

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Community Room - 6:00 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Russ Barrett, Ragnar Eberle, David Mears, Suz Stillinger, Jeremy Whalen, Deb Zuaro

Remote: Bill Dell'Isola

2. UPDATES TO TONIGHT'S AGENDA None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING: August 26, 2026

Jeremy moves to approve the minutes as written, Deb seconds; approved unanimously

5. DISCUSSION

1. VYCC Trails Project and Funding

-Jeremy reported that the town notified him that there is \$2,200 left from the \$40,000 ARPA appropriation for VYCC trail work at Garvey Hill and the Town Forest that should be spent. Jeremy has left a message with the town manager to ask if it can go towards the VYCC 2027 work on the River Walk. If it can't be, VYCC will spend 2-3 days on the Garvey Hill trails that have some recent blown downs.

-David reported that there is a possible VOREC grant that he will ask Tom Davis to write.

2. Reconnecting with Rivers – Cross Brothers Dam Removal and Access Trail

VYCC will be working on the upper level but the lower trail to the river will need heavy equipment work and will have to wait until the Main Street bridge work is completed.

3. Reconnecting with Rivers – Cross-Committee Meeting

Neither David nor Jeremy was able to attend. Stated that the Cross Brothers dam project was the topic.

4. Road Salt Discussion

Suz reported that she received the recent notice from the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) listing educational opportunities related to the reduction of road salt by municipalities. She wonders about Northfield's practices. Since no one objects, she will contact Jim Russo, head of public works, in the name of the NCC to inquire.

5. Wood Turtle Surveys

Kiley Briggs from the Orianne Society wrote to David and Debbie to ask permission to survey the Dog River Park/Dog River as part of his larger study of wood turtles in the Winooski watershed. Permission is not actually needed but the communication was appreciated. He doesn't want this to be a public event but would be happy to consider a presentation later, perhaps at the library in the winter.

6. UPDATES

1. Update on Town Forest Conservation Easement Next Steps - Meeting with Town Manager to be Scheduled

This meeting has yet to be scheduled. Russ suggested sending the Town Manager information about Hinesburg and their experience with a VLT facilitated easement as another example.

2. Dark Sky Presentation Planning Update

-Jon McCann, Director of DarkSky Vermont, has agreed to come to our December 9th meeting. He has asked for some direction as to what the NCC would like to hear about. Suz will talk with him about what he suggests and areas that we could work on.

-David has invited the Berlin Conservation Commission.

3. River Clean Up: Next Steps and Planning

-Planning should start this winter if there is going to be a clean-up next Fall.

-Ragnar will reconnoiter the Dog River to see if a clean up might be needed.

-Ragnar is certain he would be able to get the high school behind this project.

-Suz suggested this as a project that could be presented to the Reconnecting with Rivers Cross-Committee Committee.

4. Friends of the Winooski Well Field Project Proposal Update

David has connected Friends of the Winooski and Jim Russo. No update.

5. Town Forest Accessibility Update

Bill Dell'Isola reported that a date for the public accessibility event at Cheney Field has been finalized (October 4 or 5?). The gate will be open for cars and Mayo will bring some residents up in their van. There will be volunteers to help with parking and education as well as a picnic table.

6. Town Forest Stewardship Committee

-There are multiple events scheduled at Shaw this weekend. NU has done a good job advertising this on the town FB sites and on FPF. Jeremy will post on the NCC FB site as well.

-Russ and Jeremy want to find time to finish marking the boundaries of Dustin's Pasture.

-Mowing of all of Cheney Field is likely to happen next week.

-Jeremy asked Deb about the location of the signs for Cheney Field. She reported that the signs are at the municipal building and she will send the site information to Jeremy. These are the last signs from the big VOREC-funded trail signage project. They were not yet installed due to the water tank replacement project. Jeremy reported that the Andrew Padilla has volunteered to have the Shaw Center install the signs.

-Andrew is trying to get estimates for the work on the Lybrand Trail (now that the engineering study is complete) so grants can be applied for.

7. Berlin Conservation Commission Coordination

Waiting to hear if they will attend our December meeting with DarkSky Vermont.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

Bill Dell'Isola will be joining an AVCC webinar October 14 about creating a

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). This may be especially of use in Cheney Field and along Dog River.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

- Russ suggests we be a presence at Night on the Common. Suz to write to Kaitlyn Keating.
- Russ will write to the Town Manager about making sure the ash trees that were previously treated for EAB are treated again next Spring.
- Russ will keep an eye out for EAB updates that can be sent on for publication in the Northfield News.
- Jeremy reports that the DEC came out to check on the illegal road cut that was made in Cheney Field. Because it has been regraded and seeded, none of the damage could be detected. No further action will be taken by the DEC.

9. AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING (October 28, 2026)/Action Items

- Jeremy to report on disposition of the money left over from the ARPA trail appropriation.
- David to report on possible VOREC grant
- Road Salt discussion (Suz)
- Possible dates for Wood Turtle public presentation?
- Easement update?
- Ragnar to report on reconnoitering in the Dog River
- Accessible Event at Cheney Field Report
- Report on AVCC CISMA webinar (Suz to attend too)
- Night on the Common 2027? (Suz)
- EAB update (Russ)

10.ADJOURNMENT

Russ moved to adjourn; Jeremy seconded. Unanimously voted to adjourn at 1910

Respectfully,
Suz Stillinger