

**Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 7:00 PM
Atkinson Town Hall**

Approved November 24, 2021

Members Present:

Paul Wainwright, Chair
Bill Steele, Vice Chair
John Fournier
Scott Kukshel
Suzie Newman
Monique Chretien, Alternate

Others Present:

Bob Worden, Selectman Liaison

1. Call to Order, and Attendance:

Chair Paul Wainwright called the meeting to order in person at Atkinson Town Hall at 7:03PM on Wednesday, October 27th, 2021. Chair Wainwright took attendance and all members are present with the exception of Members Nenart & McVay; Alternate Member Chretien will be voting in their stead.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

a. September 22, 2021 Public

Chair Wainwright presented the minutes of the September 22, 2021 public meeting and asked for comments of corrections, there were none.

Member Newman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the September 22, 2021 public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. Vote: 6/0/0

b. September 22, 2021 Non-Public

Chair Wainwright presented the minutes of the September 22, 2021 non-public meeting and asked for comments of corrections, there were none.

Vice Chair Steele made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the September 22, 2021 non-public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written. Member Newman seconded the motion. Vote: 6/0/0

c. September 29, 2021 Public Hearing

Chair Wainwright presented the minutes of the September 29, 2021 public hearing and asked for comments or corrections, there were none.

Member Fournier made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the September 29, 2021 public hearing of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. Members Kukshel and Chretien abstained from the motion since they were not in attendance. Vote: 4/0/2

3. Treasurer's report:

Chair Wainwright produced the latest Treasurer's report and stated that as the end of the year approaches, the Commission is right on target with their spending on most budgetary line-items, although the Selectmen may need to approve some shuffling of funds from one line-item to another. A copy of the Treasurer's Report is attached to these minutes.

4. The "Worden Report":

Selectman Liaison Bob Worden thanked for the residents for supporting the comedy night event, which raised \$2,000 for the Conservation Commission. Chair Wainwright stated that he is trying to find a project that these funds can specifically be used towards in order to show the residents the outcome of supporting this event. Chair Wainwright asked the Commission to begin thinking of projects that these funds can be utilized for. The Commission had a brief discussion about creating an inventory of their tools so they know what is available and where it currently resides, and Chair Wainwright stated that former member Dan Kimball had started an inventory spreadsheet. Not much has been added since then. Chair Wainwright has prepared a dedicated space in his barn for the storage of tools and other equipment.

Mr. Worden mentioned the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and stated that the Town has already received the first of two checks for \$375,000. Mr. Worden continued that the Town is working through an agency that is supervising the utilization of these funds, and he will be recommending to the Board of Selectmen that \$18,500 from this fund should go towards designing and implementing a wheelchair accessible trail.

Mr. Worden also stated that the Commission should be thinking of any impact that the pandemic had on the trails or other conservation lands, and that these funds can be utilized to offset any impact. Member Newman suggested repairing the canoe launch dock that got a lot of additional use during the pandemic. Mr. Worden asked Chair Wainwright to work with Steve Keach on a detailed proposal for the wheelchair accessible trail.

Mr. Worden stated that there has been a good amount of employee turnover at Town Hall as of late. He continued that he worked on a press release with the Select Board Chair and then he read a short passage which highlighted the resignation of Finance Director Pat Macomber, Road Agent Ted Stewart, and Town Administrator Andria Hansen. Mr. Worden explained how the Town will operate until these positions can be filled.

Chair Wainwright mentioned the donation check from the comedy night event and stated that since the check was made out to the "Atkinson Conservation Commission" he is unsure of how to cash it at this time. Chair Wainwright continued by reading a passage from RSA 36:A-4 and asked the Commission for a vote to accept the donation.

Vice Chair Steele made a motion to accept a donation in the amount of \$2,000.00 from the Charlie George Foundation comedy night fundraiser. Member Newman seconded the motion. Vote: 6/0/0

Chair Wainwright will work with the Town Treasurer to start a non-lapsing fund for donations to the Conservation Commission.

5. Zoning Wetlands Discussion & Brainstorming – Julie LaBranche

Chair Wainwright stated that he had hoped Julie LaBranche would be here to discuss this topic but she was unable to attend. Chair Wainwright continued that he would like to have a conversation about the current state of wetlands zoning regulations in Town, and whether or not they need to be improved. He continued that the motivation behind this discussion is that the Planning Board is currently considering possible zoning changes to be implemented in the next Town election cycle.

The Commission had a discussion about the history of wetlands zoning changes in the past.

Chair Wainwright discussed the current wetlands zoning regulations, and explained the difference between setbacks, buffers, and prime wetlands. Chair Wainwright stated that a setback (100 feet) only deals with the physical location of buildings and septic systems relative to wetlands; only buildings that produce animal or human waste and/or automotive garages are affected by this setback requirement. Chair Wainwright continued that a buffer is an area of natural vegetation that is not disturbed in any way.

Chair Wainwright stated that prime wetlands have local and State regulations; local regulations require a 150-foot buffer but this only applies to new construction and not to existing residential lots. Chair Wainwright continued that State regulations around prime wetlands apply to new construction and existing structures.

Chair Wainwright read through some of J. LaBranche's talking points on wetlands setbacks and buffers. The Commission had a discussion around the needs, goals, and desired outcomes of wetlands buffers in Town.

[Subsequent to the meeting, Chair Wainwright prepared a memo to the Planning Board summarizing the issues that were discussed. A copy of this document is attached to these minutes.]

6. Short Reports & Discussions:

a. BioBlitz Report – Monique

Alternate Chretien stated that she had a virtual meeting with Vicky Brown of the East Kingston Conservation Commission to get some ideas for next years' BioBlitz program. Alternate Chretien continued that she asked Ms. Brown to come and talk to the community about the program next year, if she'd be willing to do so. Alternate Chretien stated that although Atkinson didn't have as much participation as she would have liked, the State of New Hampshire had well over 6,946 observations entered into the iNaturalist application by 308 individual observers; 1,165 different species were identified throughout the month. Member Chretien continued that she hopes to encourage more participation in Town next year with more advertising and possibly making it into a competition to see who can submit the most observations.

Member Chretien left the meeting at 7:53PM.

b. Trails and Maps – Dennis

Chair Wainwright stated that another order for maps was placed for four of the trail systems in Town, and QR code decals have also been ordered to place on the map holders.

c. "Bow Hunting Only" signs – Bill

Vice Chair Steele stated that he hung seven "Bow Hunting Only" signs – three at the Sawyer Town Forest, one at Carolyn-Orr Town Forest, one at the end of Robie Lane, one at Woodlock Park, and one at Crown Hill. Vice Chair Steele continued that he still has five signs left to be hung. The Commission had a brief discussion about where else to place the remaining signs.

d. Selective Cut on Stickney - status

Chair Wainwright stated that Vice Chair Steele, Member Fournier, and he began to start flagging the eastern property lines of the Stickney Town Forest. Chair Wainwright continued that he and Member Legault walked the other side of the forest to begin delineating those property lines.

Chair Wainwright stated that there is an abutter on Stickney Road whose fence is unintentionally encroaching upon the conservation land by about

fifteen feet. Chair Wainwright continued that the fence was built by a previous homeowner, and since there are no structures built upon or vehicles stored on this land, he is inclined to take no action at this time, but to also encourage the current homeowner to remove the fence before they sell their home, whenever they do.

- e. Birding with Matt Tarr: Saturday May 21, 2022 at 7:00 AM – Hold the Date - John

Member Fournier stated that he has identified a good spot to conduct this birdwatching event and has the blessing of the landowner, but he does not want to disclose the location until he can re-confirm with the landowner. Member Fournier continued that Matt Tarr has also agreed that this location will be a great place to spot lots of different species of birds, so the event should be a great success. The Commission had a brief discussion about when and where to advertise the event.

- f. Milkweed Pod Collection - Suzie

Member Newman stated that she has begun to collect milkweed pods, and has been in touch with Freshwater Farms who has already confirmed they will hold the seed give-away event next spring. Member Newman continued that she will be meeting with Freshwater Farms this week to solidify a date for the event.

- g. Wild Atkinson – Status and Next Steps – Pete, Scott, Bill, and Dave W

Chair Wainwright stated that he spoke with Dave Williams who has been swamped with other projects at the moment, and that Member McVay is still working on completing this video project.

Member Kukshel reminded the members that Member McVay has documented notes to help us the next time we attempt such a video. These notes are attached to these minutes.

- h. RCCD Invasives Control on Sawyer – No Report Yet

Chair Wainwright stated that the Rockingham County Conservation District has completed this work but the report has not yet been produced since they need to give the land some time to see the effectiveness of the herbicide application. Chair Wainwright continued that RCCD also recommended not mowing this area this year which will give the herbicide some time to work properly.

- i. Field Mowing (2 Fields Only) – Set for Early November

Chair Wainwright stated that he spoke with Jim Lavoie to insure he knows not to mow the Sawyer Land where the herbicides were used. Chair Wainwright continued that since only two fields need to be mowed this year, Mr. Lavoie

agreed to charge the Town \$750.00 for the mowing work, which is in proportion to the area to be mowed.

j. Moose Plate Land Conservation Plan – Paul

Chair Wainwright stated that he is making good progress on the Moose Plate Land Conservation Plan, and the Rockingham Planning Commission has completed task two of the project, which was to create a base set of maps. Chair Wainwright went through the various maps to highlight the various features of each map. Chair Wainwright requested a vote to pay the Rockingham Planning Commission for this work.

Member Kukshel made a motion to pay the Rockingham Planning Commission for the work done towards completing Task II of the Moose Plate Land Conservation Plan in the amount of \$3325.00, said funds to be expended from the Conservation Fund pursuant to our vote on October 28, 2020, and to accept the reimbursement when it comes back from the grant, this reimbursement to go back into the Conservation Fund. Member Fournier seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0/0

k. Four Industrial Way Conservation Easement

Chair Wainwright stated that the Planning Board has been looking at a development plan for Four Industrial Way for the past few years, and the plan is now coming to fruition. Chair Wainwright showed a map of this location and explained that the landowner, Bill Ermer, plans to build a garage and a parking area to store his company's trucks. Chair Wainwright stated that Mr. Ermer could either apply for a dredge & fill permit to cross the wetlands on the property to get to a higher, drier area, or he could build the structure closer to the wetland in the front of the lot.

Chair Wainwright continued that he made a proposal to Mr. Ermer that if he were to establish a conservation easement on a 6-acre portion of the 7.5-acre property, he would write a letter to the planning Board supporting the construction of the garage and parking area in the front of the lot. The Commission has considered this application in previous meetings, and has come to consensus that building a storage garage on the front of the property was less detrimental than crossing wetlands to reach the back of the land.

Chair Wainwright stated that the ZBA has conditionally granted the necessary wetland setback variance, and the Planning Board has approved building design plans contingent upon the conservation easement being followed through on by Mr. Ermer. Chair Wainwright continued that he is just waiting for this conservation easement deed, which he will sign and then send to the Board of Selectmen to sign. Chair Wainwright asked for a motion to allow him to sign the deed once he receives it.

Vice Chair Steele made a motion to accept the conservation easement deed on Four Industrial Way, and to empower Chair Wainwright to sign the conservation easement deed. Member Kukshel seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0/0

7. Other Business

8. Next Regular Meeting: November 24, 2021, at 7:00PM

9. Hold the Date: NH ACC Annual Conference will be Saturday, November 6, 2021 via Zoom

10. Non-Public Session Under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) for the consideration of the acquisition of land

Member Newman made a motion to go into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) for the consideration of the acquisition of land. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0/0

The meeting continued in non-public session

Member Newman made a motion to close the non-public session. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. The motion carried 5/0/0.

The meeting resumed in public session.

Member Kukshel made a motion to seal the non-public minutes of October 27, 2021. Vice-chair Steele seconded the motion. The motion carried, 5/0/0.

11. Adjournment

Vice Chair Steele made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Kukshel seconded the motion. The motion carried, 5/0/0

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Gilberti, Recording Clerk

Attachments:

- Treasurer's Report
- Memo to the Planning Board summarizing our discussion of setbacks and buffers.
- Notes on future video productions.

Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission 2021 Expenditure Tracking

Account Number	Description	TM Approved 2021 Budget	What	Amount	Date Prepared	Date Submitted	Amount Submitted	YTD Total	YTD Unspent	Unspent after shifting
			Rounding				\$ -			
			Oct + Nov	9	\$165.24					
			September 29, 2021 Minutes	4	\$73.44	10/5/2021	10/5/2021	\$73.44		
			September 22, 2021 Minutes	4	\$73.44	10/3/2021	10/3/2021	\$73.44		
			August 2021 Minutes	5.5	\$100.98	8/27/2021	8/27/2021	\$100.98		
			July 2021 Minutes	6.5	\$119.34	8/9/2021	8/9/2021	\$119.34		
			June 2021 Minutes	5.5	\$100.98	7/16/2021	7/16/2021	\$100.98		
			May 2021 Minutes	5	\$91.80	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$91.80		
			April 2021 Minutes	5.5	\$100.98	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$100.98		
			March 2021 Minutes	6	\$110.16	4/16/2021	4/16/2021	\$110.16		
			February 2021 Minutes	4	\$73.44	3/12/2021	3/12/2021	\$73.44		
			January 2021 Minutes	4.5	\$82.62	2/8/2021	2/8/2021	\$82.62		
			December 2020 Minutes	5.5	\$100.98	1/7/2021	1/7/2021	\$100.98	\$ 1,028.16	
			Budget Adjustment - removed					\$ -		remove
40.46111.110.00	RECORDING CLERK	\$ 1,200.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 171.84	\$ -
			Rounding				\$ (0.01)			
			Oct + Nov		\$10.24					
			September 29, 2021 Minutes	4.55	\$4.55	10/5/2021	10/5/2021	\$4.55		
			September 22, 2021 Minutes	4.55	\$4.55	10/3/2021	10/3/2021	\$4.55		
			August 2021 Minutes	6.26	\$6.26	8/27/2021	8/27/2021	\$6.26		
			July 2021 Minutes	7.40	\$7.40	8/9/2021	8/9/2021	\$7.40		
			June 2021 Minutes	6.26	\$6.26	7/16/2021	7/16/2021	\$6.26		
			May 2021 Minutes	5.69	\$5.69	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$5.69		
			April 2021 Minutes	6.26	\$6.26	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$6.26		
			March 2021 Minutes	6.83	\$6.83	4/16/2021	4/16/2021	\$6.83		
			February 2021 Minutes	4.55	\$4.55	3/12/2021	3/12/2021	\$4.55		
			January 2021 Minutes	5.12	\$5.12	2/8/2021	2/8/2021	\$5.12		
			December 2020 Minutes	6.26	\$6.26	1/7/2021	1/7/2021	\$6.26	\$ 63.74	
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/17/2019		\$ -		remove
40.46111.220.00	FICA .062	\$ 75.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 11.26	\$ -
			Rounding				\$ (0.01)			
			Oct + Nov		\$2.40					
			September 29, 2021 Minutes	1.06	\$1.06	10/5/2021	10/5/2021	\$1.06		
			September 22, 2021 Minutes	1.06	\$1.06	10/3/2021	10/3/2021	\$1.06		
			August 2021 Minutes	1.46	\$1.46	8/27/2021	8/27/2021	\$1.46		
			July 2021 Minutes	1.73	\$1.73	8/9/2021	8/9/2021	\$1.73		
			June 2021 Minutes	1.46	\$1.46	7/16/2021	7/16/2021	\$1.46		
			May 2021 Minutes	1.33	\$1.33	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$1.33		
			April 2021 Minutes	1.46	\$1.46	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$1.46		
			March 2021 Minutes	1.60	\$1.60	4/16/2021	4/16/2021	\$1.60		
			February 2021 Minutes	1.06	\$1.06	3/12/2021	3/12/2021	\$1.06		
			January 2021 Minutes	1.20	\$1.20	2/8/2021	2/8/2021	\$1.20		
			December 2020 Minutes	1.46	\$1.46	1/7/2021	1/7/2021	\$1.46	\$ 14.90	
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/17/2019		\$ -		remove
40.46111.225.00	Medicare .0145	\$ 20.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 5.10	\$ -
			Natural Resource Inventory for land purchase	\$1,850.00						
			Survey for land purchase	\$500.00						
			Charlie Moreno - timber appraisal on 20-37-1	\$318.75	2/11/2021	2/11/2021	\$318.75	\$ 318.75		add
			Budget Adjustment - added			12/16/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.390.00	OTHER PROF SERVICES	\$ 2,500.00	Budget Adjustment - added			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 2,181.25	\$ -
			Hamp Print & Copy - Trail Maps & Brochure	\$400.00						
			Hamp Print & Copy - Trail Maps & Brochure	\$453.16	5/17/2021	5/17/2021	\$453.16			
			Hamp Print & Copy - Trail Maps & Brochure	\$336.00	2/18/2021	2/18/2021	\$336.00			
			Hamp Print & Copy - Marshall brochure	\$50.00	2/3/2021	2/3/2021	\$50.00	\$ 839.16		add
			Budget Adjustment - Added			12/17/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.550.00	PRINTING AND BINDING	\$ 1,000.00	Budget Adjustment - added			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 160.84	\$ -
			NHACC Dues	\$425.00	10/3/2021	10/3/2021	\$425.00	\$ 425.00		add
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/16/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.560.00	DUES/SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	\$ 500.00	Budget Adjustment - added			8/12/2019		\$ -	\$ 75.00	\$ -
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/16/2019		\$ -		remove
40.46111.620.00	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 1.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 1.00	\$ -
			Budget Adjustment - Added			12/17/2019		\$ -		add
40.46111.625.00	POSTAGE	\$ 1.00	Budget Adjustment - added			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 1.00	\$ -
			Mowing of Fields (4H Field excluded)	\$750.00						
			Pipe for culvert replacement on Sawyer	\$759.50	8/19/2021	8/19/2021	\$759.50			
			Corrected Boundary Markers	\$445.50	7/9/2021	7/12/2021	\$445.50			
			Conservation Land Boundary Markers		Order re-done					
			Easement Boundary Markers	\$523.60	6/22/2021	6/22/2021	\$523.60	\$ 1,728.60		add
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.650.00	CARE OF GROUNDS	\$ 2,500.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 771.40	\$ -
			Bosch laser measurement tool	\$169.00						
			Weed Wrench tool for pulling invasives	\$131.00						
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -		remove
40.46111.740.00	NEW EQUIPMENT	\$ 300.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 300.00	\$ -
			2 trips to Exeter - 36 miles x2	\$40.32						
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -		remove
40.46111.820.00	MILEAGE	\$ 39.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 39.00	\$ -
			Legal notice for November 24 Public Hearing	\$150.00						
			Poinator event - Spring 2021	\$135.25	9/22/2021	9/22/2021	\$135.25			
			Legal Notice for September 29 Public Hearing	\$184.28	10/5/2021	10/5/2021	\$184.28			
			Barry Conservation Camp - Jake Martineau							Cancelled - Check returned 7/12/2021
			Jack Carrubba - Eagle project (estimate)							
			Acrylic holders for Ryan Torris' Eagle project	\$56.04	3/12/2021	3/12/2021	\$56.04	\$ 375.57		remove
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.840.00	SPECIAL PROGRAMS	\$ 1,000.00	Budget Adjustment - removed			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 624.43	\$ -
			Tuition for NHACC Annual Meeting - \$35	7	\$245.00					
			NHACC Handbooks for Monique and Hannah	\$20.00	4/20/2021	4/20/2021	\$20.00	\$ 20.00		add
			Budget Adjustment - Added			12/17/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.850.00	EDUCATION & CONFERENCES	\$ 250.00	Budget Adjustment - added			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 230.00	\$ -
			Bow Hunting Only signs (12)	\$408.00	9/15/2021	9/15/2021	\$408.00			
			Replacement signs for Marshall TF vandalism	\$30.00	4/16/2021	4/16/2021	\$30.00			
			Revised Sawyer trails plastic signs	\$38.92	2/24/2021	2/24/2021	\$38.92	\$ 476.92		add
			Budget Adjustment			12/17/2019		\$ -		\$ -
40.46111.875.00	SIGNS	\$ 500.00	Budget Adjustment - added			12/7/2020		\$ -	\$ 23.08	\$ -
			TOTALS					\$ 5,290.79	\$ 4,595.21	\$ -

Budget Adjustment Total: 12/7/2020 \$ -

Committed but not billed \$4,413.22

Available: \$ 181.98

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

Notes about wetland setbacks and buffers

Members of the Planning Board:

At our regular meeting on October 27, 2021, the Conservation Commission had a discussion about wetland setbacks and buffers, including an overview of our current zoning regulations, and a general discussion about improvements we would like to see for wetland protections in Town zoning. We did not come to any conclusions about changes to zoning, other than changing definitions for setbacks and buffers, and clarifying the wording of our existing regulations – see below.

Here is a summary of our discussion:

1. We reviewed the difference between setbacks and buffers, using the attached section of the Moose Plate Land Conservation Plan as a guide. (Julie LaBranche wrote this section, but was not in attendance at our meeting.)
2. Currently, the town's zoning protections for wetlands are primarily through 100-foot setbacks for certain structures and for septic systems. For Prime Wetlands, there is a 150-foot buffer in our zoning, but this only applies to new construction. The State also has a 100-foot buffer around 7 of our 8 Prime Wetlands that applies to all abutters (no "grandfathering"), but is difficult to enforce.
3. We then discussed the needs, goals, and desired outcomes for wetland protections in Town zoning. These include water quality, flood control, wildlife habitat protection, and nutrient attenuation. There was also the thought that adding a general buffer requirement could help us meet the goals of MS4.
4. We agreed that buffers offer more wetland protection than setbacks, but are more difficult to administer and enforce since permits are not required to remove natural vegetation for things such as lawns and driveways.
5. There have been three attempts to overhaul the zoning protections for wetlands in recent memory (1995, 2005, and 2006). None were passed at Town Meeting. All three included some form of buffer protection for larger wetlands in addition to setbacks. Since then, we have adopted the 8 Prime Wetlands, which were the primary targets for buffer protection in the earlier attempts to amend zoning. We conjectured that the need for buffers has, to some extent, been met.

6. If we were to amend zoning, there was the general feeling that we would not like to see the 100-foot setback be decreased, since that is the only “sure thing” that can be easily administered and enforced.
7. If a smaller buffer were to be added in addition to the 100-foot setback, we were concerned about how this would apply to existing homes. A lot of Atkinson is already developed, and in many cases buffers do not exist in people’s yards. The general feeling was that it would be difficult to visualize how a new buffer requirement could be applied to existing homes. If buffers were only required for newly-developed lots, this would not add much protection to wetlands.
8. If we were to consider adding a buffer requirement, we might want to consider the slope of the land – more steeply sloped areas would more easily drain into an adjacent wetland, and thus a buffer would be of greater benefit in such cases.
9. Our basic conclusion is: It’s complicated, and more discussion is needed.

Here are our recommendations:

- A. Include something like the following definitions (these were provided by Julie in an earlier document):

Buffer: An area and/or distance measured ~~perpendicular~~ from the border of a natural feature such as a wetland, stream, water body or other resource designated as no disturbance (e.g. no land alternation, removal or vegetation, alteration of hydrology).

Setback: A specified ~~perpendicular~~ minimum distance of physical separation of a building, structure or other constructed feature from a natural feature such as a wetland, stream, water body or other resource. Land and vegetation disturbance is otherwise permitted within the setback (e.g. stormwater management, parking areas, roads/driveways, structures not served by a septic system).

- B. Change the title of Section 410:8 to read “Setbacks” or “Setback Zones” – it currently reads “Buffer Zones,” but what is actually described in that section are setbacks, not buffers.

Section 4 Appendix B

Buffers and Setbacks Demystified**Buffers:**

Implementation of water quality buffers provides a comprehensive approach to protecting the quality and availability of New Hampshire’s drinking water resources, surface waters, groundwater, and riparian habitats. Protection is often focused on tailoring approaches based on site specific conditions, land use best management practices, and the best available science.

Water quality buffer programs are accomplished most often through one or more of the following approaches:

- Local water resource protection and conservation that engages community stakeholders and water users, and promotes best practices in water management, investments in protective measures, and sound land use planning and policies;
- Land use regulation and management focused on pollution prevention best practices by limiting development and impervious surfaces in drinking water supply watersheds;
- Land conservation practices focused on protecting source waters and their contributing drainage and recharge areas; and
- Applying best available science on water quality protection, drought, climate change, water conservation, water resource, and demand management.

Water quality buffers are adopted for the purpose of protecting municipal, public, and private drinking water sources, surface waters, and groundwater resources. Water quality buffer standards are adopted to achieve the following goals:

- A. Preventing the destruction of, or significant environmental changes to, drinking water sources, surface and groundwater resources, and wetlands.
- B. Protecting the continuation of natural flow patterns and hydrology of surface waters, streams and other water courses, and wetlands, including maintenance of groundwater recharge and stream flow during dry periods.
- C. Providing for nutrient attenuation and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from stormwater runoff.
- D. Preventing erosion and excess sedimentation from entering drinking water sources, surface water resources, and their associated wetlands.

- 1 E. Preserving and protecting important wildlife habitat, and maintaining ecological
2 services that protect water quality.
- 3 F. Preventing the expenditure of municipal funds for the purpose of providing and/or
4 maintaining essential drinking water-related services and utilities, which
5 otherwise might be required as a result of abuse or inharmonious use of water
6 resources.
- 7 G. Protecting wetlands, watercourses, surface and groundwater supplies, and
8 waterbodies from degradation of their functions.
- 9
- 10
- 11

12 **Setbacks:**

13

14 Setbacks are designed to separate structures - most commonly permanent buildings
15 served by septic - from a sensitive resource such as wetlands or surface waters. Unlike
16 the “no disturb” natural state of a buffer, the setback area is typically *not* a “no disturb”
17 area. In many instances, setback regulations only require that a certain distance be
18 maintained between structures and a wetland or surface water, and such regulations
19 typically allow land disturbance and alteration within the setback area. Anything not
20 identified as a “structure” in the zoning ordinance or land development regulations,
21 including permanent uses such as parking areas and stormwater management
22 infrastructure, are often permitted within the setback area. This level of alteration and
23 introduction of impervious surfaces can significantly reduce or eliminate water quality
24 protection and habitat functions in the setback area.

25

26

27 **Hybrid Options:**

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29 From a water quality and habitat protection perspective, a smaller buffer is often more
30 protective than a larger setback. Keeping a portion of a setback area in a natural state
31 would allow it to continue to perform water quality protection functions, which, in turn,
32 would greatly enhance the setback’s water quality protection capabilities, even if only for
33 the first 25-30 feet from the resource.

34

35 Other alternatives include implementation of green infrastructure practices (practices
36 that mimic or replace natural landscape functions), such as replacing standard
37 pavement with porous pavement or pavers. Another example would be to utilize
38 “constructed wetlands” (also called *bioretention areas*) in a project’s design, which
39 would serve as stormwater management infrastructure that maintains natural vegetation
40 and wildlife and aquatic habitats through the restoration of natural landscapes.

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42

Paul Wainwright

From: <p.mcvay@comcast.net>
Date: Monday, October 11, 2021 8:15 PM
To: <ahansen@atkinson-nh.gov>; "Atkinson Conservation Commission" <conservation@atkinson-nh.gov>; "Barbara Snicer" <bsnicer@atkinson-nh.gov>; "Dan Kimball" <wilvalent@yahoo.com>; "David Cressman" <townadmin@atkinson-nh.gov>; "Denise Legault" <denise_legault@uml.edu>; "Dennis Krause" <dennis_krause@msn.com>; "Jeff Nenart" <jeffmn1213@comcast.net>; "Paul Wainwright" <paul@paulwainwrightphotography.com>; "Scott Kukshstel" <scottkukshstel@gmail.com>; "Tim Dziechowski" <tdziecho@gmail.com>
Subject: Wild Atkinson: Lessons Learned

Here's my thoughts for the next projects. I hope *Wild Atkinson* is finished soon.

Lessons Learned: Wild Atkinson

A solid and detailed project plan is the most important tool.

Project plan must include:

- Detailed and understandable purpose.
- Outline of topic with segments and subheads (chapters and subheads).
- Segments have full descriptions with storyboard contents and start/end dates.
- Resources needed
 - Personnel
 - Producer/Director/project manager (same person)
 - Script and title writer(s)
 - Camera personnel
 - Material researcher
 - Editor
 - Film editor
 - Equipment
 - Task list: detailed script, gather segment images/shots
- The director/project manager oversees the entire production.
- In phase 0, the project manager "chairs" the design and development of the project.
 - Discussion, debate, and revision are allowed by all directly involved personnel. Outside personnel may have recommendations but do not have a decision-making vote.
 - Phase 0 products are:
 - Outline of project
 - Topic
 - Executive summary
 - High-level scene description
 - Draft Storyboard
 - Release plan (platform, publicity, access, and security)
- In phase 1, the project manager has both responsibility and authority for:
 - Keeping on schedule.
 - Ruling on design changes. The project manager's decisions are final.
 - Assigning and/or recruiting participants, such as sound and video personnel, script writers and managers, researchers, editors, and reviewers.
- In phase II (post-production) the control is loosened slightly.
 - Changes in scenes, script, and scene order are allowed.
 - The production manager decides on whether or not changes will be made, with potential delays being the deciding factor.
- Up-front design is absolutely essential.
 - The level design and storyboard should be as complete as possible. At the very least, each scene

should be described in as much detail as possible. (A *scene* is a segment that can stand alone: that is, order is not important at this stage.)

- Once approved a scene is frozen. Any change should be approved by all, since it could cause a huge delay and change in production.

Other random thoughts:

- In retrospect, *Wild Atkinson* was doomed from the start by overreach. The idea of showing what is in Atkinson's "wild places" was good, but a lot of the wildlife that we know is there would require literally months or years of patient stalking to catch on camera. As was pointed out, stock footage is obvious and unconvincing.
- Try to keep the interests of Atkinson residents in mind. We're immersed in the land but (I would guess) most of our neighbors spend most of their time elsewhere. What is normal and obvious to us may not be to the viewer.
- There is one thing that I've noticed about the Commission: enthusiasm for the town and dedication to wildlife conservation. I strongly believe that putting any of the Conservation members on camera would show that spirit, and be inspiring.
 - **Summary:** planning should include what we *can* show of Atkinson. Our guided walks have always been successful because the leaders point out things that are right before the participants' eyes yet were unnoticed.
 - **Possible topics.**
- A video about the trails that are available, showing brief shots of all of them and approximate locations. This should be short: it's not a travelogue but a trailer—an introduction to what's here.
- Ongoing work: trail maintenance, the new exercise station trail, forest maintenance, etc.
- History of the land, going back to Paleolithic times. Most people have heard about the "ice age" but have very little idea of how it shaped Atkinson.
- History of the trails before Europeans arrived. Many of our roads follow trade routes literally thousands of years old.
- Making an impact: pollinators, wild gardens, building in animal-friendly areas, and the benefits of doing so (such as watching nature).
- The changing seasons, and what's happening in Atkinson in each period. [BTW, the study of seasonal changes is called *phenology*.]
- ...and your ideas.

Pete