

Andover Conservation Commission
August 13, 2026
Approved Minutes

Present: Pecco Beaufays, Miranda Dawalga, Jesse Schust, Sooze Hodgson, Lee Wells, Laurel Shinerock, Tina Cotton

Also attending: Jay Terceira, Christine Murray, Barbara Couturier, Tristan Rocher, Daniel Burgester

Meeting opened at: 7:00pm

Motion made by Laurel to approve July minutes, seconded by Jesse: all in favor

NHDES Wetland violations reports & updates

219 Flaghole Road:

Jay Terceira and Christine Murray came to the meeting to give us background information and an update on their property at 219 Flaghole Road. They bought the property in July 2017, and initially enjoyed having a farm there with goats, chickens, pigs, and dogs, and having wildlife on their property and nearby.

Jay and Christine reported that there have been problems since purchasing the property. They sued the estate from which they bought the property as they incurred additional costs: they had to install a septic system as there was none which they discovered after they moved to the property. Most recently they paid to have the land surveyed to determine where the actual boundaries are.

Abutters wanted to dredge/drain a contaminated pond on their property which they started in 2022. The abutters also did some ditching to divert water from the farm pond on the abutters' property. Jay reported that the abutters said they had permission, but from whom the permission was granted was unclear. Ditching was done by equipment that got stuck in the mud. Freeing the mired equipment resulted in more silt in the water. Since then, Jay and Christine have had problems with their own water supply and have contamination in their well. This is now a health issue. Sludge from the dredging was deposited on land that has been determined to be on Jay and Christine's property, proved by Jay's recent survey. The abutters' farm pond has been drained into Sucker Brook which goes through prime wetland and eventually flows into Highland Lake. First dredging happened in November, 2022. Jay filed a complaint in September, 2025. Don Sieburg, Town Administrator, contacted the Andover Conservation Commission about the situation on July 13, 2026, and asked for recommendations from the Andover Conservation Commission (ACC). Miranda, responding from the ACC, performed a site visit, with permission to access 219 Flaghole Rd, and sent an e-mail containing photos and observations to Jen Drociak (NHDES) on July 15, 2026. Jen responded back on July 16, 2026, and forwarded all correspondences to Calvin Diessner, the new regional

inspector for NHDES. At the time of this ACC meeting on August 13, 2026, Mr. Diessner had not yet made a site visit to Mr. Terceira's property. Mr. Diessner has recently contacted Jay and apologized for being late with his response. He will be coming to visit the property soon. Jay reports that recent water testing has documented two kinds of bacteria in their well water. They are now drinking bottled water and are using purchased water for their farm animals. Jay and Christine report that they have been told by DES that they are responsible for cleaning up the sludge as it is now, per the recent survey, on their property. Once they have incurred the costs of the sludge clean-up they then could sue their abutters for the incursion onto their property and for recovery to their clean-up costs.

DHH (Department of Health and Human Services) health officer for the Town of Andover is now Don Sieburg. A Town is required to have a health officer. With the documented contamination of the Terceira's well and contamination of water flowing into Sucker Brook this problem now has become a town health problem. The health risk situation is now in Don's and the Select Board's hands.

On the morning of August 13, 2026) Miranda provided Don, Elita Reed (Finance Director) and Dana Swenson (Chair, Select Board) with copies of the Andover Conservation's e mail correspondence with Jay, Christine, and NHDES. Jay wants to keep the Conservation Commission informed. DES admitted that they had not been communicating well, and they would respond.

We want people to feel that we are concerned, and that we follow up when there are concerns.

The Conservation Commission will continue to be in contact with DES and the State Health Officials, if necessary, as well as with the Andover Select Board as in-depth information is gathered and as a resolution to this problem occurs.

Lake Smart Presentation at the Hub

On August 3, 2026 the Andover Conservation Commission and the Andover Hub hosted a well-received presentation from NH Lakes by Brea Arvidson, Director of Programs. Brea talked about Lake friendly boating. Brea's focus of discussion was on developing lake friendly communities. Barbara Couturier, President of Highland Lake Protective Association has had a Lake Smart inspection done at her place and found it very helpful. A NH Lakes inspection lets people know what they can do to make their homes more lake-friendly in a non-judgmental way. Primary goals: keeping run-off out of the lake, having landscaping/planting that prevents erosion and runoff. These inspections are done at no cost to the landowner. Once one's inspection is done, the results are sent to the landowner electronically, and provide access to a website, with one's "account" which the landowner can update as their "lake-friendly" changes are made.

4 areas of focus for NH Lakes

- Drainage
- Septic systems
- Yard, gardens, slope, buffer vegetation, beach and prevention of beach erosion
- Shoreline, water access

Barbara reviewed for the ACC her property's Lake Smart evaluation: Recommendations for her property included: Control run-off from their driveway; Define footpaths; Leave pathways clear and allow pine needles to accumulate elsewhere; Plant another row of blueberry bushes along the shoreline; Remove or change the ramp from basement to water for launching boats; Terrace or tier steep parts of the yard near the waterfront.

Barbara talked about starting a Lake Smart community. In Andover there are 7 lakes, and 3 named rivers. There is a form to be filled out to apply to become designated as a Lake Smart Community (see NHLakes.org.) There are several ways to work on this:

- Continue the VLAP (volunteer lake assessment Program), which already has been on-going for several years. We are in the "good" range in all categories in the most recent water testing.
- Build relationships with lakeside landowners and encourage them to obtain a no-cost Lake Smart evaluation.
- Encourage lakeside owners to have their septic systems inspected and pumped regularly.
- Schedule a Lake Smart Community Day.

Priority Business

- ACC BHBT balance & budget – spent \$150 for ASLPT (Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust), \$250 for NH Lakes membership.
- Deposit of \$600 from funds from properties coming out of current use. That amount has already been sent to surveyor to do the visible marking of town property and abutters [Sirard] access on Bradley Lake. Don Sieburg, Town Administrator, will be communicating with the abutter.
- Potential Conservation Properties/Town Forests – Laurel and Sooze had hoped to meet with Les Fenton. Sooze had a phone conversation with Les on August 12, 2026. The Fenton family is interested in having the ACC involved with stewardship, not ownership. The first idea is to develop a kayak/canoe launch area on some of the Fenton's conservation land which abuts Rte 4 and the Blackwater River. Information about permitting for road access onto Rte 4 has been explored. The Fentons have had deeded access across Rte. 4 in this area for many years. Greg Ward, D.O.T. Director of Access and Utilities Coordinator, assessed this access area on August 13, 2026 and has provided a follow-up e mail report outlining how an appropriate driveway into a

parking area could be done. The next step is to have Les Fenton contact the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) to review the provisions of his conservation easement and to discuss possible plans to increase public recreation on some areas of the easement land. Les has been provided with the contact information for the Easement Stewardship Director at SPNHF. We also will explore with SPNHF developing guidelines for stewardship of public recreation activities on the Fenton Conservation land by the Andover Conservation Commission. NH Fish and Game is in support of increasing public access to NH waterways, but they will provide no funding for boat launches which are not for motorized boats.

- McDonough Bench Updates –Lee and Ken Wells, Miranda, Nancy Robart, Don Moyer and Ricker Miller (from the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail) met Wednesday, August 12, 2026 with John Thompson, gave him details of size of bench, desired location, etc. We would like some kind of structure under the bench so it can be secured. Don and Ricker recommended that Thompson use stone dust to level the area. John will provide us with an estimate soon. It is something that he could complete before Winter.

On Thursday, August 13th Miranda, Lee, Ken, and Ricker met with John Champagne – went over the same information with him. He recommended that we use a tomb lid as a concrete pad, which would give the bench stability, give us something to secure it to, and we would not have to dig (and not have to contact Dig Safe). He also recommended that we move the bench location a little downstream. This was a location that we had flagged earlier because it has the best view of Sucker Brook. We had decided against it because the space between the edge of the trail and the embankment appeared to be too narrow. Jon has offered to donate the material and labor needed to widen that space in order to have the bench located with a better view. If we do decide to move the location, we will need to get approval from Don and Ricker and their help with getting approval from the State Bureau of Trails.

Motion made by Jesse, seconded by Miranda, to change the location of the bench provided that the new location is approved by FNRT and NH Bureau of Trails: all in favor. Miranda will wait to hear back from Don and Ricker before informing John Thompson of the change and asking him if he'd like to change his bid.

- ACC related articles for Newspaper: Motion was made to submit the ACC's Lake Friendly article to the Beacon Valley Life (articles@beaconvalleylife.com), seconded by Jesse: all in favor.

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Miranda, seconded by Jesse: all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:50.

Minutes taken by Lee Wells
Andover Conservation Commission

Promoting a Lake-Friendly Andover with NH LAKES

Co-Written by ACC Members Miranda Dawalga & Laurel Shinerock

On a warm, quiet, summer morning, just before the sun rises and the busy day begins, the distinct call of a loon echoes through every inlet of Highland Lake. High above the trees, an eagle soars, scanning the water for the perfect meal. As the day gets warmer, residents of all ages flock to the beach and the lake fills with swimmers, kayakers, paddle boarders, and boaters, taking in all that the lake has to offer. Yet what can we offer the lake in return?

Highland Lake is just one of seven State-recognized lakes and ponds in Andover, NH. The others are Bradley Lake, Adder (Hopkins) Pond, Elbow Pond, Horseshoe Pond, Bog Pond, and Cole Pond. Andover is also graced by three state-recognized rivers and streams: the Blackwater River, Cascade Brook, and Frazier Brook, as well as 26 state-recognized prime wetlands. Each of these lakes, ponds, and other wetlands provides valuable resources to our community, including drinking water, recreation, and habitats for abundant and diverse plants and wildlife.

The privilege of living on and alongside these bodies of water calls for some responsibility in helping to maintain the health and well-being of these resources. While Andover's lakes have not historically had severe issues with contamination, increased stress on the lakes from a growing population, old or unmaintained septs, and property improvement projects pose a high risk for future problems. But what specific actions can we take in order to protect our lakes, ponds, rivers, and wetlands?

At a recent presentation, co-hosted by The Andover Community Hub, the Andover Conservation Commission (ACC), and The Highland Lake Protective Association (HLP), Brea Arvidson, Director of Programs for the non-profit NH LAKES, discussed how Andover residents can protect their water resources through her organization's lake-friendly programs.

NH LAKES offers several programs to help promote awareness and provide active solutions that will contribute to keeping our lakes healthy, all of which support the notion that we can use and appreciate our lakes while also caring for them. Lake-friendly activities include the Lake-Friendly Boating Initiative, which NH Lakes introduced this year to help boaters recreate in areas of the lake best suited for their activity. Working to prevent the introduction and spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) is another key initiative. Recently, the HLP joined the Lake Host Program - one of nearly 90 ramps across the state that provide courtesy boat inspections to keep AIS from invading Andover's biggest lake.

NH LAKES also shared that property owners on our lakes can live in a lake-friendly way through participating in their LakeSmart Program. LakeSmart is a free and non-regulatory program that educates and recognizes property owners and communities for adopting habits that protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and property values. Property owners who choose to participate receive a property assessment from NH LAKES, which is followed up by feedback and lake-friendly suggestions. In-person assessments are available during the summer, and property owners can join their local LakeSmart Community to request one.

Thanks to the NH LAKES presentation, Highland Lake just became a LakeSmart Community! To learn more about the LakeSmart Program in Andover, you can contact Barbara Couturier (President of HLPa) at hlpanh@gmail.com , the ACC at andover.nh.conserva,on@gmail.com, or visit nhlakes.org/lakesmart/.