Minutes from Craftsbury Conservation Commission meeting on September 15, 2025

In attendance: Diane Morgan, Elinor Osborn, Ken Menard, Nancy Milholland, and Molly Sease.

Guest: Finn, Horack (Sterling College Ecology and Land Management Intern)

Absent: Farley Brown

Meeting called to order at 7:07 pm by Diane

New agenda items: none

Approval of August minutes - Elinor moved to approve the minutes as written from the August meeting, Ken seconded, unanimous approval.

Report on Farmers Market journaling event: Nancy updated the group that while the event was not well attended as hoped due to rain+wind, it was an excellent trial run with the kids who attended. 'Would like to do it again next year.

JK Project update: Elinor reported that a few weeks ago, the town repaired and filled the sinkholes by the culvert, and the fabric has been pulled back to the Cole Rd. side and secured with rocks. Before repairs, Elinor was able to save a few coneflowers, and purchased a new dogwood to replace one that was unable to be saved. All are replanted and Elinor needs help keeping them hydrated through the continuing drought. Molly volunteered to bring and stage buckets if possible for watering through the week and weekend. Elinor also updated the group that there is one roll of fabric left to use-we will need many volunteers to help place and secure the fabric on the Cole Road side. It was mentioned again that the Commission is deeply grateful to the Sterling College and Green Racing Project U23's and athletes for all of their help and hard work over the course of the summer, as well as to the Craftsbury Outdoor Center for the use of tools and equipment to keep weeds and JK at bay. Molly will weedeat again to knock the JK as close to the soil as possible. Finn volunteered to talk to Farley and John Helms, Dean of Work and Faculty at Sterling College re wrangling volunteers on College Work Day to help with the fabric. Another end of season project at the JK site will be to do a final weeding of the JK near the new plantings, smooth gulleys, seed grass, trench and lay and staple the jute. Finn volunteered again to inquire about volunteers for this job.

Report on Trees for Streams event: Diane reported that around 20 people attended the Trees for Streams event and shared a report on the Craftsbury town site and a few others in the area, including before and after photos.

Report on AVCC zoom meeting: Elinor attended the zoom meeting and reported the following noteworthy items: while commissions around Vermont are engaged in all sorts of interesting outreach projects and activities to engage the public, many are dealing with similar membership retention issues and volunteers. It was noted that of the three towns that received tiny grants, all had nice logos-should the Craftsbury CC work on this? Regarding membership and outreach, one town puts out a quarterly newsletter, another provides "community welcome kits" that include recycling information, hiking trails, CC doings and knotweed/invasives information, and a third has put together birdwatching kits at the public library that includes binoculars and ID information. Another town is working with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) to monitor and collect data from kestrel boxes, kestrels experiencing an overall decline in the state. Finally, an interesting project seen in one town was the mapping of vernal pools and monitoring road crossings in the spring as amphibians wake up and migrate towards these breeding pools. Other noteworthy points: most towns use FPF as their main form of communication, and that many people gravitate towards more adventure related and hands-on activities. Diane reminded the group that the regional summit for AVCC is on October 11 in Hardwick, and that it would great if as many members could attend.

Outreach presentation on Orleans Co. Forestry History: Nancy moved to go ahead with the planning for the Forestry History in Orleans County event and to hold it on the date of our November meeting; seconded by Molly. Farley and Jared Nunnery, along with Colleen Goodrich, will do the presentation. Discussion on the planning continued and it was suggested that the library has a better projection system so that it may be a possibility to hold the presentation there. Because this is the same evening as our November meeting, the members of this commission will meet just before or after if we need to deal with any business. All voted in favor.

Other Announcements: Gratitude to Finn for leading a wonderful iNaturalist program and for being here and offering help and insight. Elinor would like to attend the meeting on Sept 22 in Waitsfield where they will be presenting on their JK eradication efforts. Would like to coordinate a ride, Greensboro CC members are attending as well.

Discussion topics: generally tabled until our next full meeting, but it was briefly discussed again the importance of recruiting lasting members of the commission, as well as volunteers for the JK site. While it is somewhat reassuring (and alarming) that this is a statewide issue (and the topic of the AVCC summit on October 11!), what can this commission do? It was discussed that our incredible crew of volunteers over the years at the knotweed site may be tired. The physical element to the project is significant, and attendance on Thursdays is slipping for both volunteers and members. It was suggested

that the Craftsbury CC send another survey to the public to see which conservation issues are of interest, which will help inform and guide the commission to create outreach projects that will generate lasting interest and engagement, as well as an email to current volunteers and members to see if there are days and times that work better so we can finish the end of season projects and tasks at the JK site this fall. Molly suggested that as far as recruiting new members, perhaps we can put together the information about the commission, past and current projects, and a list of other ideas that have yet to be initiated, in a paper copy for prospective members when they attend a meeting.

Next meeting: October 20

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.