

6/27/23 Conservation Committee Meeting from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the Otisfield Community Hall

In attendance: Maureen Howard, Lee Dassler, Mike Thorne, and Jen Blastow. Storm Field was also at the meeting and we welcomed her as a new member to the committee.

- Minutes from meeting on 5/31/22 were approved.
- Open discussion of Roadside Clean-up we had on May 6th, 2023 was had. Overall, consensus was it went smoothly. Storm will send photographs of groups participating in clean-up to Maureen to be placed in next town report. We will work on a plan at future meetings to encourage reusable water bottles rather than giving out plastic single use water bottles that could end up on the road side. We want people to bring their own reusable water bottles if possible and we will supply water. We want to have cold water from the tap from the community hall. For the lunch, we will continue to have hot dogs and chips from the Otisfield Social Outreach Committee, but Jen and Chloe have committed to providing veggie wraps and fresh fruit next year as well.
- Lee Dassler provided an update on WFLT activities pertinent to Otisfield. At the Twin Bridges trail system, WFLT is working on closing on a piece of property on the Chadbourne property. This the Edward Mills parcel that includes the towns of Norway, Otisfield and Harrison It is 721 acres and includes 3 miles on the Crooked River and 44 acres of wetlands. Also Lee discussed an 84 acre parcel near the Oxford Elementary School called the Staple Forest. This will provide nature-based education for the school. It includes 1,140 feet of river frontage.
- We discussed ideas for future programming for this committee:
  1. We would like to start working on trail work. Specifically, a very wet area of the Two Ponds Trail that needs a boardwalk or bridge. To start will need DEP assessment. Maureen will contact Hal Ferguson and they will plan to walk it. Lee mentions that Alex Abbott could assess the area. He is with NRCS office.
  2. We discussed if Otisfield has an ordinance in place for resource protection of the Crooked (must have at least 200 ft set back from the river). Mike Thorne is going to ask the town about this and if we have it in place or not.
  3. Consider setting up a Jugtown Road History.
- Maureen brought recently submitted 2nd grant proposal from the Resilience Committee for us to read. She provided copies to each of us. The request is for funding for three separate projects. They would occur concurrently, but likely involve different personnel. The projects proposed are to develop energy sustainability plan, create student pollinator garden, and develop programs to address extreme temperatures. The committee members all expressed appreciation for the amount of work that has been completed by the Resilience Committee.
- Finally, Maureen will recommend that next year's town report be dedicated to Pixie Williams, who was the founder of the Otisfield Conservation Committee. She died on August 27, 2022 at age 97. She had a long life as a botanist and advocating for the protection and conservation of wetlands.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, August 29th, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Community Hall.