

Conservation Commission Minutes

28-Nov-16

Attendance Adam Gebb, Ashley Bies, Tom Groves, Charlie Schneewies

Wildlife Road Crossing Data Collection (once snow cover is present)

- Prioritizing areas with less data and less recent data (Adam will compile data; northern half of town will be top priority, particularly Upper Dover Rd. as a connection to the Green Mountain National Forest), and proposed terrestrial crossings (15, 20, 23).
- Recording all detected crossings along search route (not biasing to currently proposed crossings).
- Consider additional crossings, particularly to ensure at least two crossings between each contiguous block of forest habitat, in advance of future road surveys.
- For the purposes of our wildlife road crossing data collection and evaluation (or teaching), Ashley has 15 years of wildlife tracking and field conservation ecology experience (and certification).

Proposed Zoning Regulation changes (input for Dec. 6th public meeting of the Zoning Board)

- Sections 343 and 353 (Exemptions): We propose removal of farming, and also of forestry and silviculture activities, from exemptions, to ensure that the viability wildlife road crossings can be maintained.
- Section 344: We request Conservation Commission consultation before deforestation of land within designated road crossings, to address potential concerns of clearcutting or conversion of forest to field impairing crossing viability {to maintain wildlife habitat and cover at crossings}.
- Sections 345 and 355, 1 (Consultation): Require flagging of the proposed driveway and building footprints for proposed development to be in place visible and identifiable from a distance. The 21 day interval allowed for consultation with the Conservation Commission for proposed development may not be sufficient to provide input.
- Section 354, 1: Change first “should” to 'shall,' in accord with clause 2, to ensure that the intent of protecting interior habitat (limiting distance of development impact into the interior habitat), and to protect regional ecological connectivity and wildlife corridor function through Marlboro (Ashley will write up draft CC input to present for meeting).
- Section 344 3d. (fences): Amend language to “New fencing within a Wildlife Road Crossing shall be reviewed by the Development Review Board and the Conservation Commission. Only fencing that is deemed to cause no significant impairment of road crossing habitat shall be approved, and fencing will be limited to 4.5' in height and a minimum clearance of 1.5' below the bottom rail.”
- Section 354 2c. (fences): Add “fences” to list of structures and habitat alterations to be designed for minimum impact.
- The CC may consider recommending additional measures such as buffering houses (in addition to roads) for exemption from wildlife habitat designation (and perhaps also to decrease road buffer distance to less than 500’), and to include deforestation (conversion of forest to clearcut, field or road, in addition to a structure) in review process for both road crossings (of any area) and wildlife habitat (if a large area), before the public Zoning Board meeting.

Notes

- Remind Select Board of unanimous CC recommendation to fund Japanese Knotweed eradication along South Rd. (near the Town Center).