

Strafford Conservation Commission

Minutes

January 20, 2026

Strafford Town Office 7:30 PM

Members in attendance: Courtney Potter, Micki Colbeck, Joanne Blais, Kate Bass, JT Erbaugh, Mike Hebb, Andrei Kubail Kalousdian, Erin Yunger

Non-voting Members: Margaret Romney

- Approved minutes from December 2025 meeting.
- Welcome our new members, Marty Frank, and Joanne Blais, and Margaret Romney(non-voting).
- Trails report. Mike Hebb.  
Will be a lot of maintenance because of the ice storm, but the trail managers should be able to handle the clean-up.
- Town Summary of SCC 2025 activities is due this week.
- Review of our funds:
  - \$11649.82 in our reserve account. This reflects the \$6000 donation from the Alliance for Vermont Communities in 2022
  - \$3765.88 in our Whitcomb Hill fund.
  - \$2196.60 in a Conservation Trust.
- Kate wrote and submitted a proposal to the town asking for a yearly budget from the town for extra expenses:  
speakers, river clean up, removal of trash, educational supplies for outdoor education.
- Micki and Kate emailed the ANR about proposed changes to wetland protection rules:

Wetlands Rulemaking Committee,

On behalf of the 9-person Strafford Conservation Commission, we are writing about the proposed changes to wetland regulations. But we believe we are speaking for most of us in Strafford, who live in a beautiful river-carved valley, one that has flooded many times and will continue to do so. The safety features we have that protect our homes

and charming old villages is that we have been blessed with large floodplains in the valley that absorb tremendous amounts of water, releasing it slowly during floods. We have also been blessed with hills and forests full of class-two wetlands that also hold water, releasing it slowly, purifying the water as well, protecting our drinking water. These wetlands are rich with rare and unusual plants, many of which have not yet been “discovered”. We agree that Vermont needs more affordable housing, but because of the enormous costs left in the wake of flooding, it will ultimately cost more in the long run if development is encouraged in wet places rather than in higher, dryer sites that are still close to village centers. Thank you for considering our viewpoint.

Micki Colbeck, Chair & Kate Bass, Co-chair

- Other business: Brainstorm speakers for next year, maybe a game camera demo, Daisy could speak about botanical illustrations and pollinators, and Andi Lloyd could possibly speak about dendrochronology- her former field. Mike suggests having some items/tools that we purchase but could be checked out from the library- game camera, weed puller, fleur camera, kilowatt meters, soil ph meter, telescope, metal detector, field guides, and handouts.
- Mike and Kate will approach the topic with the library, Micki will reach out to Andi, Kate will reach out to Daisy, Mike and Kate will talk to the library.
- Educational hikes for next season: Andrei wants teach fly fishing, Paul Harwood might lead a tree identification walk, Erin might do a workshop on making teas from wild plants.
- Next meeting is February 24, 2026, 7pm
- Voted to adjourn