

Underhill Conservation Commission (UCC)  
Underhill Town Hall  
June 11, 2012

Present: Trevor Squirrel (chair), Barbara Greene, Merianne O'Grady

**- Opening remarks/Public comment:**

Trevor noted that there were only three of us present, and therefore, it would be a relatively brief meeting this time.

**- Large Habitat Blocks and Regional Connectivity:**

**Identification and Mapping Project:**

Trevor stated that he recently conversed with Jim Andrews, from Middlebury College and also a member of the Salisbury (Town) Conservation Commission. They discussed ways to involve local communities more in projects/work of town conservation commissions, and also how to work more creatively with the State of VT on such projects. Reportedly, the VT Regional Planning Commission is looking at having local/town road crews begin wildlife monitoring while on the job. This has not been tried yet in Chittendon County. Trevor suggested that perhaps the Town of Underhill's road crew could be trained in the use of mapping and logging in of specific wildlife species observed while they are out on the local roads.

**Chittendon Uplands Project:**

Trevor reported that there is no new updates on this project. At the current time, the focus is on the Winooski Watershed work.

**- Trails Committee report - (reported by Karen McKnight to Trevor)**

Per Karen, there are no updates at this time. As she reported in May, the Committee is still awaiting settlement of the two legal cases pending on the Cranebrook area.

Trevor said that he recently walked with some of the VYCC staff around the Cranebrook area, and they surveyed the current invasion of knotweed there. He indicated that the Underhill Select Board is interested in using the VYCC, but he was told by the Corps' staff that they are already booked up with other projects for the season. The knotweed in the Cranebrook area is of particular concern since it has been spreading vigorously there, and needs to be dealt with soon. Given the limitations of time and resources, Trevor suggested that we deal with the smaller patches in the area first, and also work on the relatively new ones cropping up along the

banks of Mill Brook, adjacent to the Pleasant Valley Road bridge. UCC could invoke a service group for this purpose, such as a local Boy Scout troop or other community-service organization(s). Targeted knotweed infestations could then begin to be controlled before next Spring.

(Knotweed dies back in the Winter, so the next opportunity would be in early Spring of 2013, if no progress is achieved this Summer.)

Education and outreach to Underhill residents regarding the spread of invasives, and how landowners near watershed areas can assist in controlling their spread, is also a possible project for our commission.

Trevor pointed out that knotweed is a rhizome, and is carried down from the higher watershed areas via stream transport. So, removing it in higher areas of a watershed would reduce its establishment down-stream. To control knotweed, it must be pulled up/cut at ground level and then concentrated (18%) Round-Up applied to the stem of each plant.

Trevor also pointed out that in addition to knotweed, the other invasive species which is spreading locally is the yellow-flag iris. Both are found in wetland areas. The wild Chervil is also found in the Underhill area, and is an invasive as well.

#### **- Aquatic Organisms Project (Fish Project):**

Trevor reported that the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District and VT. Fish & Wildlife will present three culvert designs to the Underhill Select Board Thursday, June 14th. The design work and pricing were completed by Grover Engineering. The three targeted roads are: Barrett Ln., Beartown Rd., and Irish Settlement Rd. The cost for each is as follows:

Barrett	\$13,000
Beartown	\$12,000
Irish Settlement	\$16,000

The Irish Settlement Rd culvert is highest priority of the three because, as Trevor reiterated, it crosses Crane Brook and is close to the local school, thus providing an excellent educational opportunity for the Underhill community re: aquatic organisms. The plan is to complete the Irish Settlement Road culvert work this year. Funding sources will be the VT. Fish and Wildlife (50%) and the Lake Champlain Basin Program (50%).

#### **Plant Sale (June 2nd):**

Barbara Greene reported that all but ten of the 90 blueberry plants ordered from Hartman's nursery sold. When they arrived at Karen McKnight's, one box was so tightly packed with blueberries that some of the plants were

damaged. It was agreed that in spite of the weather (very windy and some intermittent rain), the sale was still a success. Trevor reported that the UCC netted approximately \$300. In addition, the Underhill community residents' donations of plants to the sale were generous. Barbara stated that Donna had put advertisements on the local Front-Porch Forum, the Two-Town website, and the Town of Underhill website. Trevor suggested that for next year's sale, we should consider posting signs at the following highly visible locations :

- 1) Underhill Flats (on Hwy 15 near the Mills River Park entrance)
- 2) Far side of cemetery at intersection of Park St and River Rd/Pleasant Valley Rd.
- 3) Jolly's gas station
- 4) Underhill Town Hall

Trevor suggested that we consider not posting flyers on local bulletin-boards. There is already too much information at such sites and often, fliers are overlooked anyway.

**- New Business:**

Underhill Harvest Market (in September): Barbara indicated that the Jericho-Underhill Land Trust is interested in sharing a booth with UCC at this event, as was done last year. Trevor will contact Libby of the JULT re: this possibility.

**- Next UCC Meeting:** Monday, July 9 , 7:00 P.M., Underhill Town Hall

**Adjournment:** 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Merianne O'Grady, UCC member  
6/20/12 DRAFT