

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1967 – FIFTY-NINE YEARS AND COUNTING – 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes – September 14, 2026

Members Present: Haley Andreozzi, Davis Brush, Aaron Freed, Josh Freed, Serita Frey, Rich Lacourse, Erroll Rhodes,
Judy Marshall (Clerk/Alternate)
Members Absent: Ken Cohen (Alternate)
Visitors & Guests: James Franklin, Thadeus Clark, George Thompson

Chair, Serita Frey, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Land surveyor James Franklin, representing Thadeus and Shannon Clark and Pamela Hebert, responded to members' questions during a review of an expedited wetlands permit application to construct a driveway to the Clark's house site.

The roadway would cross a narrow, seasonal stream situated in a scrub wetland on the Clark property on Old Center Road, Map 410 Lot 103. A 24" culvert was deemed to be sufficient to facilitate the wetland crossing. Members questioned whether the intended culvert would be an embedded, substrate-lined HDPE product (not considered to be ideal), or a concrete culvert. In either case, the culvert should be designed to mimic a natural streambed to accommodate amphibian crossing. Mr. Franklin noted that using a box culvert would eliminate the need for a permit, but would result in a greater wetland impact.

DES has not suggested a site visit at this time; however, the site is scheduled to be surveyed by a certified wetland scientist on 9/16/2026 to confirm or rule out the presence of small whorled pogonia (a threatened species), which was indicated to be potentially present in the project area, by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. DCC will be updated on the outcome of the site visit.

A final determination whether to sign the application for expedited DES approval will be made at a special meeting of the DCC scheduled for Tuesday, September 22nd at 6 pm.

George Thompson was present to follow up on concerns related to the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) that he expressed at previous DCC meetings.

To summarize, Mr. Thompson's concerns have centered around Thurston Pond being identified as an area considered ecologically desirable from the perspective of attendees at the January 23, 2025 Community Forum, and being included on a list of Conservation Focus Areas in the NRI. Because of this designation, Mr. Thompson is concerned that there could be an effort to place restrictions on his property through zoning or other regulations.

His concerns arise from a section in the NRI that suggests data from the NRI could be used to help guide decision-making by Town boards, including the Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and Zoning Board, potentially affecting his property contrary to his wishes. As such, Mr. Thompson was asking for assurance that the information used to compile the NRI would not be used against him, as well as how he would know if there were an effort to do so and whether meeting agendas would reflect such a discussion.

In response, members explained that the DCC has no authority to impose restrictions on an individual property and that its land conservation efforts are focused on landowners who have expressed an interest in conserving their land. The DCC can make recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Boards and hopes that the NRI can serve as a decision-making tool for Town boards and others; however, the DCC has no enforcement authority. From a land conservation perspective, participation in conservation is completely voluntary. Discussions are generally town-wide in nature. If the DCC intended to discuss a particular focus area, that information would be posted on the meeting agenda, in which case Mr. Thompson could attend the meeting if he chose to do so.

Mr. Thompson referenced two remaining questions of the five originally posed and answered by the DCC. The first asks if there was a data-sharing agreement with the NH Natural Heritage Bureau to collect relevant, albeit publicly restricted, data and, if there was, what data was collected, how it was used, and to whom it is available. Secondly, Mr. Thompson asked if the above information was used in the NRI StoryMap, other maps, or reports, and, if so, what data was collected, how it was used, and to whom it is available. In both cases, Mr. Thompson asked if the information was available to him and to identify the authority that makes it publicly restricted.

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Mr. Thompson requested the above information from Moosewood Ecological, LLC, as was suggested at the July 13th DCC meeting; however, he has had no response to date. Serita Frey will follow up with Moosewood.

Note: At Mr. Thompson's request, the DCC provided an opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting, during which Mr. Thompson inquired whether the DCC has a specific period for public comment. He also asked by what means members of the public who might have an interest in hearing a discussion on a particular land-use permit being presented for DCC recommendation, such as the Clark expedited Wetland Permit being reviewed that evening, would be aware of the proceeding.

Mr. Thompson also commented on a section in the DCC minutes from January 8, 2024, relative to identification of important areas. Haley Andreozzi explained that, in considering whether to overlay the identified areas of ecological importance onto tax maps, the inclination was to avoid doing so because it could lead to a misinterpretation of the information as applying specifically to individual parcels. The Conservation Focus Areas identified in the NRI are intended to represent broader areas of ecological importance; some landowners would welcome their location within the various areas, while others would be concerned about being omitted.

Resident Concern

Serita Frey was contacted by resident James McDonald regarding recurring activity that was significantly impacting a wetland. Mr. McDonald was scheduled to **address his concerns** with the DCC regarding the potential violation, but did not join the meeting. Chair Frey will follow up on the matter.

Trails

Trail Inventory Project

Mariah Keagy from Sinuosity is tentatively scheduled to update the members on the project at the October 19th meeting.

Regular Business

Minutes:

Motion:

Serita Frey Moved to approve the minutes of the August 10th regular meeting.

Second: *Erroll Rhodes*

Discussion: *None*

Vote: *The August 10th minutes were approved as written, with one abstention from Haley Andreozzi who was not present on 8/10.*

Finance:

August Ending Conservation Fund Balance – \$ 749,506.34

July Interest posted in August – \$1,115.78

Moosewood 6/25/2026 Invoice #6 - \$1,770.00 – Payment Posted 8/21

Sinuosity 8/5/2026 Invoice #1 - \$3,025.00 – Payment Posted 8/21

(Sinuosity contract payments NTE \$12,980.00 were authorized on 8/10/2026)

2027 Budget:

The DCC 2027 Budget Report is scheduled for presentation to the BOS on 9/21.

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Motion:

Serita Frey Moved to reimburse Erroll Rhodes for invoices totaling \$257.16 representing the cost of printing and binding Six copies of the Natural Resources Inventory.

Second: *Davis Brush*

Discussion: *None*

Vote: *The motion passed with one abstention from Erroll Rhodes*

Stewardship & Easement Monitoring

Hart Town Forest

There has been no response from the abutting property owner who may be responsible for cutting a new trail into the Hart Town Forest. As decided at the August 10th meeting, a certified letter, clearly outlining DCC's concerns, will be mailed to the abutter. A copy of the Bear-Paw monitoring report was attached to Mr. Rhodes' previous email to the abutter.

Easements and Land Protection

Strategic Planning

The completion of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) has given DCC the tools to be more strategic and less reactive in its approach to land conservation. This snap-shot-in-time enables the Commission to more judiciously approach landowners who may be interested in some form of conservation for their land, allowing DCC to base its decisions on the parcel's attributes, using up-to-date data about its conservation value.

A discussion on how to proceed yielded the following talking points:

- **Strategic Planning**
 - Determine the one thing we want to accomplish in the next year
 - Develop goals
 - Create a list of action items as a guide to determine how to proceed
- **Next Steps**
 - Devote 30 minutes per meeting to planning
 - Speak with land trusts to determine their interest and capacity to assist in the process
 - Develop a list of resources
 - Compose a landowner letter
 - Hire help with landowner engagement
 - Develop a list of potential contacts using information from the NRI
 - Review options for utilizing suggestions from the *Conservation Commission Funds Ideas* list
 - Explore methods for working with the public
 - Make DCC public-facing information more available; ensure accessibility to residents
 - Explore cooperation with other bodies
- **Potential Conservation Partners/Land Trusts**
 - Southeast Land Trust (SELT), The Forest Society (SPNHF), The Nature Conservancy, Federal: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) including Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)
 - Preliminary conversations: Haley Andreozzi – Southeast Land Trust, Serita Frey – Bear-Paw
- **SELT (Southeast Land Trust of NH)**
 - Currently has no significant activity in Deerfield
 - Interested in working in Deerfield
 - Some opportunities may not be a good fit
 - Offered a list of procedural questions to start the conversation (information gathering, vetting, etc.) which can be used with any other land trusts
 - Enable us to make a smart investment of the LUCT

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o **Bear-Paw**

- o Focusing on in its own strategic planning
- o Currently lacks the capacity to partner (no staff land protection person at this time)
- o Prioritizing fully donated easements
- o Priority is fully funded easements: Organizational funding not available and not pursuing outside funding sources
- o Considering initiatives that have a straight-forward risk profile, i.e. uncomplicated transactions with clear ownership
- o Prefer Town-held easements with Bear-Paw as Executory Interest Holder (as opposed to Bear-Paw as grantee and Town secondary)

o **SPNHF (Society for the Protection of NH Forests/The Forest Society),
The Nature Conservancy, NRCS**

- o Prefer larger, ecologically valuable initiatives
- o Their preference is fee ownership of parcels
- o NRCS usually driven by wetland functions and values

• **Our Approach**

- Recognize that this is a major, personal decision for the landowner
- Offer various conservation options
 - Conservation through guided maintenance, providing tools and resources for conserving
 - Conserve by granting a formal conservation easement
 - Conserve using Fee ownership

• **Landowner Outreach**

- Overlay identified areas of ecological importance onto tax maps with Moosewood, other professional assistance or UNH student assistance
- Identify appropriate candidates for outreach
- Begin with a broad list of landowners/potential conservation partners
- More narrowly identify potential candidates within NRI focus areas
- Contact owners using informational letters, providing options for conservation
- Further filter responses by level of interest and conservation value, focusing on specific parcel attributes

• **Landowner Letter (Awareness & Educational Outreach)**

- List the available options
- Explain Financial support and funding options
- Formulate next steps on how to move ahead if there is an interest

• **General Outreach**

- Publicize what we are doing in printed and electronic media (educational/awareness letter)
- Create a page on the Deerfield Heritage.org website with information listing priorities
- Produce an informational/educational video
- Implement ideas from *Conservation Commission Fund Ideas* list
- Host and advertise a Q&A session with a panel to include representatives from a land trust, UNH and a landowner

• **Conservation Commission Fund Ideas List**

- Categorize the list
- Prioritize the list items by cost and DCC bandwidth to implement
- Implement specific ideas as a means of outreach

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- **Members To-Do**

- Review allowable uses of conservation funds per RSA's (Conservation Funds Handbook)
- Resource Sheet: List of resources providing information about, and all options for, managing and conserving
- Research options for building a list of landowners falling within focus areas (tax map overlay over focus areas: Moosewood, UNH student, other professional means)
- Subdivide the Conservation Fund Ideas list based on goals and interests aligned with DCC and Town constituencies

Regulated Wetlands & Shorelands:

Notifications/Permits/Applications/Potential Violations

Motion:

Erroll Rhodes Moved to require that full documentation for permit applications being presented for review by the DCC be submitted no later than one week in advance of the meeting tentatively scheduled for the review.

Second: *Aaron Freed*

Discussion: *To allow members sufficient time for review prior to the meeting*

Vote: *The motion passed unanimously*

Informational only at this time. No DCC action taken. DES application permitting review in process.

Carter – Pinecrest Rd - Map 424 Lot 079 (Emailed to Members 8/26)

Shoreland Permit Application (RSA 483-B) NHDES File Number: 2026-02273

Project Description:

Installation of a 13'4" x 75 ft - manufactured home, well and septic on 0.77-acre waterfront parcel within 250-foot protected shoreland area of the Lamprey approximately 125 feet from the river with a septic system approximately 100 feet from the river

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

A Special Meeting to discuss the Carter Application is scheduled for
6 PM on Tuesday September 22, 2026

The next regular meeting is scheduled for 7 PM on Monday October 19, 2026

(Please check the website townofdeerfieldnh.com for scheduling changes)

These minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Revisions, if any, will be contained in the minutes of the next meeting and posted to the Town website, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission