

**MINUTES**  
**Underhill Conservation Commission**  
**September 8, 2014**  
**Underhill Town Hall**

**Present:** Trevor Squirrell (chair), Nancy McCrae, Karen McKnight, Dan Steinbauer, and Merianne O'Grady

**Opening Remarks:** Trevor stated that UCC members Barbara Greene, David Rogers, and Pat Lamphere were unable to attend tonight's meeting.

**Cranebrook Trail Ordinance:** Per Trevor, litigation involving the Cranebrook Trail is still in process. Therefore, any action on the current Underhill Trails Ordinance is currently on hold until further notice.

**Invasive Education / Outreach Project:** Karen stated that this month (Saturday, 9/13) is the last Underhill Farmer's Market until Spring, 2015. It was decided to wait until next year to set up a UCC invasive-education/outreach booth there. We will be more up to speed on this topic/concern by then, and, in addition, the live species will be more observable next Spring and Summer. We are still planning to hold one workshop, and possibly work-parties, on the 8th of November. Members will focus on the details at the October UCC meeting. Trevor indicated he has not lined up definite speakers at this point, but has conferred with Keith Thompson, the Chittenden County Forester, regarding potential individuals. Dan has also offered to be a speaker.

It was pointed out that Japanese Knotweed, one of the major invasive plant species, has been aggressively encroaching along stream-beds in Underhill and adjoining areas. It can be seen along the stream bank on Beartown Rd in Underhill Center. This fast-spreading invasive can be limited by removing the plants which are present, and replacing them with native species. This can create a canopy with sufficient shade in which knotweed does not thrive. Brown's River School students, in collaboration with the Jericho Underhill Land Trust and Mills Riverside Park, have been involved in knotweed removal-silver maple replacement, and it is hoped that such student-volunteer fieldwork will continue along our local stream-beds. UCC will be in contact with the other Underhill schools to educate students, and to initiate more such work-projects.

Dan, a State of VT Forest Pest First Detector who is trained to identify and monitor initial signs of insect invasion into local forest ecosystems, gave a presentation. He reviewed the three most prevalent invasive insect species, which have established themselves in the local region or are threatening to migrate our way. They are: the Emerald Ash Borer, the Asian Longhorn Beetle, and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Dan gave an overview of each species: host trees, appearance of insect, how it affects trees, what identifying characteristics visible on trees, where insect migrating from, methods of migration, and current control techniques. Each member received a brochure entitled "Look UP! Vermont: Our Trees Are At Risk" (VT State Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation and UVM Extension, in collaboration with the National Parks Diagnostic Network and the U.S. Forest Service).

**Town Plan 2015 - Natural Resources section:** Trevor reiterated UCC's assigned task of reviewing and updating the Natural Resources section of the 2015 Underhill Town Plan during our upcoming meetings. He has already worked on parts of the section, and will send UCC members these revisions.

Karen expressed concern regarding the impact of developments and new construction on local aquifers. She suggested that the Commission review the current (2010) Natural Resources section to determine how/if this can be somehow addressed, and incorporated into the Town's 2015 Strategic Plan. The Development Review Board can utilize certain regulations to enforce site-by-site impacts, but Karen stated that the consequences to the farther-reaching areas of Underhill's aquifers are not currently under the Town's control. (Karen is also a member of Underhill's DRB.) It was also pointed out that mapping of aquifers in the state of VT has not been done, so exact locations and sizes are currently unknown.

**New Business:** We briefly discussed the excavation occurring at the Ethan Allen Firing Range by the VT National Guard. Reportedly, variances have been officially approved for this work, and legal permits have been issued by the State of VT. Concern was expressed regarding the impact of such new construction on the vulnerable wetlands within the area.

**Approval of Minutes - August 8th, 2014:** Since a quorum present at last month's meeting was not present for voting purposes, approval of last month's meeting minutes will be addressed at next month's meeting.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, October 13th, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Underhill Town Hall

Respectfully submitted, Merianne O'Grady, UCC member, 9-11-14. **DRAFT**

*FWWD*  
*[Signature]* 10/13/14