

ALTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
ALTON TOWN HALL
October 10, 2025

Members:

Gene Young, Chairman
Tom Diveny
Ken Sheehan, Alternate

Dana Rhodes, Vice Chairman
David Mank
Drew Carter, Selectman's Rep

Russ Wilder
Tara Lamper

Others Present:

Steve Junkin, SPNHF, Chris O'Brien, NH Dept. Forests & Lands,
Wendy Weisiger, SPNHF, Ashleigh Roberts, SPNHF, Katherine Bowden, CC

Members Absent:

Dana Rhodes

Call Meeting to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Ken Sheehan was appointed to fill Dana Rhodes' seat for this meeting.

Presentations/Consultations:

- **Steve Junkin, SPNHF, and Chris O'Brien from Division of Forests and Lands - presentation about prescription burn plans at Morse Preserve.**

After introductions, Mr. Junkin and Mr. O'Brien presented a slide discussion of the Society's plans for a prescribed burn of 12 acres of the lowbush blueberry barrens on the Morse Preserve. The burn will take place during the spring of 2026, conditions permitting. The procedures, safeguards, and publicity were explained. Alton Fire Department personnel will participate. SPNHF will provide information to the Commission that we can share with the public as the project progresses.

Approval of agenda:

The chair added a non-public session to the the agenda. The agenda was approved as amended.

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes of 8/28/25

- Minutes of 9/11/25

On a motion by Russ Wilder, seconded by Drew Carter, the minutes of 8/28/25 and 9/11/25 were approved by a vote of 7 yea and 5 yea, with Drew Carter and David Mank abstaining from the vote on the minutes of 9/11/25.

PERMITS AND APPLICATIONS

(Any permit or application that has been signed off by the Chair or Vice-Chair is entered here for the record, unless any Commissioner has questions or comments)

Planning Board/ZBA Department Head Review Agenda Items:

- 1) **Z25-35, Varney Engineering, LLC, Tom Varney, Agent for Thane LLC, Kristian Johnson, Manager, M11 L28-13 Swan Lake Trail** - A Special Exception is requested for Article 400 Section 401.D.17 to permit a Contractor's Yard in the Residential Rural District.

Gene Young commented “We note that in the upper right corner of page 1 of the plan, that the applicant claims to have received a Notice of Decision from the Alton Planning Department on October 2, 2025. Is this wishful thinking? The plan calls for 15 parking spaces, but only ten are shown on the drawing. The narrative states that there is a compost pile on site, but the drawing indicates that the compost pile is off-site. Which is correct? Is the pile properly enclosed and is any drainage from the pile properly contained to protect the surrounding land from runoff?” Signed by Gene Young 9/18/25

Z25-36, Changing Seasons Engineering PLLC, Stephanie Richard, Agent for Richard Lundy, Owner, M 15 L9-3-1 Miramichie Hill Road - A Special Exception is requested for Article 400 Section 401.D.17 to permit a Contractor’s Yard.

Gene Young commented “The plan calls for arborvitae on the screening berm along one border of the parcel. Arborvitae are very susceptible to damage from browsing by whitetail deer. We suggest juniper to avoid attracting deer and the potential for five or six feet of defoliation” Signed by Gene Young 9/18/25

Wetland Permit By Notification (PBN):

- 1) **NHDES Wetlands PBN Application – 154 MMH Realty Trust, 154 Mount Major Highway M36 L42** – This project involves removing and replacing in-kind a 29’x39’ sf boathouse and 181 sf of decking this fall with no change in dimensions or impervious area. Gene Young commented, “Decline to sign this PBN. Replacement of the boathouse necessarily requires removal of the second story residence. If the residence is also being replaced, what are the provisions for domestic water supply and waste disposal?”
- 2) **NHDES Wetlands PBN Application – Ann Bettencourt, 41 Smith Point Road M63 L23** – Make repairs to existing retaining wall, specifically where rocks have fallen out or have been displaced. The wall is 86+/- linear ft along Lake Winnepesaukee. Work will be done fall 2025 while water is extremely low and will have no impact to shoreline. – No Conservation signature needed.

Reoccurring/Unfinished Business & Projects:

(Incomplete projects may not be discussed at every meeting)

- 1) **Water Quality testing and monitoring**
- 2) **Property Monitoring and Reports**
 - Lakeshore Rail Trail Monitoring Report for 2025
 - Frohock Brook Marsh Report for 2025
 - Tree Growers Easement
 - Gontarz Marsh AMR
 - Stockbridge AMR

Russ Wilder moved to accept 5 monitoring reports, seconded by Tom Diveny. Motion passed by a vote of 6 yea, with Drew Carter abstaining.
- 3) **Current Year Budget – 2025 Budget Justification sheet**

The final 2026 budget, as it appears in the Town’s new software, was reviewed.
- 4) **Master Plan ConComm Action Items**
- 5) **Onedrive Updates and improvements**

6) Social media Accounts

Tara Lamper reported that the CC's Instagram account is now working to link content from Instagram to our Facebook account. The Facebook page is getting linked to related FB pages, such as SPNHF, LRCT, the Alton Community page. Members are encouraged to send pictures and relevant content to Tara for inclusion.

7) Trails Committee

Gene Young moved, and David Mank seconded, a motion to establish a Trails Committee composed of one or two Commission members and as many volunteers as the new committee deems necessary. The committee is to manage and conduct the ongoing inspections and maintenance of the trails on Town land, as well as the construction of any new trails. The committee will report to the Commission as needed. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

New Business:

- **Annual Meeting Registration Reimbursement**

Russ Wilder moved and Drew Carted seconded a motion to reimburse any members who attend the NHACC annual meeting on November 1 for the \$60 registration fee upon submission of a receipt for the registration. Approved by a vote of 6 yeas, with G. Young abstaining.

- **Trails Use Policy**

The proposed trails and property use policy was reviewed. David Mank moved to adopt the policy as written, Drew Carter seconded the motion. The policy was adopted by a vote of 7 yeas. The policy is appended to and made part of these minutes.

- **BRCC Membership Form**

Tom Diveny moved to pay the 2026 dues of \$40.00 to continue membership in the Belknap Range Conservation Coalition. Seconded by Tara Lamper. Approved by a vote of 5 yeas, with Russ Wilder and Gene Young abstaining.

- **HMLA Donation**

Tom Diveny moved to contribute the final payment of \$250 to the Half Moon Lake Association to complete our annual contribution of \$500 toward their water testing expenses. Motion passed by a vote of 7 yeas.

Commissioner Reports:

Russ Wilder, Tom Diveny – Water sampling report for public

Russ Wilder reported that the Lake Winnepesaukee Alliance has an interactive report on its website that presents water quality testing in a reasonably understandable format through the 2024 testing season. It does not include all of the data from Alton's six monitoring sites on the Lake, and none from the Merrymeeting River. Russ will contact LWA to see if they can include all of our testing data in the report.

Notice of Intent to Cut Timber:

- **Map 12 Lot 66 Powder Mill Rd**
- **Map 18 Lot 30 Roberts Cove Road**
- **Map 21 Lot 8 Hopewell Road**

Correspondence:

- Visit to 512 Drew Hill Road
- Comment to NHDES, 169 Hopewell Rd.

Date and time of next meeting:

October 23rd 2025 @ 6PM

At 7:41 pm, Gene Young moved that the Commission enter non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(d), to consider the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interest are adverse to those of the general community. The motion was seconded by Russ Wilder. Roll call vote: D. Mank, yes; K. Sheehan, yes; T. Diveny, yes; G. Young, yes; R. Wilder, yes; T. Lamper, yes; D. Carter, yes. Motion passed.

Drew Carter moved and Tom Diveny seconded a motion to leave non-public session. The motion passed by a vote of 7 yeas. The Commission left non-public session at 8:23 pm.

Drew Carter moved to seal the minutes because the divulgence of the information likely would render a proposed action ineffective. Tom Diveny seconded the motion. Roll call vote: D. Mank, yes; K. Sheehan, yes; T. Diveny, yes; G. Young, yes; R. Wilder, yes; T. Lamper, yes; D. Carter, yes. Motion passed.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Young, chair



Town of Alton

Conservation Commission

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POLICY FOR THE USE OF TOWN-OWNED CONSERVATION LAND AND TRAILS

- As a general rule, the Town-owned conserved land is open to the public for pedestrian recreational use, whether or not trails exist on the property.
- Hunting and fishing are allowed consistent with NH Fish & Game rules and regulations unless safety of persons, pets, or livestock is endangered. Permanent stands or blinds are not allowed. Protection of endangered or threatened species can result in areas being closed to use.

- Bear baiting and trapping are not allowed.
- Camping is not allowed on the Town's conserved properties. Fires of any description are not allowed. Picnics are allowed, and tables are provided at the Gilman Pond parking area and the Drew Hill Road parking area for the public's use. No trash containers or sanitary facilities are provided. Visitors should follow proper *Leave No Trace* principles and pack out any waste.
- Hiking trails are designed and maintained for foot traffic only. Bicycles, both conventional and e-bikes, are not allowed on any Town trail, with the exception of the Lakeshore Rail Trail where conventional bicycles and e-bikes up to Class 2 are allowed. E-bikes above Class 2 are not allowed on the Rail Trail.
- The Commission will maintain signs where appropriate to inform the public of these policies.

E-Bike Classes Defined:

Class 1: have only pedal assistance up to 20mph.

Class 2: have pedal assistance up to 20mph + throttle assistance up to 20mph.

Class 3: have pedal assistance up to 28mph + may or may not have throttle assistance up to 20mph.

Class 4: may have a top speed of over 28mph and motor wattage over 750W.