

WESTMORELAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Unapproved minutes for 03-12-2026

Members present: Perry Sawyer, Nancy Ranson, Anson Burt, April Ferguson
Guests: Aimee Brekmeier, Ted Ferguson

Meeting called to order by Chair Perry Sawyer at 6:10PM

Perry led the Pledge of Allegiance

There were no alternates to be seated for the meeting

Motion by April to accept the February minutes was made seconded by Nancy R. The February minutes were accepted with a few minor typo corrections noted.

Perry stated Conservation members Alicia Powell and Jean Rudolph have agreed to another term and would be sworn in at the end of March

Perry spoke with Jon Lounsbury who has agreed to chair the annual Roadside Clean-up project on April 18, 2026. Donations for prizes including maple syrup and gift certificates were discussed. April asked about buying more reflective vests for the participants again this year. Perry will follow up with Jon to get sizing for the order.

Joy communicated with Perry that she has not heard back from the Westmoreland Road Agent regarding salt use on town roads. It was noted that he has been working non-stop due to inclement winter weather conditions. Pictures of accumulated road salt on Spofford Road were shown and it was noted that a brook was in close proximity to the area. Perry stated Keene, NH is experimenting with a liquid magnesium brine to help with icy roads. It was noted that a salt/sand mixture seems to be more widely used on state roads perhaps due to a salt shortage statewide.

Andy Powers, the licensed sprayer for the Harrisville Knotweed project, will be attending our April meeting.

Amanda Littleton from the NH Conservancy will be attending our May meeting.

New Business:

Perry spoke of HB1015 submitted by Rep. Catheryn Harvey of Chesterfield, NH regarding property owner disclosure requirements for Japanese Knotweed. She has been in consultation with Paul Steblein regarding this bill.

Perry provided additional dam licensing information from FERCO which will be in our file and can be reviewed at any time by members

April introduced Aimee Brekmeier who owns Slippery Slope Goats in Vermont. Aimee transports her goats to various areas including Vt, NH and NY to eat invasive species of aggressive weeds including Japanese Knotweed, Poison Parsnip and Giant Hogweed. She identified characteristics of Knotweed including the underground root systems which can be 6' deep and 65' in width as well as the height growth which is 3-4 inches per day. The magnitude of this root system kills off native plants which are necessary to prevent erosion and damages natural habitats.

Aimee's approach is to control Knotweed through her goats which ingest the leaves of established plants as well as new plant shoots. The goat rumen kills 99.8% of the ingested material so it is not re-distributed via manure. Once the Knotweed has been removed from the plots it allows for replacement of native plants which then choke out the Knotweed growth through native plant recovery which keeps the Knotweed from growing back. Typically she revisits sites every three weeks to graze new growth shoots after the initial grazing is done.

The NRCS recognizes goat grazing as opposed to spraying to be a better environmental practice. A brief discussion about spraying herbicides (which Aimee does not do) included information about commercial Glyphosate producing problematic "superweeds" after 2-3 years of application. Glyphosate has also been linked to a number of environmental and health risks including causing cancer. The herbicide Grazon was discussed as an alternative to Glyphosate. Available safety data sheets do not find these same risks with Grazon. It was mentioned that licensed sprayer, Andy Powers, could be asked for input about these two herbicides at the April meeting and to ask if Grazon is allowed for use in NH.

Aimee was asked about grazing the goats near waterways and she said she grazes the goats for short periods of time along water embankments which has been very effective. She has coordinated with Black Water Action Team (B.R.A.T) to develop best practice methods near waterways. She is aware of managing her grazing time to minimize impact and protect the land.

Aimee shared a narrated video of her goats in action at a site which was very impressive when compared to an area not yet grazed.

April made a motion to adjourn, second by Anson, meeting adjourned at 7:45PM.

Submitted,
April Ferguson, Secretary Pro tem