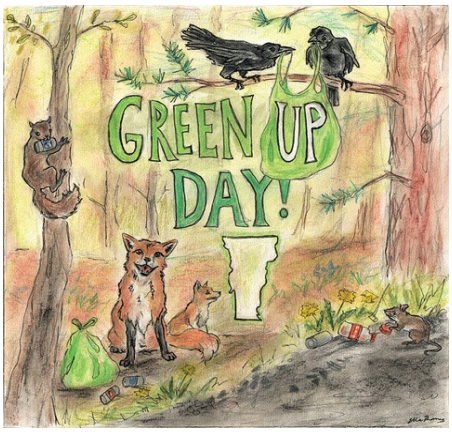
Summer 2025 Fayston Conservation Commission Update

Summer is here, or at least that is what the calendar says. While some days feel more like summer than others, our calendars are starting to fill out with classic Vermont summer activities. And the Fayston Conservation Commission is gearing up for another busy summer, from efforts to remove invasive Japanese Knotweed to updating our management plan for the Chase Brook Town Forest.

Green Valley Rally & Green Up Day brings the Mad River Valley community together.



Volunteers from four to eighty-four Greened Up our beautiful Mad River Valley and celebrated the 55th anniversary of Green Up Day with a BBQ at the 3rd annual Green Valley Rally at the MRV Welcome Center.

Despite a bit of rain… or more than just a bit… we enjoyed coming together as a community to foster stewardship in the Mad River Valley. Many thanks to the following individuals and groups:

- Patty Pasley, Fayston Green Up Coordinator
- Eric Friedman and the MRV Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring the Green Valley Rally and the BBQ for Green Up Day volunteers
- Afterthoughts for the awesome Rally entertainment -- the John Lackard Blues Band -- and for sponsoring the Kentucky Derby Recycled Hat Contest
- Andy Landry of Nor'easter Catering for his grill skills
- Stark Mountain Bike Works for sharing their grill
- The Collection for providing gift bags to kids who greened up
- The Fayston road crew, who picked up full bags and delivered them to the transfer station
- Misha Golfman of the Mad River Path Association, and the volunteers who joined him to pull tires out of the field and woods behind the Welcome Center
- stewardMRV for the ongoing support for keeping our public spaces clean and welcoming to visitors
- Cabot, Lawson's, Sugarbush, Darn Tough, and Casella for sending out teams to green up
- GMVS, Harwood Men's Lacrosse, and Cub Scout Pack 798 for their amazing greening teams

- Reps from the MRV Bear Initiative, Friends of the Mad River, Mad River Riders, and Valley Conservation Commissions for tabling in the rain at the Green Valley Rally
- Shaw's for donating water, snacks, and fruit for greeners

Thank you for making Green Up Day 2025 another fantastic community event (despite the rain). Until next year!

FCC gathers community feedback for Chase Brook Town Forest plan update

Thanks to YOU and the overwhelming community response to the survey that went out through a variety of channels, we have read your comments and aggregated your responses. These valuable insights will inform us as we continue to work on the draft management plan update. Michael Brown, with Birdseye Forestry, has completed the forest inventory and shared these highlights with us:

- There is a vibrant vernal pool that supports a wealth of wildlife
- Aside from some cow parsnip, shrub honeysuckle, and Japanese knotweed (actively being managed by the conservation commission along with the UVM intern crew), no other invasives were detected
- Most of the trees in this forest look to be around 60 years old, with legacy trees along the boundaries 150-200+ years old

Our target date for submitting a draft plan to the Fayston Select Board for approval is mid-July. Once approved, we look forward to seeing you all at a community event to be held at the McCullough Barn located at Chase Brook Town Forest. We'll be sure to notify you with plenty of time so you can add us to your fall calendar.

And speaking of that beautiful McCullough Barn, if you have a special event, this may be a perfect venue. For rental and reservation, click HERE.

Summer means Knotweed - an Invasives update.

Are you seeing the difference between managed sites and unmanaged Knotweed…? WE ARE!

In late May/early June, we measured the density and size of Japanese Knotweed in 3'x3' measurement sites throughout the Valley to measure the efficacy of our management methods.

As part of the grant reporting requirements, new measurement plots were selected along Fayston waterways and roadsides. In addition to measuring Knotweed density, size, and percentage of total biomass,

we identify existing and returning (hopefully mostly native) species. In dense stands of Japanese Knotweed, there is very little other vegetation. With the management of Knotweed, native species begin to return to the area. To help restore riparian buffers along the Mill and Chase Brooks, we planted native trees at two sites in Fayston and are seeding sites managed with a conservation mix. We are grateful for the collaboration with the Waitsfield and Warren Conservation Commissions and Friends of the Mad River to accomplish this vital work.

Join us at some of this summer's Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Parties to help steward our beautiful waterways and minimize Knotweed spread throughout our Valley alongside this season's team of UVM interns.

June 18, 4:30-6 pm at Mt Ellen / Barton Rd
June 25, 12-1 pm - location TBD
July 9, 4:30-6 pm at Chase Brook Town Forest
July 23, 12-1 pm - location TBD
Aug 6, 4:30-6 pm at German Flats / Mt Ellen Rd
Aug 13, 1-3 pm, location TBD - and a creemees social for all volunteers at 3 pm.

Please email andreahenderson@gmavt.net to receive email/text updates regarding midday locations for Wednesday Knot Work Parties.

Boyce Hill Happenings

In mid-April, we shot a **documentary video about Boyce Hill's hill farm heritage** with historian Sam Ford and Vermont Master Naturalist founder Alicia Daniels. Boyce Hill features evidence of the original homestead, barn, farm road, stone fence, and cattle corral, and Sam walks viewers through some of the stories she uncovered during her research. The production was funded through the Fayston Town Forest Reserve Fund and was also supported by a 2025 Tiny Grant from the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions. Stay tuned for our announcement of the premiere! There will be no red carpet…

We're also pleased to let you know that a **set of stone steps has been installed** to the pond where most users (human and canine) choose to enter the water to swim. That area has experienced significant erosion over the past few years, and we

hope you'll enjoy using them. The steps were installed by the Northern Forest Canoe Trail summer stewardship crew. It was part of their pre-season training before they deploy out along the trail this summer to manage NFCT's river access and camping projects. We're super grateful to Mike Jordan and Ben Bridgewater, who helped with mechanical heavy lifting!

We'll be hosting a couple of **summer volunteer projects** at Boyce Hill and will let you know soon when you'll have the opportunity to help us maintain the special place!

Conservation Recreation Visioning moves into phase 2.0

The Conservation & Recreation Visioning project (CRV for short) is an ongoing collaboration among local organizations across the Mad River Valley, including the Fayston Conservation Commission, to balance ecological integrity and outdoor recreation. Based on discussions between local groups, consultant-supported mapping and research, and community feedback, CRV's first phase focused on developing data layers, maps, and a set of shared goals, guiding principles, and best practices that together will provide a route forward for our community to achieve this balance. With this important foundational work complete, the CRV project now moves into phase 2.0, where groups will continue to meet to discuss further ways partners can collaborate and share progress on individual conservation and recreation actions. The Fayston Conservation Commission will continue to participate and work with partners on this vital effort to ensure the Valley continues supporting recreation opportunities while protecting the healthy natural environment we all value.

MRV Bear Initiative

Photo courtesy of Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

MAD RIVER VALLEY
BEAR INITIATIVE

Sarah Crockett, educator and advocate for human/bear coexistence, joined the MRV Bear Initiative in hosting a workshop on April 10th. The presentation covered black bear ecology, common causes of conflict between bears and our community, and practical ways we can change our behaviors to reduce conflict. Participants came away with a greater appreciation for bears and valuable strategies for keeping food and attractants away from them, ensuring we can keep our bears wild for years to come.

If you haven't already, take down bird feeders and consider creating habitat for birds and pollinators. Check out Audubon Vermont's Planning Your Plants for Birds Project. Store garbage in bear-resistant containers or structures and use electric fences to keep chickens and honeybees safe.

If a bear encounter occurs, please contact Vermont Fish & Wildlife and the Mad River Valley Bear Initiative. It is helpful to track all bear incidents to better educate residents and visitors about living in bear country. And if you want to learn more about living with bears in the Valley, check out the excellent resource from the MRV Bear Initiative here.

We'd like to hear from you ~ so share your experiences via the Mad River Valley Bear Story Contest. Enter at https://mrvbears.org/.

Welcome, Kim Phelan!

Fayston Conservation is always looking for volunteers to get involved with the ongoing conservation initiatives and projects, and we are thrilled to welcome Kim Phelan to the Commission. Kim brings a wide range of experience to the Commission from her teaching career, military work, and numerous volunteer leadership roles. She looks forward to helping to involve people in our community and steward Fayston's natural resources.

Summer Activities

June 15 - July 20: Open Hearth After School Kids Program at McCullough Barn
June 14 - MRV Bear Initiative and Tri-town Invasives tabling at Waitsfield Farmers Market
June 18, Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Party, 4:30-6 pm at Mt Ellen / Barton Rd
June 25, Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Party, 12-1 pm, location TBD
June 28, Stark Mountain Foundation Guided Naturalist Hike, 2-4 pm
July 9, Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Party, 4:30-6 pm at Chase Brook Town Forest
July 23, Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Party, 12-1 pm, location TBD
July 26 - MRV Bear Initiative and Tri-town Invasives tabling at Waitsfield Farmers Market
July 26, Stark Mountain Foundation Guided Naturalist Hike, 2-4 pm

Aug 6, Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Party, 4:30-6 pm at German Flats / Mt Ellen Rd
Aug 9 - MRV Bear Initiative and Tri-town Invasives tabling at Waitsfield Farmers Market
Aug 13, Fayston Wednesday Knot Work Party, 1-3 pm, location TBD, and creemees social for all volunteers at 3 pm.
Aug 30, Stark Mountain Foundation Guided Naturalist Hike, 2-4 pm

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About the FCC

Your Fayston Conservation Commission has been working steadily to manage and maintain our town's natural resources since 2008. The Commission currently has six members, one open seat, and one open alternate seat. Current commissioners include Brian Litmans (co-chair), Andrea Henderson (co-chair), Amy Dalton, Woody Dugan, Peter Colgan, and Kim Phelan.

Our team operates with the philosophy that small acts of community add up to large ones, and we invite all interested neighbors to join us. If you'd like to learn more about being a Fayston Conservation Commissioner or volunteering to support conservation in Fayston, please check out the FCC Invitation here and contact us at faystonconservation@madriver.com.

You can learn more about the Commission on the Fayston town webpage.

If you were forwarded this email and would like to receive future Fayston Conservation Commission emails directly, please subscribe to the Town of Fayston, VT's email listserve HERE.