower off Route 272, Barry Hill, South Sandisfield Road, state roads) can be prioritized for survey next year. (Becky Eaton)

Japanese Stiltgrass / Future Roadside Plan

Susannah raised Japanese stiltgrass along town roadsides as a priority for a future roadside management recommendation, noting it has not yet reached the woodland in many areas and that the Commission would be remiss not to act while there is still an opportunity. Becky noted that Native Habitat is now willing to use a pre-emergent treatment, and that culverts and areas near moving water should be prioritized using Sophia's map data. Potential grant funding, including a possible AKC Foundation grant, was discussed as a way to support this work. The Commission agreed to bring a focused discussion of a stiltgrass plan to a future meeting.

Land Trust Workshop and Buddy System

Becky Eaton reported positive interest from the Land Trust in co-sponsoring a hands-on workshop on fall/winter woody-invasive control methods (cut-stump treatment, basal bark treatment, girdling, and mechanical/organic methods), to be held on a Land Trust property and open to the general public. Becky has a call in to Jess Toro of Native Habitat Restoration and is proposing late October or early November, given the Land Trust's schedule. The Commission discussed also using the workshop, or a related follow-up meeting, to launch a volunteer "buddy" system pairing residents to help with invasive removal on one another's properties; several people (including Geoff Rogers and Marie Civco) have previously expressed interest but have not yet been paired with a buddy.

Action Item: Continue coordinating with Jess Toro and the Land Trust on a late-October/early-November workshop, including site selection. (Becky Eaton)

Action Item: Develop logistics for a volunteer buddy system (pairing interested residents, including those previously signed up) and consider a follow-up planning meeting. (Becky Eaton and Susannah)

Outreach and Community Events

The Commission discussed hosting a table at the Rails to Trails bicycle event at the curling club on October 17 (registration from approximately 8:00 AM–9:00 AM and 12:00 PM), using the occasion to promote the bittersweet/buckthorn recruitment effort and share Sophia's invasive species map. Availability of Commission members to staff the table was uncertain given other commitments in October.

Becky also noted that she shares invasive-campaign materials monthly with conservation commission representatives from Winchester, New Hartford, Colebrook, and Canton. Other towns have asked to receive Norfolk's invasive outreach materials for their own use, and Bill Ticineto is generously sharing his "Wanted" invasive series.

Action Item: Determine staffing for a Commission table at the October 17 Rails to Trails event at the curling club. (Becky and Bill)

Road Salt Testing

Bill Ticineto, Jill Chase, Inland Wetlands Commissioner, and Chair Wood planned to conduct road salt testing Wednesday 9/16/26.

Mission Statement on Town Website

Susannah reported she has reviewed the Commission's mission statement revision that Bill sent around and has some suggested edits. She will circulate proposed language for member review and further input.

Action Item: Circulate proposed mission statement revisions for member review. (Susannah Wood)

Commission membership

Chair Wood reported that June Peterson, a longtime volunteer who is retiring, has expressed enthusiasm about potentially joining the Commission and may be brought up for consideration at an upcoming meeting once her schedule allows (anticipated around September).

Adjournment

Chair Wood adjourned the meeting at 6:46 PM.