



Lyme Conservation Commission (LCC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 10, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
Lyme Fire Station Meeting Room

Present: Blake Allison (Chair), Sue MacKenzie (Vice-Chair), Ann Flood (Secretary), Matt Stevens, Meg Sheehan, Lin Brown, Jill Niles (Alternate) and John Biglow (Alternate)

Members and public via Zoom: None

Public present: None

Blake called the meeting into session at 7:05 pm. Jill was appointed as a full voting member.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2025-10-06 Meeting

On a motion by Ann, seconded by Sue, the October minutes were approved by a unanimous rollcall vote, with members who were not present at that meeting abstaining.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Town Forest and Chaffee Conservation Easements Update –**
- **Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS).** There are two separate but somewhat intertwined documents about CWS that are being discussed: (i) the existing CWS Management Plan (Plan) and (ii) the potential need for a Conservation Easement for the CWS (Easement).
 - i) Blake reminded LCC members that all have in the recent past received copies of the 2003 Plan by email. There is general agreement that the Plan needs to be updated for several reasons, including language about what needs to be managed. The LCC attempted to revise the Plan in 2010, but it was never fully ratified due to concerns raised in conjunction with beaver activity around CWS causing flooding in the adjacent Town ballfield. At that time, the LCC had wanted the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) to become the manager but that was not settled.
 - ii) Blake reviewed our discussion at the last month's meeting about the Easement, including his getting the opinion of Peg Merrens, Vice President, Conservation at UVLT. She said the LLC should be the group to 'call the shots', not the UVLT. She indicated that, because of the unique history of the CWS, it is questionable as to whether an Easement is needed. The forever wild status appears to be essentially in place because federal conservation funds were involved in its purchase from the Nichols property (as well as from the Lyme Conservation Fund through local donors). Blake mentioned that he is still trying to definitively determine from its history whether it already has forever wild status or whether, for example, the Town could propose new housing developments for the site. Briefly, Nichols transferred the property to the LCC; there is a quit deed claim on it. There was also an additional acquisition of land needed to construct the berm to prevent flooding of the ballfield. He will contact Lee Larson to see if he has any information about the history of the land that could shed more light.



Second draft

- **Town Forest.** The Town Forest does not currently have forever wild status. Blake reported that the risk to it has recently increased because The State of NH legislature has recently allowed construction along Class VI roads such as Mud Turtle Pond Road. Blake also spoke with Peg Merrens about our plans for an Easement for the Town Forest. She said going ahead with an easement makes sense but, given the expense of preparing the paperwork to do so and surveying it (potentially ~\$30,000 +/-), we should consider being sure that the Town would approve it before spending a lot of money. This would require adding a warrant to the next Town meeting to see if there is general agreement to provide forever wild status to the Town Forest. There was some discussion about what the Town residents might want to know before agreeing to it and whether such details should be in the warrant and/or need for us to be ready to address at the meeting.

After some additional discussion, there was a consensus that we would like to move forward based on this advice and put a warrant on the Town Meeting 2026 to determine whether we should proceed to place an Easement on the Town Forest. The deadline for placing a warrant for the next Town meeting was not clear, i.e., it may be as soon as early Dec or as late as mid January. The LCC requested that Blake find out the deadline and any advice about what should be included in our warrant.

In general, the consensus was that the warrant would not ask for monies at this time but instead would seek agreement that the LCC should develop a Plan and Easement to protect it in perpetuity. It should note that monies involved would not involve the Town adding money to the LCC to obtain an Easement. Blake noted that in the recent past, a majority of the Select Board appears to support obtaining an Easement. The LCC would be willing to host a special meeting or devote a portion of a meeting to hear public interests and concerns about the future uses of the Town Forest. This may occur after the Town Meeting 2026 and could be included in the warrant or declared at the Meeting.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Town Forest “Ledge Trail” Outlook Update**

Jill reported on recent developments on a project to maintain the view along the Ledge Trail in the Town Forest. She and Peter McGowan recently walked the trail to the ledge that has the only beautiful view along the trail, agreeing that it should be maintained. Right now it is overgrown and needs some trees to be felled and some early growth of trees that should be discouraged. Peter (and his wife Kathy) offered to pay up to \$1000 to have it done. Peter contacted Eric Bragg of GreenShield Arboriculture, Thetford VT, who agreed to remove ~12 trees before the first major snow of the winter or next spring for \$850. Peter agreed to pay that amount for this work and Eric sent Peter a contract to sign. Peter asked Blake to co-sign since it is on Town property. John raised issues about whether there are additional things that should be considered besides the view, i.e., making it wildlife friendly, such as leaving parts of the trees. There was general agreement that the LCC would like to support this proposal but there are concerns about work done on/by contract from the Town and wildlife concerns in addition to concerns about preserving views. Jill urged the LCC to move ahead ASAP and shared the GreenShield contract with the whole CC (by paper copy and by email). Matt suggested that all who were willing to review the current contract from Eric should respond very promptly by email. Blake agreed to follow up with Dina Cutting to find out how the check should be made out to reimburse the Town.



- **Town Forest and Trout Pond Forest Draft Management Plans**
There was some discussion about preparing a draft of the Plans (and Easement), using the report on managing it from Rick Van De Poll as a template for the Plan (and Easement) already approved for Trout Pond Forest as a template for the Easement). Meg said she could use legal AI to begin to draft documents which we can then modify. Matt noted that a new survey of the Town Forest is likely to be needed because it consists of three parcels, i.e., two new parcels have been acquired since the original survey of the Town Forest, and the three separate surveys may not be deemed adequate for an Easement and/or Plan.
- **NHACC Land Management Program Trail Signage.** Mentioned but postponed.
- **UVTA HS Trails Corps 2026 Project(s)** Russ Hirschler proposed replacing all the truncheons in CWS' woodlands trails. He also mentioned controlling vegetation on the accessible trail. There was a suggestion that maybe a suitable, more permanent replacement for wood truncheons could be used, e.g. concrete or durable plastics. These will be investigated.
- **FoPP 2025 Milfoil Campaign Update**

Sue presented the Milfoil Project 2025 summary (with many thanks from the LCC to Sue for her stewardship of the Friends of Post Pond [FoPP]).

It was a very slow start to the season's campaign due to cold weather and cold water. However, that did not slow the milfoil growth. While all volunteers worked hard to keep up with the weed, the eastern shore was again the major problem. We were able to keep up with the plants on the south, west and northern shore. Again this year the need to apply the chemicals became obvious to all. Four dives in July and August were completed with good results. Over 5000 plants were harvested.

Estimated Volunteer hours:

Divers: 16 + hours Eight divers participated.

Tenders :16 + Hours

Lunches: 16 hours

Coordination: 12 hours

Boat support: 16 hours

Watchers / Spotters 80 to 100 hours

Many thanks to all who participated to make this project a success. One need was identified: we are fortunate to have a lot of donated equipment for use by all. We need a centrally located place to store this equipment, with easy access for all. The only suggestion so far is the Horse Sheds.

The Friends of Post Pond will meet again in April 2026 to plan for the summer season.

4. Project and Application Review

- **No Items Submitted**



5. Outreach and Education

- **Utility Club Bench Purchase.**

Blake ordered the bench as described in the October minutes. It cost \$390 because he was able to get 15% discount. Nora Gould mentioned that the Utility Club would like to place a plaque on it.

6. Other Business

- Meg mentioned that the Lyme Biodiversity group had a potluck with Northern Woodlands that went very well and they discussed fund raising and other things of mutual **interest**.
- Sue, who attended the Board meeting, said that the LCC request for a budget raised no questions and appeared to go forward.
- Blake will confirm that we can meet again at the Fire Station meeting room in December and future winter meetings, i.e., at least through April 2026.

7. Adjournment

On a motion by Meg, seconded by Matt, Blake adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Barry Flood, Secretary

NOTE: If matters of business warrant it, the next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place in person at the Lyme Fire Station and via ZOOM conference call on Monday, December 1, 2025, beginning at 7:00 p.m.