Fayston Conservation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, March 25, 2025

5:45 - 7:00 pm

Fayston Municipal Office

1. **In Attendance** - Brian Litmans, Amy Dalton, Kim Phelan, Andrea Henderson, Peter Colgan, and Woody Dugan.

2. **Members of the public in attendance** - Sparky Potter from Fayston is interested in the FCC's role in land stewardship. Joanne Peacock, from Fayston is working on sustainable sitework mitigation.

3. **Meeting called to order at 5:47 pm**.

4. **Approved minutes** from Feb 25, 2026, unanimously.

5. **Project updates**
    a. **MRV Bear Initiative** – the focus of our monthly meeting on 3/24 was planning for the Bear Fair at the MRV Welcome Center in conjunction with the Green Valley Rally on May 2 from 8-2. There will be info on practical ways to live with bears on topics ranging from garbage to fencing. Bear Haiku is ongoing with the libraries for poetry month. Our intern Casey Klus is very helpful.
    b. **Invasives/Knotweed** – Met with FMR Exec Director, staff, and Board to discuss tri-town CC efforts and collaboration to examine the breadth and scope of work taking place, and administrative and other challenges faced. Fayston benefits significantly from Waitsfield's financial and administrative work. The 2026 project manager position and all six internship offers have been accepted.
    c. **Boyce Hill** – 15 volunteers showed for the recent apple pruning workshop. One volunteer found us via the Bee app and donated loppers and handsaws. We are already tackling honeysuckle as an invasive. We could use Grant funds for other invasives like reed canary grass which is found in several places on the property. Volunteer Gail O'Keefe (Waitsfield Conservation Commission) is a point person for the knotweed mitigation goat grazing project underway throughout the Valley and walked the site below the barn foundation that might be good for goat grazing. We have a vague idea of costs/acre but need more detail.

i. FCC voted unanimously to allow the goat herd to use Boyce Hill as a safe haven when riverbanks are not usable (flooding, etc)
ii. Woody spoke with Misha Golfman from the Mad River Path on potential signage for Boyce Hill.
iii. Potential to draft a Tiny Grant (now up to $800) for use at Boyce Hill on invasives. The deadline is in early April.

d. **Chase Brook Mgmt Plan** - We are doing a comprehensive and holistic plan update for the forest. This is a work in progress due to significant rewriting, formatting and content shifting.
    i. The FCC has some concerns about use by camps and groups - we need to monitor impact (rock painting and erosion along Mill Brook). We need a more robust agreement not just for use of the barn but also on use of/impact on the natural environment at Chase Brook and other locations.
    ii. Use permits will be discussed at the April Select Board meeting for groups using town lands. The FCC focus would be on "leave no trace" as a guiding principle. There is no fee for non-profit or not-for-profit organizations and a small fee for use by other groups.
e. **Chase Brook Maintenance** - The parking area has been plowed. Dog cleanup is needed everywhere - and Mad River Path will be giving us the last "poop fairy" sign. Good news: there has been no further deer browse on serviceberry trees due to fencing installed by Brian and Amy in the fall of 2025.
f. **Wildlife Corridors** - no updates.
g. **Conservation and Recreation Visioning** - At the recent CRV quarterly meeting a majority of time was spent on "Attitude of Gratitude" work and video. This focuses on showing appreciation for the environment, gratitude for landowners, and for other users. Similar to "Almost there" video.

6. Other business

a. **Green Up Day is on Saturday, May 2,** with volunteers across the Valley cleaning up along roads. Patty Pasley is coordinating with Bri Skoldberg on volunteer sign-ups. Clean-up bags are available in advance or at the Welcome Center that morning.

b. **Green Valley Rally at the MRV Welcome Center from 8-2.** There will be a BBQ for Green Up Day and steward MRV volunteers from 12-2. The **MRVBI Bear Fair** will be at the same location with tables and info on composting, fencing, protecting chickens and bee hives, planting, garbage, videos, and more.

c. **Act 59.** Langford Davidson, Chair of the Planning Commission, had questions for the FCC about our thoughts on Act 59 as it relates to the Town Plan. Act 59 aims for 30% land conservation by 2030. **There is a Listening session at Yestermorrow on Monday March 30th from 9:30-11 am and there are other online opportunities and in-person options around the state on this topic.** FCC will discuss Act 59's goals, in relation to the Town Plan, as it considers Act 171 and other relevant conservation goals that will be addressed within the Town Plan. Act 171, passed in 2016, requires Vermont municipalities to identify and map forest blocks and habitat connectors in their town plans to reduce forest fragmentation. Plans updated after January 1, 2018, must include policies to protect these areas, often incorporating maps from Vermont Conservation Design to maintain ecological connectivity.

d. **Spring newsletter -** Need content written by April 1 to send out Fri, April 3.

7. **Next Meeting: April 22, 2026 at 5:45pm**

8. **Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm**