Middlesex Conservation Commission
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Katy Farber, Kimberly Hagen, Ross Lieblappen, Adrienne Magida, Dave Shepard, and Jon Udis
Guest: Jane Dudley – Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area

1. Administrative Operations

a. Minutes of March 24, 2026, Meeting
Kimberly made a motion to approve the March 24th meeting minutes of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) with a second from Jon. The minutes were approved.

b. Town Forest Cabin Update
Adrienne attended a Select Board meeting to discuss the cabin, and the Board was supportive of repairing it. They asked about liability and Adrienne explained that if reservations for the cabin were to be managed by Vermont Huts and Trails it would be covered by their liability insurance. The Board was also in favor of a survey of town residents to gauge interest in the cabin. Paul Cerminara said there is interest by the Fish & Wildlife Department in establishing a new parking area further up Notch Road that could alleviate concerns about the current parking situation.

Discussion moved on to some potential options to reduce the cost of repairing the cabin. Jon said the Central Vermont Career Center building trades program does a construction project each year. He also asked about the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. Kimberly said there is a cost share for their projects and they are more oriented toward trail work, but they could be a possibility. She also asked whether the Mad River Path might be interested in the cabin. Adrienne said the path is planned to end in Middlesex village so that cabin would likely be too far away from the path.

Regarding the survey, Katy asked whether town residents are the right audience since they might be less likely to want to stay in the cabin than people from out of town. Kimberly expressed the opinion that the purpose of the initial survey would be to gauge support for the project from town residents, even if they might not personally use the cabin. Jane said there is interest amongst various groups for places to have an overnight outing. She offered that Yestermorrow and Youth Build are two other entities that might be able to take on the cabin reconstruction. Jon said the survey should assess the support of town residents for putting town money (e.g. Conservation Fund) into the project. Sage asked if we had an idea of how much funding from the Conservation Fund would be appropriate. Adrienne said we wouldn't want to completely drain the Fund and Dave noted that its' primary purpose was for land conservation and that money from the Fund might be needed if the Chases Mountain Trail ever needed extensive work that was beyond what volunteers could handle. Sage offered to work on drafting questions for the survey.

c. Mad River Path

A grant has been received for construction on a section of the Path. The organization is in the process of hiring an implementation coordinator. They will be proceeding with public fund raising soon.

d. Trail Work Dates
The spring walk through on the Chases Mountain Trail will be on Saturday, May 16th with May 17th as a rain date. Work on the loop trail will be on Monday, May 11th. On a related note, the Green Mountain Club will be coordinating with the Trail Committee to lead a walk on trails at Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area in late June.

e. Waterbury Development Review Board
The MCC has been notified by the Waterbury Development Review Board that construction is being proposed at a property at 1125 Ring Road in Waterbury that is adjacent to the Middlesex Town Forest.

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)

a. Trails Committee (Adrienne, Dave and/or Jon)
At the most recent Committee meeting, there was discussion of and approval for a joint letter from the MCC and the Committee to the Select Board concerning a proposal to upgrade the classification of the Class 4 section of South Bear Swamp Road to Class 3. There was also discussion of the potential for a trail on the east side of Wrightsville Reservoir and a report on a walk on trails on Michael Hill's property on South Bear Swamp Road.

Minutes of Trails Committee meetings can be found at the What's Next Middlesex website: http://www.whatsnextmiddlesex.org/meeting-minutes.html.

b. Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area and Shady Rill Park (Aric Brown)
Jane reported that the park is in the process of being readied for opening for the season including construction of a shelter to replace one damaged by flooding. Washington Electric Coop is looking to sell their hydropower plant at the outlet of the reservoir. This could have implications for the future management of the dam and the water level in the reservoir. Jane wants the Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area Board of Directors to be part of any discussion of water levels in the future.

c. Green Up Day (Jon)
Jon reported that the Commission has received a grant of $1200 for tire disposal cost from the Middlesex Community Fund. If the entire amount of the grant is not expended this year the remainder will be retained for next year.

d. Culvert Monitoring Project
Jon attended a meeting with Community Resilience for the Waterbury Area (CReW) who are the hosting entity for the Culvert Crawlers program in our area. There is an app created by Dartmouth College that is used by volunteers. There will be an in-person training later in May.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

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Next Meeting: May 26, 2026

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary

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