

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 21, 2014  
JOHNSON PUBLIC LIBRARY, 6:30PM

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Jeanne Engel, Carley Coolidge, Anne Marie Bahr, Cynthia Perry, Louise Von Weis.

Absent: Eric Nuse

Hey, it's the new State of Vermont game show, Minutes in a Minute! You won't win a fridge but you will experience the fastest five days you ever lived through! Yay!! Move over Pat and Vanna; the Conservation Commission is at the wheel and coming up with the answers!! It's Minutes in a Minute, sponsored by your legislators! It's the most irritating game show anywhere!!

#### MINUTES

The August and September minutes were approved.

#### LANDS AND INVASIVE PLANTS

UVM's LANDS program has accepted our proposal that they identify and map invasive plants, particularly Japanese Knotweed, along the Lamoille and will complete the work from November 12-18. They'll also provide management and outreach ideas that we might use in future educational attempts.

#### PADDLER'S TRAIL UPDATED

The Vermont River Conservancy has also had an RFP accepted for the Paddler's Trail, in which students will accompany Noah Pollack on a Johnson-Milton canoe trip down the Lamoille. They'll pinpoint possible campsite and access locations. It is hoped that we may be able to encourage the Paddler's group to eradicate knotweed in the areas where they choose to establish campsites.

It was noted that Conservation will always help out on the Paddler's Trail, but that it is not our project.

#### JOURNEY'S END: NEXT STEPS

Jeanne reports that most of the trail marking that we did in June is down and needs to be replaced.

There has been a lot of talk about the Journey's End art project that was presented by Eric and Michael Mahnke at the August CC meeting. A recent article in Basement Medicine stated erroneously that "The town of Johnson has approved Michael Mahnke and his father-in-law Eric Nuse to become the stewards of the land." The facts are that the CC are the stewards of all of the town conserved lands and that we will follow the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp's plan to develop the Journey's End trail, bridge(s), and steps as stated. This is etched in stone, so to speak. Louise offered to speak with Michael about the procedures that need to be followed in making changes to publicly owned land.

All agreed that we should have any such requests in writing, especially from outside the Commission.

In other JE matters, there has been dumping of trash at the water's edge; it has subsided somewhat since the weather cooled down. Lois suggested that we might ask Dave Bergh to add the 'take in, take out' message to student communiqués.

#### ON A ROLL: THE CC GETS A WEBSITE!

Our web guru, Noel, offered to set up a Facebook page and an email address so we can improve communication with the community. Noel made it happen the morning after the meeting and it's great! The CC is smokin'!! Find it at [facebook.com/pages/Johnson-Conservation-Commission](https://facebook.com/pages/Johnson-Conservation-Commission). There was plenty of polite argument over the email address; Noel flatly refused [sasquatch@gmail.com](mailto:sasquatch@gmail.com), which had a classy conservation ring to it. He finally settled on [conservationjohnsonvt@gmail.com](mailto:conservationjohnsonvt@gmail.com). Yawn.

#### GOMO

We'll walk at Gomo to see how well our tree-dropping attempts to thwart ATV damage have been working out. Meet at Lois' at 10:00 on Sunday, Nov. 2 to carpool.

Sue attended the Town Forest Summit and brought home a couple of relevant ideas. Most folks at the Summit reported that use of game cameras is the best means they have of keeping ATVs and other damage-causing behavior in line. The CC is still determining how we might accomplish that.

Bringing to life the story of the people who lived on the land and worked the farm is a good way to get the public interested. We will try to find information and anecdotes about the Gomo family and farm and tell the story of the Gomo Town Forest from a cultural point of view. Carley will look for information that she has in storage and the rest of us will follow any available leads. Perhaps we can do a Gomo presentation over the winter.

Apple tree release will take place in the spring.

#### CONSERVATION WHO?

Let's face it, the CC gets no respect. (Think about the recent grant debacle and the fact that no one in the town or Planning Commission notified us of their intention to usurp it.) It was decided that we will draft a clear statement of what we believe is the CC's role and take it to the Selectboard for a public endorsement. Over the next month we'll gather our ideas as to our role between the community and the Selectboard and the rules by which we function. For example, we need to have requests such as the JE art project in writing.

We are a small group of volunteers who work hard and get things done on a very small budget. We're as cool as it gets.

#### TUESDAY NITE LIVE WRAPUP

It was a very useful and effective summer of Tuesday evenings. With many displays and props, we reached out to the community about invasive insects and plants, Journey's end, our hiking trails, the Paddler's trail, leaf and tree identification (nobody got the black walnut!), tree houses, and gave out a whole lot of bug tattoos and literature. The response was good, especially from several kids who brought the

invasives message back to their schools in the fall. Several people signed on for further involvement in invasives, trail work, the Christmas Bird Count, and hiking.

We had a new canopy that made things more comfy and owe thanks to the Historical Society members who regularly helped put it up and take it down.

Can't wait for next year!

## TREE BOARD NEWS

The Village Tree Inventory of +/-410 trees was completed in September and the final report will be issued in November. It'll also be available online. Diameter, tree health, location, and a photo were provided for each tree that would fall into the Tree Board or Tree Warden's management purview.

## MISC:

- There is grant money available for the removal of bush honeysuckle, much to everyone's surprise. Can we get money to remove it from Gomo?
- The strange occurrence of north-flying birds in a south-flying season was the subject of much discussion. This happens, quite naturally, over French Hill.
- Knotweed is being used in combating Lymes Disease. Who knew? Ann Marie will look into the facts and enlighten us.
- Noel will discuss plans for the Christmas Bird Count, set for December 28, at the November meeting.
- Lois and Sue will attend the AVCC Summit on Nov.1.
- A motion was made, seconded, and almost passed (okay, by Sue) to only use nature-related terms. For example, 'no strings attached' would become 'no tentacles attached' or 'no spider webs attached' or 'no mucus membranes attached'. Folks got into it but flatly refused to do it. There were a lotta flat refusals at this meeting.
- Nobody refused Anne Marie's almond Hershey's Kisses. Thanks, AM!

Adjourned at 8:30

Next meeting will be November 18, 6:30 at the Library.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary