Spring 2026 Fayston Conservation Commission Update

Spring has sprung, with fits and starts. While winter is making its retreat and the snow is melting, the warm temperatures have us all thinking of spring and coming summer. Gardeners are thinking about this summer's crops and planting seeds. Bicyclists are getting their bikes tuned up for a summer of fun. Hikers are thinking about trails they have yet to walk. And bears are finding their way out of their dens - a reminder that now is the time to put away bird feeders. For those thinking it's time to get out and clean up their garden beds, please wait. Dead stems and leaf litter are habitats for beneficial insects and pollinators. Cleaning up the beds too early can have real impacts on these species. It's best to wait until late May when evening temps are in the 50s - that will give these species time to emerge from their winter hibernation. And that goes for mowing too - practicing No Mow May provides habitat and forage for early-season pollinators. You can learn more about how to protect pollinators in the spring from the Xerces Society at For Pollinators' Sakes, Don't Spring into Garden Cleanup Too Soon! | Xerces Society.

May 2nd is Green Valley Rally & Green Up Day

Last year, neighbors of all ages signed up to clean up roads and culverts throughout Fayston. Choose to come out and make a difference on Green Up Day! Sign up for a section of road and help keep our community clean and green! **Green Up MRV** - https://greenupmrv.com/

The 4th annual Green Valley Rally will be held on Saturday, May 2nd, at the MRV Welcome Center at Rt 100/17 from 8 am - 2 pm. Green Up Day and stewardMRV volunteers will be treated to a BBQ hosted by the MRV Chamber of Commerce from 12-2 pm. Valley stewardship organizations will table at the Green Valley Rally, including the MRV Bear Initiative, which will host it's first ever Bear Fair.

Details can be found at: Green Valley Rally 2026 - Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce

MRV Bear Initiative - mrvbears.org

Photo courtesy of Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

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. Vermont Fish and Wildlife's recent press release sharing additional recommendations can be found online - Bears Are Waking Up, Vermonters Should Take Down Birdfeeders and Secure Other Food Sources to Prevent Bear Conflicts

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department asks Vermonters to submit reports of bears engaging in potentially dangerous behavior like targeting bird feeders and garbage, feeding on crops or livestock, entering cars or homes, or investigating campgrounds. Reports can be submitted at https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/living-with-black-bears.

The Initiative is collaborating again this year with the MRV Libraries for April's National Poetry Month. The community is invited to contribute bear-themed haiku for display at local businesses throughout April. People of all ages may submit their haiku about bears through April 15th **HERE**

Here's a bear-themed haiku by Megan Sharkey of Alaska:

Garbage on the porch
Is the best way to get a
Bear on short notice

The MRVBI will also host a **Bear Fair** at the MRV Welcome Center in conjunction with the Green Valley Rally on May 2nd from 8 am -2 pm. There will be valuable information about how to keep bears out of your trash and compost, demonstrations of how to use electric fencing to protect your chicken coops and bee hives, and native plant suggestions to help attract birds and pollinators. Follow the Bear Initiative on Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/madriver_bear_initiative/

Boyce Hill Happenings

Apple Tree Pruning

A volunteer crew of 15 Boyce Hill friends spent the morning of March 14th pruning some long-neglected apple trees. Apple trees are best pruned while dormant to improve fruit quality and keep the tree healthy by increasing sunlight and airflow. Apples are “soft mast” for wildlife, and you can enjoy them, too!

Goats?!

Nothing is definitive yet, but we are evaluating the possibility of using goats to graze invasive species (like Reed Canary Grass) and other areas we’d like to keep clear that are hard to reach with a mower or brush hog. Have thoughts about this? Please share them (see below)!

We’re always interested in your thoughts about Boyce Hill! Please let us know here.

Knotweed Management and Habitat Restoration.

Wondering what the white tubes you see along the Chase and Mill Brooks are?

They are protective planting tubes that allow native saplings to grow, protecting them from wind and deer browse. Follow us at https://www.instagram.com/madriverknotweed/

In late May/early June, we will again measure the density and size of Japanese Knotweed in 3’x3’ measurement sites throughout the Valley to measure the efficacy of our management methods. 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. We are grateful for the collaboration with the Waitsfield and Warren Conservation Commissions and Friends of the Mad River to accomplish this vital work.

It's been a productive winter collaborating and planning for another season of knotweed management and habitat restoration. We are excited to welcome back one of last year's interns, Ray McAuliffe, as the project coordinator, along with six new enthusiastic interns.

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.

Knot Work Party dates, times, and locations will be posted on the **Bee App** - https://joinbee.app/ It's a great opportunity to help restore native habitat and introduce these young people to the beautiful valley we call home.

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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.