

Stowe Conservation Commission  
Wednesday July 2, 2014  
Akeley Memorial Building  
Meeting Minutes  
(Preliminary)

Members present: Gar Anderson, Bob Fahey, David Jaqua, Marina Meerburg, Robert Moore –  
Members Absent: Andre Blais, – Town: Tom Jackman – Guests:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30.

Minutes, Correspondence and Reports

Minute of May 21 were approved as amended.

Gar reported that Catamount Trail Association is holding a trails day in the Sterling Forest area on July 13.

Rules of Operation

The CC reviewed the Rules of Operation document prepared by Tom. The document contains the rules that govern how the CC operates, including statutory powers, membership, meetings and officers.

**Motion: Adopt the “Town of Stowe, Conservation Commission, Rules of Operation” document dated July 3, 2014.** Moved by David. Seconded by Robert F. Approved unanimously.

Budget

Tom presented the fiscal year 2015 budget and work plan document. The CC discussed each of the line items up to the Sterling Forest Upper Gorge Loop water bars. The remaining line items will be discussed at a future meeting.

The CC decided to consider action on one item within the work plan, the Catamount Trail / Sterling Brook bridge in on conservation land owned by the Anderson family adjacent to Sterling Forest. The Commission had previously discussed this project and endorsed it in principal. The public will have perpetual rights to use the bridge as a means to cross Sterling Brook while utilizing the Maple Run Lane right-of-way that traverses the Anderson property.

The materials for the bridge cost approximately \$4,500. Gar Anderson spearheaded the project and contributed all labor at no cost. The bridge was constructed during late-May and early June 2014. He is requesting the CC to pay one half the material costs. The Sterling Falls Gorge Natural Area Trust has already paid for the materials.

David inspected the bridge and verified that it was built to a high standard. CC members concurred that the bridge serves an important public interest.

**Motion: Reimburse the Sterling Falls Gorge Natural Area Trust \$2300 for materials used in construction of the Sterling Brook / Catamount Trail bridge.** Moved by Marina, seconded by Robert M, approved unanimously.

Other Business

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM. Respectfully submitted by David Jaqua.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. July 16, 2014 at 5:30 PM at the Akeley Memorial Building.

Stowe Conservation Commission  
Wednesday September 17, 2014  
Akeley Memorial Building  
Meeting Minutes  
(Preliminary)

Members present: Gar Anderson, Andre Blais, David Jaqua, Marina Meerburg, Robert Moore –  
Members Absent: Bob Fahey, Christine McGowan – Town: Tom Jackman – Guests:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30.

Minutes, Correspondence and Reports

Gar updated the CC on his advocacy for legislative changes to the manner property taxes are applied to certain qualifying conservation properties.

Robert suggested that the Town should install a sign on Maple Run Lane indicating that it is not a through road. Last weekend a car pulling a trailer went down MRL and had difficulty turning around once the driver realized MRL was not a through road. Mindless following of GPS directions was likely the cause.

Andre and Robert recommend that dwarf pines (*pinus strobus nana*) be planted to replace the barberry currently planted at the March of Dimes monument on the Mayo Farm. After a brief discussion, other CC members concurred. Andre and Robert will arrange for the purchase and installation of the dwarf pine trees.

Living Willow Project

This project involves building a functional living willow plant / structure on the Mayo Farm. Susie Gray would be hired to create the structure. She first approached the CC last year. The CC discussed various aspects of the project, including cost and the likelihood that it would require several years of effort and commitment to allow for the plants to mature. The CC authorized Andre to negotiate with Susie to determine a cost and statement of work to commence the project.

Budget

The lease for agricultural portions of the Mayo Farm will terminate in December 2014. Paul Percy is the current lessee.

Traditionally the town has leased all of the agricultural fields as a unit to a single lessee. The CC would like to explore changing the manner in which the town offers to lease the fields to be on a field by field basis. Tom said he would propose changes to the offering document and lease agreement to be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting. Any such changes would be subject to approval by the Selectboard.

Other Business

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM. Respectfully submitted by David Jaqua.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. October 1, 2014 at 5:30 PM at the Akeley Memorial Building.

Stowe Conservation Commission  
Wednesday October 1, 2014  
Akeley Memorial Building  
Meeting Minutes  
(Preliminary)

Members present: Gar Anderson, Andre Blais, David Jaqua, Marina Meerburg, Robert Moore –  
Members Absent: Bob Fahey, Christine McGowan – Town: Tom Jackman – Guests:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30.

Minutes, Correspondence and Reports

Minutes of September 17 were approved.

Gar updated the CC on his proposal to change the manner in which the state taxes conserved lands.

Gar updated the CC on the plan to install railings on the bridge at Twin Bridges in Sterling Forest.

Gar said that many people are using the Sterling Ridge Trail which crosses Sterling Forest and state land during this past summer despite it being designated as a winter use only trail. He inquired whether it could be re-designated as a year around trail. Tom said that at the time the trail was approved, Vermont Department of Forest Parks and Recreation wanted winter use only for a variety of reasons. Any re-designation would require FPR approval. The CC will revisit this topic at a future meeting when it has the time to thoroughly discuss the issues.

Gar reported that the all of the Sterling Historic brochures had been used. Tom said the town had an ample supply and would provide more for Gar to put in the kiosk at the Sterling parking lots.

Gar requested that Sterling Falls Gorge Natural Area Trust website be added to the Green Mountain Byway brochure.

Gar reported that he was negotiating with Catamount Trail Association to change the easement CTA holds on his 50 acre conserved parcel to reflect installation of a new bridge crossing Sterling Brook and accompanying trail re-location.

Gar reported he had done work to improve the views along the Upper Gorge Loop trail. David reminded Gar that it would be best for Gar to seek approval from the CC prior to doing any work within the town-owned Sterling Forest with the exception of removal of downed or threatening trees across pre-existing trails.

David reported that he had attended a meeting sponsored by Stowe Land Trust on the subject of town-wide priorities for recreation oriented land and trail conservation. The meeting was a part of SLT's periodic planning efforts. The meeting was attended by many recreation oriented local and regional organizations. David said he would forward the meeting summary to all CC members once he receives it from SLT.

Tom reported that he had attended a Recreation Commission meeting during which they had discussed construction of a shelter on the Mayo Farm and possible switching of the fields for the Recreation Zone. He was in attendance to educate RC members on the basic terms within the Mayo Farm 25 year term conservation easement and the management plan.

Tom reported on trail work currently being conducted within Cady Hill Forest. The work is going very well. He proposed changing the location for the installation of the Coppock chairlift chair from the Sunset Hill upper overlook to an area the CC had considered last year within Cady Hill Forest. One of the new trails goes right by the considered spot. After discussion, the CC concurred that this was a better location. Christine and other members did state that they would prefer in the future, that when an item that requires CC consensus be discussed, that it be listed explicitly as an agenda item rather than be discussed as a part of Reports or Other Business.

Christine reported that a resident had asked her about the CC's role in regard to the possible removal of an old oak tree along South Main Street by the owner of the property upon which the tree is located.

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Tom said that there had been discussion by various representatives from the Town and State. The property owner has agreed to reconsider this matter. A plan to preserve the tree is likely to emerge.

### Mayo Farm Lease

Tom presented proposes changes to the Mayo Farm agricultural lands offering document and lease agreement. The CC briefly reviewed these and will discuss them further at the next meeting. Any changes would be subject to approval by the Selectboard.

### Other Business

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM. Respectfully submitted by David Jaqua.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. October 15, 2014 at 5:30 PM at the Akeley Memorial Building.

Stowe Conservation Commission  
Wednesday November 19, 2014  
Akeley Memorial Building  
Meeting Minutes  
(Preliminary)

Members present: Gar Anderson, Andre Blais, David Jaqua, Marina Meerburg, Robert Moore –  
Members Absent: Bob Fahey, Christine McGowan – Town: Tom Jackman – Guests:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30.

Minutes, Correspondence and Reports

Minutes of October 15 and November 5 were approved.

Gar reported on maintenance activities on the Upper Gorge Loop within Sterling Forest and State of Vermont forest land.

Mayo Farm Lease

The CC discussed the final version of the Mayo Farm agricultural lease, advertisement and submittal letter. The Selectboard will take up the matter at their next meeting on November 24.

Cady Hill Management Plan

Tom presented an updated version of the Cady Hill Management Plan. CC members reviewed the draft and made a number of comments.

Other Business

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM. Respectfully submitted by David Jaqua.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. December 4, 2014 at 5:30 PM at the Akeley Memorial Building.

Stowe Conservation Commission  
Wednesday December 3, 2014  
Akeley Memorial Building  
Meeting Minutes

Members present: Gar Anderson, Andre Blais, Marina Meerburg, Robert Moore, Christine McGowan  
– Members Absent: David Jaqua, Bob Fahey, – Town: Tom Jackman – Guests: Bob Lindamann,  
Catamount Trail Association

The meeting was called to order at 5:30.

Minutes, Correspondence and Reports

The minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

Reports

Tom shared with the commission the final draft of the Mayo Farm RFP to be published in the Stowe Reporter and other publications. Marina informed the group that the Selectboard accepted the changes the commission proposed to the RFP and lease. The only change the Selectboard made was to note that fields D&E are not available for crops for human consumption. Marina said she has received inquiries from at least two Stowe farmers who expressed interest in the lease opportunity; she also said the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class at Stowe Elementary did a water testing project on the West Branch River last year, along Mayo Farm. The teacher let her know that their results showed elevated levels of algae (phosphorus?) in the river, which may be due to agricultural runoff. They plan to test the water again as a class science project, and Marina invited them to present their findings to the commission.

Tom updated the commission that the Stowe Recreation Department plans to request a capital budget item to install a well at the community garden; currently, the Rec Dept. trucks water to the garden. Building a new well may entail building a small shed, as the ground water levels may prohibit burying the pump. Due to the Mayo Farm regulations, building an outbuilding may require approval at Town Meeting.

Catamount Trail Relocation in Sterling Forest

Bob Lindamann from the Catamount Trail Association came to inform the commission about the need to temporarily relocate part of the trail connecting Dish Road to Peak A View and Billings Road due to construction of a private home. The new property owner has asked that during construction of the home, skiers, etc. not use the trail that now would cross the driveway. Other trails that cross the property, including a small portion of Lauren's Loop and Peak A View, are fine the way they are, as they are not very close to the homesite. The commission agreed that the temporary re-route proposed by Bob would work well. Bob and Gar Anderson will post signs at 5 trail intersections alerting trail users of the changes, and will post new maps showing the temporary routes. Bob will also post blue blazes or blue temporary ribbon along the temporary routes. Bob noted that a permanent trail solution will be needed at some point.

Rec Path Armoring/Relocation on Bouchard Farm

Tom briefed the commission on engineering plans to reroute a portion of the Stowe Recreation Path that was washed out during a major storm. The plan, which is in its 6<sup>th</sup> iteration, would remove bridge #7 and necessitate significant re-dredging of the river to re-route it away from its current path, which damaged the bike path and caused the loss of several acres of cropland farmed by Paul Percy. The new engineering plan will be presented by the engineer in greater detail at Monday's Selectboard meeting.

Cady Hill Forest Management Plan

The commission decided to move the item to the next meeting.

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### Other Business

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM. Due to holidays, there will be no Conservation Commission meeting Dec. 17 or 31. The next meeting will take place on Wed. January 7, 2015 at 5:30 PM at the Akeley Memorial Building. Respectfully submitted by Christine McGowan.