

Strafford Conservation Commission

Minutes

September 23, 2025

Strafford Town Office 7:00 PM

Courtney Potter, Micki Colbeck, Anne Fayen, Erin Yunger, Mike Hebb, Kate Bass, Elizabeth, Howland, JT Erbaugh

Others: Peg Merrens

- Approve minutes from June 24, 2025, meeting. Approved
- Peg Merrens from Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) spoke about a project for newly conserved land in Strafford.

David Taplin is one of the largest landowners in Strafford. He wishes to put 320 acres of his land into a new conservation easement and amend his earlier easement from the 1990s to bring it up to today's standards. David will cover some of the cost of the administration of the easement but would like the community to help with a small portion. Legal and administrative costs will be approximately \$30,000. Peg would like us to consider making a conservation fund which we could do with help from the Alliance of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) group. Or we could make a David Taplin Conservation Fund and UVLT could hold the money under David's name and be used for this project and for future conservation efforts in Strafford. We would become the fundraisers along with UVLT to raise money. A motion to open a fund in David's name with the UVLT was made. All voted yes. Kate, Courtney, Erin and Micki will be the core group for fundraising. Elizabeth and JT will serve as support.

- Jim Armbruster, biologist from VINS is looking to place kestrel boxes in people's fields. We can ask folks if they might be interested and have them contact Jim directly.

1802.359.5000 <jarmbrustervinsweb.org>.

Micki will meet with Erin from VINS on Monday to install a kestrel box in Susan Cloke's field. Erin, JT, and Kate also want to have kestrel nesting boxes.

- Steve Faccio, Mike and Micki will meet with a state wetlands biologist to hike the Cobb Forest fen next Monday, the 29th, to investigate having it reclassified to Class 1 wetland. Kate and Micki attended a selectboard meeting to suggest greater protection for the Cobb Town Forest. The Selectboard was not supportive.
- Trails and guided hikes update: Courtney and Kate may still sponsor a crafting class for kids with natural materials in October. Micki and Levi led a group of around 20 people on a Cobb hike to the fen. Mike has asked all trails managers to do a pass through the trails before winter. Daisy and Micki are taking over management of Whitcomb Hill. Sean has agreed to mow later in the year, after the frost, to help the pollinators. Andy Milne has agreed to help Daisy and Micki with keeping an eye on things since he goes there daily.
- Emerald Ash Borer in Cobb Forest. Mike update on basketmakers. It is not going to happen, as it became complicated.
- Next meeting, October 28, 2025, Micki will be gone. Kate will run the meeting.
- Voted to adjourn