

**Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 7:00 PM**  
**Atkinson Town Hall**

**DRAFT**

**Members Present:**

Paul Wainwright, Chair  
Bill Steele, Vice Chair  
John Fournier, Secretary  
Pete McVay  
Suzie Newman  
Scott Kukshtel  
Monique Chrétien, Alternate  
Hannah Rizzo, Alternate

**Others Present:**

Bob Worden, Selectman Liaison  
Karen McFadden, Master Plan Update Committee  
Chris Walker, Commission Member Hopeful

**1. Call to Order, and Attendance:**

Chair Paul Wainwright called the meeting to order in person at Atkinson Town Hall at 7:00PM on Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Chair Wainwright took attendance and noted that all members are present with the exception of Members Kukshtel and Nenart, the alternates will be voting in their stead until they arrive.

**2. Review & Approval of Minutes**

a. February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 – Regular Meeting

Discussion: Chair Wainwright presented the regular meeting minutes from February 22, 2023 and asked for comments or corrections, there were none.

**Vice Chair Steele made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from 02/22/2023, as written. Member Fournier seconded the motion. Members McVay, Newman, Rizzo, and Chrétien abstained from the motion because they were not in attendance. Vote: 3/0/4, the motion carried.**

b. March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Public Hearing

Discussion: Chair Wainwright presented the public hearing minutes from March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and asked for comments or corrections, there were none.

**Vice Chair Steele made a motion to approve the public hearing minutes from 03/09/2023, as written. Member Newman seconded the motion.**

**Members Rizzo and Chrétien abstained from the motion because they were not present. Vote: 5/0/2, the motion carried.**

### **3. 2023 Expenditures – Nothing Much to Report**

Chair Wainwright stated that the only expenditure has been to the Recording Clerk and there is nothing else to report.

*Member Kukshel joined the meeting at this time.*

### **4. April 11<sup>th</sup> Community Forum – Karen McFadden**

Chair Wainwright introduced Karen McFadden from the Master Plan Update Committee and stated that one of his goals this evening was to understand how the Commission can help with the upcoming Community Forum. Ms. McFadden stated that the idea for this event is to have unstaffed tables for each topic where residents can come learn more about the groups like the Commission. Ms. McFadden continued that all committees who have a topic are welcome to attend and engage in meaningful dialogue but the intent is not to lead discussions. Ms. McFadden stated that Commission Members are encouraged to identify themselves with hats in case residents have specific questions.

Chair Wainwright confirmed that the event is being held on April 11<sup>th</sup> from 1:00PM to 3:00PM and from 6:00PM to 8:00PM. Ms. McFadden stated that there will be a ten-minute kick-off at the beginning of each session and then people are free to come and go at their leisure. Ms. McFadden continued that there will be a questionnaire at the event, and for those that cannot make it there will be an online version of the questionnaire as well.

Mr. Worden stated that Ms. McFadden's efforts have been tremendous and have exceeded all of his expectations. Ms. McFadden continued that there will also be focus groups after this event, targeted at certain topics of interest. Ms. McFadden stated that the Master Plan Update Committee is expecting the final product to be complete in November and subsequently presented to the Town.

### **5. Site Walk “Checklist” and Happy Letter Format – Bill and Paul**

Chair Wainwright stated that the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) would prefer that the Commission refrain from using the word “recommend” in the Happy Letters they write. Chair Wainwright continued that sometimes a contractor will approach the ZBA with a Commission Happy Letter in hand and think it is the final word; unintentionally neglecting the fact that the ZBA may have concerns aside from conservation matters. Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission's Happy Letters should be more informational in nature.

Chair Wainwright stated that Vice Chair Steele and Member Fournier worked on a site walk checklist. A draft copy is attached to these minutes. Vice Chair Steele explained how they created this checklist by brainstorming about the attributes and observations that should be recorded each time a site walk is completed. Vice Chair Steele continued that these site walk checklists can be supplied to the ZBA and the checklist also includes a “lessons learned” section where the Commission can capture their impressions and important considerations. Chair Wainwright discussed how this checklist can be effective to capture the facts of each situation while also allowing the Commission to voice their observations and concerns.

Chair Wainwright read from a revised Happy Letter for the project on Maple Avenue (Map 14 Lot 37), which he has been working on, that reflects how the new checklist works in practice. A copy of this revised Happy Letter is also attached.

## **6. ADA Trail on Slade TF: Project Status, and Next Steps – John**

Member Fournier stated that he has completed a timeline for the project (attached), and added that the executive summary of the project’s status (also attached) is that they would like to move forward in two phases with the assistance of private donations and some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, if available. Member Fournier continued that the plan for Phase One is to do about one fifth of the trail this spring and then have the rest of the trail under way by next summer once grant funding is available.

Member Fournier stated that, for Phase One, they will seek two bids, one for the parking lot and then one for the actual trail building. Member Fournier continued that it will be important to maintain a distinction between Phase One and Phase Two because it could jeopardize the Town’s eligibility for grant funding. Member Fournier stated that one of the grants is explicit that, in order to be eligible, the project cannot have already been started until the grant is awarded. Member Fournier continued that by the end of May fundraising for Phase One will be done and grant funding for Phase Two can begin.

Chair Wainwright stated that, while he is in favor of this project, he needs to raise the red flag that the Commission may not have the resources necessary to complete this grant application by the June deadline. Chair Wainwright continued that the Commission should also be applying to multiple grants in the event that this particular grant is not awarded to the Town.

Member Fournier stated that one reason not to go with contractors recommended by GPI is that these contractors would be coming from a far distance and it would be much more cost effective to use a local vendor.

Member Fournier continued that fundraising for Phase One will begin soon. Member Fournier stated that he opened a new email address and is also creating

a website for Atkinson Trails: [www.atkinsontrails.com](http://www.atkinsontrails.com) and [atkinsontrails@gmail.com](mailto:atkinsontrails@gmail.com). Member Fournier continued that this website will be helpful for fundraising and for grant applications moving forward.

Member Fournier discussed his strategy for fundraising and stated that there is still a lot more work to be done towards this effort. Member Fournier continued that he is looking into GoFundMe campaigns and trying to figure out how to effectively use the crowdsourcing platform for this project. The Commission had a brief discussion around how residents can currently donate and what other options are available.

## **7. The “Worden Report” – Bob**

Selectman Liaison Bob Worden stated that he was hoping to add the small parking area onto the paving schedule however, due to the timing it was not feasible. Mr. Worden continued that the Selectmen are reorganizing and he is no longer Chair. Mr. Worden stated that the Select Board recently approved acceptance of the land for the Jameson Triangle purchase. Mr. Worden continued that the Commission is his first priority and he is fully committed to its efforts this year. Member Fournier asked if B. Worden would be able to help with grant applications; Mr. Worden suggested working with Town Administrator John Apple, who has a lot of experience and would be happy to help.

## **8. Turtle Awareness Initiatives: Signs and Events – Monique**

Alternate Member Chrétien stated that the turtle event in the library is this coming Monday, and, so far, 75 people have registered to attend. Alternate Member Chrétien continued that Member McVay will be video-recording the event and she'd like to publish the video afterwards for those who couldn't make it.

Alternate Member Chrétien stated that they are working on installing turtle crossing signs by identifying the exact locations for each sign. Alternate Member Chrétien continued that she'd like the signs posted in April to cover breeding and nesting seasons. Chair Wainwright suggested having the signs up from May 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Alternate Member Chrétien stated that signs alone will not take care of the problem, the culvert on Maple Avenue needs to be fixed as well, which will likely require grant funding. Alternate Member Chrétien continued that she assumes an Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) grant would be the right choice in this case. Mr. Worden suggested asking the Public Works Director, Matt Sullivan, because sometimes they receive grant funding that could be used for culvert repair.

## **9. 2023 Pollinator Event at Fresh Water Farms – Suzie**

Member Newman stated that seeds have been packaged by the Boy Scouts. Member Newman continued that she may need help assembling the handouts ahead of the event. Member Newman stated that the Boy Scouts will be there at the event after completing several bee-related projects this year. Member Newman continued that the Commission will have a booth as well, and will have an emphasis on trails in Town. Member Newman stated that Alternate Member Chrétien will also have a booth for her Birds, Bats, and Butterflies initiative. Member Newman continued that the Atkinson Garden Club will have a booth. Member Newman stated that there will also be a food truck onsite for attendees. Member Chrétien stated that she will be coordinating the raffle and asked the Commission how they felt about charging money for the raffle. Vice Chair Steele responded that if you charge for the raffle, it becomes a lottery and that would not be allowed. Member Newman stated that the Girl Scouts will also be onsite to sell cookies.

## **10. Other Upcoming Events and Public Outreach Programs – Save the Dates!**

Chair Wainwright stated that there are a lot of programs going on so people should read the Town newsletter as well as the Kimball Library schedule of events. Chair Wainwright continued by discussing a few of the upcoming events. Chair Wainwright stated that Charlie Moreno is coming back April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM to walk the Marshall Town Forest, and will discuss what went into the planning of this selective harvest and what the Commission can do now to promote healthy forest growth.

## **11. Short Reports & Discussions**

### **a. NHACC Board of Directors Report – Paul**

Chair Wainwright stated that one of the things the NHACC would like to do this year is a statewide photography contest, and he will be running it. Chair Wainwright continued that before the platform goes public, he needs some help testing and troubleshooting the photograph submission process. Chair Wainwright stated that the purpose of this contest is to get folks excited about going out into their local conservation lands.

### **b. Land Acquisition Status: the Jameson Triangle and Lang Parcel on Knightland Road – Paul**

Chair Wainwright stated that the Lang parcel is supposed to close on or before June 1<sup>st</sup>. Chair Wainwright continued that there will be a public hearing to spend the necessary money from the Conservation Fund in mid-May. Chair Wainwright stated that the Management Plan needs to be

done beforehand, so he is working with Northeast Conservation Services, as discussed in our March 9 meeting, to have this plan completed. A copy of the contract with them is attached to these minutes. This plan is scheduled to be completed by April 21.

Chair Wainwright continued that a conservation easement also needs to be established on this land by the Southeast Land Trust (SELT).

c. Beckhorn/Marshall and Stickney Trail Recovery – John and Others

Chair Wainwright stated that since Member Fournier will be busy with the Slade Trail project, he was wondering if others could step up to assist with trail recovery efforts on the Beckhorn, Marshall, and Stickney lands. Member Fournier stated that he has been in touch with Denise Legault and the mountain-biking community to coordinate trail work there.

d. Troop 9 News – Bill

Vice Chair Steele stated that he does not have any Troop 9 updates at this time.

e. Trail Maps: Current Inventory and Re-Printing Needs – Hannah

Member Rizzo stated that she visited each of the trailheads and they are all fully stocked, with the exception of Woodlock Park. The Commission explained the process for re-printing trail maps at Hampstead Print & Copy.

f. NHACC Wetland Training Continues this Friday, March 31

Chair Wainwright stated that the NHACC wetland training continues this Friday.

g. 2023 Appointments

Chair Wainwright stated that he is still working on the appointments for next year.

h. How Shall We Celebrate Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Next Year? (1974-2024)

Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission needs to keep this in mind and brainstorm some ideas before next year to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

i. Other Business

Chair Wainwright stated that he was contacted by a forester from Unitil who was in the area flagging trees for an upcoming tree cut to protect the company's power lines adjacent to the McPherson Town Forest along Main Street. Chair Wainwright continued that, because the power lines in are in close proximity to the trees, the trees will have to be cut down; mostly white pine trees and some dead ash trees. Chair Wainwright asked the Commission for a consensus that it is appropriate for him to sign the necessary documentation; the Commission did not object.

**12. Next Meetings: April 26 and May 24, 2023**

**13. Expect a Public Hearing for the Lang Parcel Acquisition Sometime in Early or Mid-May**

**14. Hold the Date: NH ACC Annual Conference will be Saturday, November 4, 2023**

**15. Adjournment**

**Member Fournier made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0**

The meeting adjourned at 8:28PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Gilberti, Recording Clerk

**Attachments:**

- Draft Site Walk Checklist
- Revised Happy Letter for Map 14 Lot 37
- Status and timeline for the Slade Accessible Trail project
- Contract with Northeast Consultation Services for the Lang parcel Management Plan

# Atkinson Conservation Commission

## Site Walk Checklist

**Property Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of initial request:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested by:** ☐ Planning and Zoning Administrator Sue Coppeta  
☐ Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for the request:** ☐ Wetland setback variance application (Zoning reg 410:8 (b))  
ZBA meeting date: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ NH DES Dredge & Fill Application, dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Activities Performed:

☐ Site Walk – Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Reviewed plans – date on plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Discussed the site with interested parties. Who: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Researched applicable data – What: \_\_\_\_\_

### What we learned (factual observations)

Describe what we observed from examining the plans and viewing the site:

Describe what we learned from researching the Land Conservation Plan and other references:



## Our thoughts and concerns about the environmental impact(s) of the project

1.

2.

3.

4.

TOWN OF ATKINSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
19 Academy Avenue  
Atkinson, New Hampshire 03811

March 29, 2023

Glenn Saba, Chair  
Atkinson Zoning Board of Adjustment

**Re: Application for a Wetland Setback Variance for Map14 Lot 37**

Dear Glenn and Members of the ZBA:

**Introduction:** The Atkinson Conservation Commission was contacted by Charlie Zilch of SEC & Associates in late December of 2022, concerning the above-referenced wetland setback variance application that he was preparing for presentation to your Board. Mr. Zilch is representing Paul Schena, the new landowner of Atkinson Tax Map 14 Lot 37, and Mr. Zilch requested time on our December 2022 agenda for a preliminary discussion. In my absence, commission Member John Fournier informed Mr. Zilch that we were not meeting in December due to the unavailability of members and the lack of urgent business, and after further correspondence I suggested a site walk followed by an appearance at our February 22, 2023 meeting.

**What we did:** Members of the Conservation Commission conducted site walks of the property on January 17, February 17, and February 20, 2023. During those site walks we reviewed and commented on early versions of the conceptual plan. Mr. Zilch's associate, Bill Hall, presented a conceptual plan dated February 21, 2023 at our February 22 meeting. Before the meeting, we also reviewed data from the Land Conservation Plan of 2022 and other sources concerning the wetlands in the area and the contiguous block of wildlife habitat that exists in that part of town.

A copy of the February 21, 2023 plan is attached to this letter.

**What we learned:** The wetlands on the property are part of a chain of wetlands between Maple Avenue and East Road that run from Academy Avenue on the north to Bryant Brook on the south. While not designated as Prime Wetlands, nevertheless they provide important wildlife habitat and watershed protection qualities for the town. Also, the property in question is part of an unfragmented block of more than 100 acres, in which wildlife can travel without having to cross any roadways. During one of the site visits, one of the abutters mentioned that he has seen spotted turtle on his property. Spotted turtle is on the state's list of threatened species.

In viewing the conceptual plan dated February 21, 2023, we noted the location of the wetlands and the size of the relief being requested from the 100-foot wetland setback as required by Atkinson Zoning, Section 410:8 (b). We also noted on the plan that there is a 50-foot no-cut buffer of natural vegetation between the wetlands and the disturbed areas around the house, and stormwater management features to help stormwater from the roof of the structure to be contained and allowed to enter the groundwater for wells in the area.

**Our thoughts and impressions:** Although the nature of the wetlands and the presence of spotted turtle is fairly significant and thus important to protect, we were favorably impressed with:

- the small size of the relief that is being requested,
- the voluntary inclusion of a 50-foot no-cut buffer of natural vegetation between the wetlands and the disturbed areas around the house, and
- measures to manage stormwater runoff.

We feel these measures mitigate any potential harm to the wetlands, and we have no further concerns about this project.

This letter replaces an earlier letter about this application dated February 28, 2023. That earlier letter should be discarded.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Paul Wainwright, Chair  
Atkinson Conservation Commission

Attachment:

- Conceptual plan dated February 21, 2023 – highlighted to show detail

Copy to:

- Sue Coppeta, Planning and Zoning Administrator
- Charlie Zilch, Representative for the landowner

# Slade Town Forest Accessible Trail

## Current status:

1. All Engineering work has been completed by GPI
2. GPS coordinates have been recorded for all survey points.
3. GPS coordinates have been recorded for all flags that marked the centerline of trails as they were laid out.
4. The revised set of plans from GPI, dated Feb. 24, 2023, provides all necessary details for a trail-building contractor to be able to provide a quote for trail construction.
5. With the addition of CAD files containing the above-referenced GPS coordinates, a trail-building contractor will have all of the information needed to build these trails.
6. All trails have been cleared of brush and debris and roughed-in by unpaid volunteers.
7. All trails have been flagged with colors that match the plans.

## Proposed Scope for Phase 1 construction, Summer 2023

(Two separate bids)

Bid #1- Grade the parking lot and build the retaining wall per GPI Feb. 24, 2023 drawings.

- Parking lot surface shall remain semi-rough since it will be damaged while staging trail construction.
- Relocate the temporary Kiosk.

Bid #2- Build Phase 1, six-foot-wide stonedust trails and all drainage features per GPI plans and GPS coordinates on the following trail segments:

- Starting from the parking lot on the “Pink” trail and ending at approximately the 650’ mark. Build a cul-de-sac at this location, where the trail meets the stone wall on the west property line.
- The entire green “Grove” trail, its 2 connections to the “pink” trail, and its connection to Pope Road.

## High-Level Timeline for 2023, Phase 1 and 2024, Phase 2

Date range	Phase 1	Phase 2	Comments
Feb. 27- March 15	Get preliminary price quotes for whole project and individual segments from GPI.	same	Overdue from GPI and their consulting contractors
April 1- May 31	Fundraising for Phase 1 only.		Scope of Phase 1 may be adjusted based on funds received.
April 15 – June 1		Prepare applications for grants that will be awarded in Spring of 2024.	Define precise scope and cost of Phase 2 for grant applications as “Entire plan minus Phase 1”.
June 1 – June 30		Submit applications for 2024 grants	Recreational Trails grant application due ~June 15.
June 15 – June 30	Put out request for bids for Phase 1 construction only.		Phase 1 to be built exclusively with private funds.
Aug. 15 – Sept. 30	Phase 1 trails and parking lot to be built by selected contractor(s)		GPI on-site at times to provide GPS guidance and to oversee construction.
Jan. – May, 2024		DES and ZBA wetlands permits and variances for waterfront trail, bridges across stream, and observation platform	
June-July		Receive grants!	
June 30		Put out request for bids for Phase 2 construction of trails and wooden features.	
June 30 – July 31		Fundraising for matching funds for Phase 2, if needed to meet grant requirements.	May not need to raise funds if we are awarded more than one grant. Otherwise, estimate \$20K max needed.
Aug. 1-31		Permits for wooden features if required.	
Aug. 15-Sept. 30		Build it all.	



March 13, 2023

Paul Wainwright  
Chair, Atkinson Conservation Commission  
19 Academy Avenue, Atkinson NH 03811

**RE: Environmental Services Agreement  
ARM Management/Stewardship Plan, Lang Property**

Dear Chair Wainwright,

Northeast Conservation Services, LLC (NCS) is pleased to provide this environmental services agreement to assist the Town of Atkinson with the development of a New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) program compliant Management/Stewardship Plan for the 15-acre Deborah Lang Property (Tax Map 18 Lot 40) on Knightland Road in Atkinson, New Hampshire.

**Scope of Services**

NCS will complete the deliverables as outlined below:

- 1. Draft the Management/Stewardship Plan for the Lang property using the ARM Management/Stewardship Plan template.**
  - Coordinate with the Atkinson Conservation Commission to incorporate their management priorities and intentions into the plan.
- 2. Finalize the Management/Stewardship Plan for the Lang property by incorporating Town of Atkinson feedback.**

**Timeline & Deliverables:**

- Assume signed agreement by 3/17/2023
- NCS will provide a draft Management/Stewardship Plan to the Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission by 4/7/2023.
- The Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission will provide feedback to NCS on the draft Management/Stewardship Plan by 4/13/2023.
- NCS will deliver the final Management/Stewardship Plan to the Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission by 4/21/2023.

**Assumptions:**

- Ecological assessments already completed for the Lang property, in addition to knowledge of the property provided by the Atkinson Conservation Commission, is sufficient to complete the management plan. At its discretion, NCS may decide to visit the Lang property to field verify its

management and stewardship recommendations. Permission to access the property will be granted to NCS staff.

### Environmental Services Fees & Payments

For all of the services, the Town of Atkinson will pay NCS a fee not to exceed a maximum total of \$1,500.00 (fifteen hundred dollars and no cents) based on invoices submitted to the Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission. Costs for services will be billed at \$125/hour for the NCS Principal and at \$80/hour for the NCS Stewardship Ecologist. NCS shall submit invoices not more frequently than monthly for services rendered, with the final invoice to be submitted within 15 days after the final deadline for completion of the services. The Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission agrees to pay NCS' invoices within 30 days of receipt.

### Agreement Term

This agreement will become effective upon the last signature date below and will expire automatically once all the services have been completed and final payment by the Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission has been made. NCS must finalize all services on or before April 28, 2023.

### Authorization

You may authorize NCS to proceed with this agreement by signing below and returning this agreement to Peter Steckler at NCS (psteckler@neconservation.com). A digital copy of the authorized agreement is sufficient.

Thank you for partnering with NCS on this project; I look forward to working together.

Sincerely,



Peter Steckler  
Principal, Northeast Conservation Services

### Authorized:

#### FOR NORTHEAST CONSERVATION SERVICES, LLC

#### FOR ATKINSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Signature of  
Authorized  
Agent:



Name: Peter Steckler

Title: Principal

Date: 3/13/2023

Signature of  
Authorized  
Agent:



Name: Paul Wainwright

Title: Chair, Atkinson Cons. Comm.

Date: 3/14/2023