Conservation Land Review Committee

A subcommittee of

Tamworth & Sandwich Conservation Commissions

MINUTES

Meeting of April 21, 2026 • Sandwich Town Office

DRAFT to be approved at a subsequent meeting.

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Ned at **~5:10 pm, Sandwich Town Office & on Zoom**

Present: Nancy Walser (SCC), David Little (via Zoom), Dylan Alden (via Zoom), Ned Beecher (TCC), Anne Glavin (SCC), Ron Albert (SCC, had to leave a bit before the end of the meeting), Caroline Nesbitt (had to leave ½ way through meeting), and Dwight Emery (SCC). Not able to attend: Dexter Harding (via Zoom), Teresa Fournier

Minutes of March 17, 2026 – to be reviewed & approved at the next meeting.

O'Bryan and Aprille conservation easements - Ned noted that these Tamworth easements are now signed & recorded, with copies sent to Nelson O'Bryan & June Aprille, with the original filed in the town vault. Britt (TCC Admin. Assistant) is creating files for easement monitoring (red & green folders & easement summary pages).

Ongoing work of updating the towns' systems for prioritizing land conservation– co-occurrence mapping

- Provided by email in preparation for this meeting:
  - A "2026 CLRC Categories Master.docx" provided by Dylan & Nancy that brings together categories from key sources:
    - 2006 CLRC NRI categories
    - 2007 CLRC co-occurrence summary
    - 2009 TCC considerations for land protection document
    - Lakes Region Conservation Plan 2017
    - NH Wildlife Action Plan 2025
    - https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f20f7af103ac4f3a9ab8a4e18b37f968
  - A spreadsheet table with color-separated, side-by-side comparisons of the different categories from the various sources, which David created (see attached version with annotations from this meeting)
- See minutes of prior meetings for goals & the process for this work.
- Discussion began with a focus on the color-separated spreadsheet PDF that David had provided, showing the various attributes/categories for possible co-occurrence scoring and mapping that have been compiled from the various sources (see attached).
  - Reiterated David's suggestion that we be careful to avoid double-counting of any particular attribute. This led to idea that the Wildlife Action Plan maps & scoring be considered as an additional factor to consider, but not be part of this scoring & co-occurrence mapping system we are creating, because that WAP process already takes into account some of the same attributes, such as large unfragmented forest blocks. Of course, as Anne noted, if we decide we want to double count (add weight to) some particular category, that is fine.

- Discussion then addressed what might we be missing from the list in the table David created? A few items were added (in yellow text) to the spreadsheet matrix; see attached).
- This also led to mentions of a number of other factors for decision-makers to consider alongside the co-occurrence scoring & mapping, including:
    - Threat of development… some organizations are moved to protect a parcel sooner – even if it is a lower priority by the scoring system - because of an immediate threat of it being developed.
    - Size of parcel: Most organizations have a rough or more precise minimum area to be protected, but, as Ron noted, sometimes a broader project or some other consideration requires flexibility and accepting of a small parcel that is key to the larger project, such as in the riverfront development in Franklin where LRCT is willing to take on an acre or two to help the bigger project. Caroline mentioned that Concord is taking on conservation of some small parcels as part of a broader effort to curb sprawl. It was noted later in the meeting that the Chocorua Lake Conservancy takes any size parcel in their watershed/basin (usually by donation).
    - Effort & cost involved in obtaining the easement/land protection for the particular parcel(s). Land trusts always have to consider how much time and effort and money will be required; Ron noted that, right now, LRCT is stretched thin and is thus focused for now on easements being donated. Our volunteer Commissions have limited time & energy.
    - Which organization(s) are best suited to hold a particular easement/parcel? There was discussion of whether our towns are the best holders of easements, a concern that Caroline has been thinking about. Sometimes easements become controversies and can be costly for a town to defend/deal with. Ned noted that an easement, like much that we do with public policy, is a social construct and has benefit even if it gets challenged later, because most people see the land as protected and it avoids development for years or decades or forever. Any land trust has the same challenges and concerns, just like towns do, of the possible costs of dealing with easement monitoring and enforcement. We noted ways to hedge this:
        - keeping a stewardship fund that can pay legal costs for defending easements (in Tamworth, there is a held-aside stewardship line in the Conservation Fund)
        - having a land trust hold a formal executory (back-up) interest in the easement.
    - In summary, we imagine the items listed above as part of a list of "additional factors to consider" in addition to – and for consideration alongside - the co-occurrence scoring & mapping we are refining in David's spreadsheet.
    - Ron noted also that a land trust or a CC might want to consider obtaining (likely by purchase) a right of first refusal, which could be in a variety of forms, including a typical right of first refusal where the seller would have to obtain a bid from the land trust or CC before selling the parcel. Or, there are likely other options that lawyers could craft that allow for intervention when land is being sold/transferred to ensure an easement is placed on it. Such legal maneuvers are always available to a town CC and/or land trust if needed, and mention of this could be on our list of factors for decision-makers to consider.
- Next steps:
    - Ned suggested someone take the input & annotations on David's spreadsheet and create a proposed draft of our nested list of co-occurrence categories that we can refine and discuss at our next meeting. The group agreed to ~5 top-level categories,

which are highlighted in purple in the attached (water resources, wildlife & wildlife corridors, etc.)

- David suggested we focus the choices of major categories on the question "What are we trying to protect?" Thus, we might use the phrase "water quality and quantity" or "water resources" to describe that top-level category that includes second-level things such as groundwater, surface water, wetlands, etc. Part of the challenge of this effort is to figure out which precise words we will use for each category/attribute, as the various efforts we are learning from have used different words for the same or similar attributes.
- Dwight kindly offered to provide the group with a next-draft spreadsheet integrating all the categories that David, Nancy, & Dylan had compiled into one proposed co-occurrence list that can be the focus of further discussion. He will integrate into it the information from this meeting and share the result with the CLRC soon, in preparation for the next meeting.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 19, 5:00 pm. Location TBD.

Adjourned: ~6:35 pm.

Submitted by Ned Beecher, 23 April 2026

Co-occurance Categories:
UVSLT, LRCT, TCC, SPNHF

4/18/2026

UVSLT Priority planning	LRCT Delphi	TCC 2007	SPNHF
Water Resources			
Watershed Protection	Watershed		
Aquifers	Aquifers		
Flood Storage	NWI wetlands and Hydric Soils	Wetlands	Climate Mitigation (floodplains)
Wellhead Protection Areas	Wellhead Protection areas	Water Quality	Drinking Water Resources (surface and ground water)
		Surface water	Surface Water Resources (streams, wetlands, shorelines)
	Favorable gravel Well sites		
	Impaired Waters		
	EPA reference reach		
	Riparian and Shoreland Buffers		
Ecological Integrity			
High ranking Natural Communities	WAP Teirs	NH Fish and Game WAP Tiers	Critical Wildlife Habitat (WAP Tier I/II)
Wildlife Corridors			Connectivity/Wildlife Corridors
Unfragmented Forest Blocks	Unfragmented Forest Blocks	Unfragmented Forest Blocks	Unfragmented Forest Blocks
Conservation Parcel Connectivity			Enhancing Existing Conservation Lands
Climate Resiliency			
Carbon Storage			Climate Resilience (TNC's Resilient and Connected Network)
Farmland Protection agriculture			
Important Agriculutural Soils		Agricultural Soils	
Open Fields		Agricultural Use	
Public Access & Scenic Value			
Trail Corridors			Regionally Significant Recreation Trails (non-motorized)
Designated Scenic Areas			
	Habitats		Rare and Endangered Species Habitats (Plant, Animals, Natural Communities)
	Floodplain forest complexes		
	Species of interest habitat		
	Marsh Complexes		
wildlife & wildlife corridors	Peatlands complexes		
		Habitats unusual or threatened (selected from WAP)	
		Pine Barrens	
		Flood Plain	
		Spruce Fir	
		Northern Hardwoods	
		Old Forests	
		Black Spruce Sphagnum Bogs	
		Ledge	
		Eskers	
		Obsidian Mines	
		Vernal pools/crossings	
	Steep Slopes >25% topographic		
	Highly erodible soils		
		Development potential soils	
		Forest Soils	Productive Forest Land

Other potential/related attributes:
threat of development

Other factors to consider
size of parcel (another filter)
difficulty of obtaining easement (donated, in partner with other organizations?
recommendation or interest by a professional land trust