Lyme Conservation Commission (LCC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 14, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.
Lyme Center Academy Building and Zoom

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

Public in person or via Zoom: None.

Blake called the meeting into session at 7:05 pm. John and Matt were appointed as full voting members.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2026-07-13 and 2026-08-10

Minutes were reviewed and approved separately, after Blake reviewed who was present at each meeting.

On a motion by Ann, seconded by Lin, the July minutes were approved by a unanimous rollcall vote, with members abstaining if they had not been present at the July meeting.

On a motion by Sue, seconded by John, the August minutes were approved by a unanimous rollcall vote, with members abstaining if they had not been present at the August meeting.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Deliberation Regarding Selecting a Town Forest Conservation Easement Holder --** Blake asked if it would be okay to postpone this discussion until after item 5, which was unanimously agreed to.

- **Town Easement Monitoring Responsibilities for Conserved Land --** Blake reminded all that it is time to begin the annual monitoring of the Town's 29 properties for which the Town is responsible. Although some members of the LCC are monitors, Blake said he would send all prior monitors a letter requesting confirmation if they would be willing to do so again. He wanted to allow all confirmations to be made privately to him.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **New Signage --** Blake said he had no new information from Ben Hoffer since the last meeting and indicated he had given Ben the preferred text for additional signs needed.

- **Upper Valley Trail Alliance High School (UVTA HS) Trails Corps Chaffee Payment --** Blake commented on the new boardwalk built by the UVTA HS Trails Corps in Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS), noting it looks very nice and encouraged all to check it out. Blake noted that he had tried to inform the public via the listserv but was unable to provide the full link to the UVTA website. Blake commented that he had received an invoice for $6500 from UVTA which was the amount agreed upon by the LCC at its February 2026 meeting. This was in addition to the amount funded by the Lyme Foundation. Since it had already been approved to have the money come from the Conservation Fund, his announcement was informational only.

- **Grant Brook "Source to Sea" Clean-Up --** Blake mentioned the upcoming clean-up on Sept. 19 of Grant Brook, sponsored by CommunityCare of Lyme, the LCC, and the Lyme School's Student Advisory Leadership Team (SALT) as part of the Connecticut River Conservancy's annual "Source to Sea Cleanup." It will focus on the section of Grant Brook between Market Street and River Road. Blake encouraged all who can to participate.

- **Milfoil Project Update --** Sue reported that a 3rd plant had been found midway on the pond's east side — still, a remarkably low count for the year. Markers were placed at all locations to guide next year's efforts. There will be one more meeting of the Friends of Post Pond this year, held this coming Wed. In response to a question, Sue mentioned that the ability to treat with chemicals early (July) this year and on a calm day likely contributed to the low number of plants.

- **Lyme Biodiversity Working Group (LBWG) Update --** Meg reported on the LBWG's work to date, based on a report from Rob Wipfler who indicated they had they had a very good summer in trying to remove knotweed. Meg said that Lydia and her brother Thomas Hansberry were stewards for the summer and they did good work. The Kingswood Camp boys came down a few times as well.

- **Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary Maintenance and Related Items --** Blake mentioned that the entire meadow section of the CWS is intended to be mowed every other year and is due again this fall. He will see if Albert Balch will do it again, noting that it usually results in about $700-$800 in fees for gas and other supplies. Several members mentioned that there is an encroaching stand of knotweed near the house on Rte 10 and North Thetford Road that will pose a problem for the CWS. John was asked to share his drone video of the Clay Brook from North Thetford through the CWS, which he shared with the members and the Lyme listserv, noting only that it was a video of Clay Brook. Paul Guyre is looking for high school kids to help with knotweed removal on his property abutting Big Rock Nature Preserve

  Lin went out in late August with NH DES as a volunteer on the annual Volunteer Lake Assesment (VLAP) water quality test for Post Pond and Reservoir Pond. They used a motorboat this year which made it much easier. There were no reports of cyanobacteria blooms on Post Pond this year and, due to a change in NH DES policy, they no longer monitor for E. coli.

  Matt raised the issue again of the need for some maintenance of the Pollinator Patch. Lin said she would ask Lynne Parshall of the Utility Club what it is planning to do with the site. She said the expectation is that contractor Zack Gray will take off the plastic barrier that surrounds the rock border and will edge and till it so something can be planted.

  Lin took a photo of the installed Utility Club bench at CWS for Blake to reply to Nora Gould's question to the LCC posted on the listserv, i.e., "Are you planning to buy a bench with the Utility Club monies?"

4. Project and Application Review

- **No Items Submitted**

5. **Outreach and Education**

- **Town Forest Conservation Easement Issue – Public Comment?** -- Blake said that there had been two comments from the public to date regarding the proposed easement on the Town Forest. Richard Menge, in person and by email to CC, had expressed his concerns about a 'forever wild' designation to the Town Forest, expressing concerns about potential fire hazards for nearby private property. Lee Larson, the former chair of the LCC, also expressed an opinion to Blake which he will send to the members. He noted that there had been a proposal that the western 2/3 of the Town Forest not be disturbed but the area east of Whipple Brook continue to be available for snowmobiling. Blake said there were no other comments from the public in response to his announcement on the webpage and the listserv.

  Blake then opened the previously tabled discussion from **Item 2** for members to deliberate on: **Regarding Selecting a Town Forest Conservation Easement Holder --** John asked how many members were needed to make the selection. The answer is that any motion requires a quorum (at least four members) but Blake added that it would be desirable to have a larger number of permanent commissioners present (as well as alternates) in order to have the largest number of members participate, given the vote's significance, even if complete consensus is not achieved among LCC membership.

  There was considerable discussion among members about how to go about choosing an easement holder with some disagreement on whether it would be advantageous to have an easement holder devoted to forever wilding forests versus one which was more open to defining an easement that allowed some sections to be designated as 'forever wild' and define others to be less restricted. There was disagreement on whether both trusts would be equally willing to agree to whatever the LCC would request, including not forbidding some harvesting of invasives or clearing of logs, including near the boundaries of private property.

  The members decided that it was important first to know what they wanted for 'inclusions' and 'exclusions' and that they should begin to build a list of things that should be voted on individually by members, e.g., allowing some, all or no: motorized vehicles, ATVs, monster trucks, snowmobiles, mountain bikes, invasives removal, logging, new trails, camping, signage, horses, pets, scientific studies, fire protection areas, maintenance of current trails, camping sites, etc.

  Members agreed that it would be helpful to have a map listing things like current trails and roads, current archeological sites, and current snowmobile trails and current parking. Blake agreed to provide this. John asked Ann to provide a list of questions that she would find compelling to make a decision about which easement holder should be chosen. Ann said she would rather define the questions to try to be compelling for all members. Ann asked Blake for clarification about whether the members should vote first on which trust should be chosen to work on the easement definition or what items should be in the easements. Blake replied that we should focus first on what items the members agree on should be in the easement and see which trust would be willing to work with us.

6. Other Business

- **Vision and Mission Statement Discussion**
  Blake postponed this discussion to another meeting due to the lateness of the hour.

7. Adjournment

On a motion from Sue seconded by Meg the meeting was adjourned at 9:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Barry Flood, Secretary

If matters of business warrant it, the next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place in person and via Zoom conference at the Lyme Center Academy Building on Monday, 7:00 p.m., October 19 because the regular meeting date, Monday, October 12, 2026, is Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day.