

Dummerston Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes 4/13/17

Members attending: Mary Ellen Copeland, John Andersen, Lynn Levine, Ed Anthes, Bill Schmidt, Betsy Whitaker, Jonathan Royce

Others attending: Marie Caduto, Carolyn Mayo-Brown

1. Minutes of the March meeting were approved as submitted. Moved by Betsy, seconded by Lynn. Unanimous approval.

2. Marie Levesque Caduto, Water Management Coordinator, Agency of Natural Resources, presented information on the streams of Dummerston. The West River in Dummerston is in Basin 11. Among the natural features to celebrate in Dummerston: great habitat diversity, populations of Jefferson salamanders, and Brook Floater Mussels in the West River.

For monitoring water quality, bugs and fish provide information. The West River, Salmon, Crosby and Stickney Brooks are monitored.

In summer, water quality is sampled on Wednesdays at the Covered Bridge, so results can be posted prior to the weekend. Generally, e coli levels are very low, except within 24-48 hours of heavy rainstorms that wash everything off the land and into the rivers.

Crosby Brook is impaired in Brattleboro near the Exit 3 Rotary due to sediment. Some remediation work has been done close to Rt 5. More work will be done along Black Mountain Rd. in the future.

Road Erosion Inventory funds will be made available to towns to help comply with stream water quality standards. For example, rock lining of roadside drainage ditches that carry sediment into streams.

Many of the culverts that carry streams into the West River do not allow fish to travel up into the cooler water of the streams, as needed when the West River water level is low in summer. Aquatic Organism Passage funds are available to help pay for replacement. About three replacement culverts have changed this situation at Stickney Brook and near the Covered Bridge.

Conservation Commission members will continue to discuss stream water quality at future meetings.

3. Publicity: the many activities of the Conservation Commission require a lot of work publicizing them. We will apply for a Tiny Grant from the VT Association of Conservation Commissions to help with this.

4. Educational Programs and Other Events

Lynn's program "In the Woods with Children" looked at the reasons different people find being in the woods something they want to do, as a way to encourage children and adults to experience the natural world.

Deb Luskin will speak on her transit of the Long Trail on May 4, at The Learning Collaborative, at 7 pm.

Hiking up Prospect Hill May 13, 10 am. Jonathan will lead the walk from Dummerston Center.

Wetland walk with Patti Smith has been postponed until September.

Dutton Pines event June 25, 5:30 PM. Mike Mrowiki will provide entertainment. The Conservation Commission will provide refreshments.

August 24 at 7 PM there will be a presentation, the "Hurricane of '38" with Stephen Long

5. Dummerston School

Dummerston School environmental work with Joan Carey, from Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, will be focused this Spring on water.

The Trail Guide to Prospect Pasture is in process with Dummerston School students.

6. Lydia Taft Library librarian has chosen books to add to the library, compliments of the Conservation Commission. Among the titles chosen are Animals in Spring, and the series, How do We Know...?

7. With the agreement of the Prospect Hill Trustees, a bench, in memory of John Evans and his work for trails, woodlands and invasive plant control in Dummerston, will be placed on Prospect Pasture in May.

8. Garlic Mustard: It's starting! The rosettes are visible now. John has written an article describing this invasive plant, which will be sent out on the email list and submitted to The Commons for publication.

9. Sightings: fox, bobcat, bear, woodcocks, belted kingfisher, flickers, osprey, bald eagle, snow fleas.