

Norfolk Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 552, Norfolk CT 06058



Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, April 13, 2026 | 6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susannah Wood, Chair; Libby Borden; John Anderson; Bill Ticineto; Becky Eaton

ABSENT: Nash Pradhan

ALSO PRESENT: Sophia Nathanson and Noel Jenkins

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE AND BUDGET UPDATE

The Chair reported correspondence to be brought up under new business. The current budget, prepared with assistance from Libby Borden, was distributed to all members prior to the meeting. The Chair noted the Commission has a healthy remaining balance for the year which must be spent by June 15th.

INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

***Botelle School – Honeysuckle Removal and Wild Rose Planting**

Troy has done the removal of the honeysuckle and Becky proposed an early May date for retrieving the natives from Nash's friend and planting them. In addition, we will need to organize cutting of knotweed patch in June and covering it with 6 ply black plastic. The mugwort will also need cutting then and covering. Near the vegetable garden we will need to cut back bittersweet and porcelain berry vines, especially from the trees and keep them under control that way.

John has received a printout of the Botelle School property from Bob Gilchrist to be used for charting our efforts going forward.

Action Item: John to coordinate with Nash to get the plastic.

Action Item: Becky to reach out to Lauren about involving students.

***Other areas in town**

Becky to contact Jess Torro to do a second spraying of mugwort at the town garage. John suggests having a member of the DPW on hand to observe.

Haystack Woods cleared areas need to be planted to prevent invasion.

Action Item: Susannah to reach out to Avice Meehan who is on the board of the Foundation for Norfolk Living to find out who will do the work, timing and what trees, plants will go in

NORFOLK NATURE ALLIANCE (NNA) – UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- Compost Tea Talk — Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 AM (
- **Action Item:** John to confirm table needs with Monique/Nash
- Spring Ephemeral Walk — Saturday, April 25 (led by Mike Zarfos)
- Native Nursery Talk — Saturday, April 25 at 4:00 PM (By Bridghe McCracken from Helia Native Nursery)
- Kids' Pollinator Event — Sunday, April 26 (location: Congregational Church)
- NWR students planting natives for pollinators — Sunday, April 26 (Town Hall)
- May Event on the Green — Friday, May 29 (plant exchange and pollinator information; details to be finalized)
- Spring Cleanup — Sunday, May 25 at 9:00 AM

SEED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Chair reported that the Commission's application to the AKC Fund appears likely to result in a \$2,000 grant, though nothing is yet confirmed. Should hear something this month.

Town Hall Pollinator Garden

A pollinator garden is planned for the area off the back staircase at Town Hall. Henry has approved the site as suitable.

- Work needed: clear grass and prepare site within the next two weeks
- Each participating group will contribute plants for the planting event
- Susannah will conduct soil testing and provide a list of recommended shrubs
- Northwest Regional students will participate in the planting as a community service project; Laura's daughter is coordinating student involvement
- Planting event tentatively scheduled for April 26–27 — confirm exact date with Laura (runs The Hub)

RAILS TO TRAILS

John reported that the bidding process is under way and work will probably begin in August. The committee is offering the commission a free hand with planting more natives around the parking area and creating some signage as well.

ROAD SALT TESTING

The Chair will be meeting with Bill and Jill Chase on Wednesday to go over protocols.

SUMMER VOLUNTEER

Sophia will focus on roadside invasive species identification and tagging to help the road crew know what to cut and what to leave. Becky will serve as her mentor.

- A targeted list of priority invasive species will be provided to Sophia (not an exhaustive list — key hit-list species only)
- Reconnaissance will be done in advance to identify the most vulnerable areas
- Transportation will be provided to reach more remote sections of town

Action Item: Chair to follow up with Sophia

MINUTES MANAGEMENT

The chair discussed using Otter.ai directly for minute-taking, eliminating the extra step of routing recordings through Claude. The town will eventually have its own Otter account. The current approach of using Otter + Claude was noted to have produced excellent results.

OUTREACH

Monthly native plant ads are running in Norfolk Now. The current campaign encourages planting natives (replacing prior years' focus on invasive removal). Posters for upcoming events were commended.

The Chair raised a new article idea: explaining the difference between true natives and cultivars, and why true natives are generally better for pollinators. Key points to include:

- Cultivars with complex flower structures are harder for pollinators to access
- Dark/red-leafed cultivars (e.g., dark elderberry) are less beneficial
- Wind-pollinated native plants still provide value (e.g., pollen for some insects); all natives contribute to the broader ecosystem
- Non-native plants may provide some nectar but rarely serve as caterpillar host plants

Action Item: Chair to reach out to Andra Moss as next editor to see if she is interested

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS:

Chair said she would circle back with Noel to see if he would consider becoming a commissioner. She also said she has some other potential candidates in mind.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jill Chase sent the commission word of two proposed plans for redoing the bridges at Smith and Old Goshen Roads. Inland Wetlands would like our input on the replanting plans. Commissioners looked at the proposed species and so far they look fine though very limited.

- Spicebush, Common Milkweed, Swamp Milkweed, Red Maple, Silver Maple, Black Gum, Sycamore

- Also: wetland grass establishment, wildflower establishment, turf/lawn establishment (Smith Road has ~930 sq yds of wildflower establishment)

Action Item: John to take a closer look at exactly where the plantings are to be

Great Mountain Forest is hosting a three-part wildlife series of talks with Ginny Apple. The first is on the Fisher on May 2nd. They would like us to co-sponsor. We will supply volunteer help rather than funds. Given limited funds earmarked for invasive treatment, no financial contribution at this time.

Noel Jenkins gave a rundown on his ongoing projects to restore habitats on his farm with grants and advice from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He has found the people he deals with knowledgeable and helpful. The chair proposed a possible program with NRCS staff providing information on funding that is available to landowners.

Becky suggested amplifying the moth program with a presentation by David Waggoner that is available on the Simsbury Pollinator Pathway website.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Recording Secretary

Date: _____