

Received 9/12/25
12:19 PM Jodi Moore, ATC

Town of Durham Conservation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes REVISED

July 14, 2025

Otte Meadow Open Space

- 1) Augur called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM. Commissioners present: Augur, Cordes, Devito, Dudko, Laflamme, Miller, Pasiewicz.
- 2) LaFlamme motioned approval of agenda as submitted, Cordes seconded, all ayes.
- 3) Public comment – none.
- 4) Review damage from trespass and discuss restitution recommendations to make to First Selectman

The Commissioners walked up the trail to the point of damage related to trespass topic 1 that had previously been reported by a member of the public and looked into by State Police. What was observed was an area roughly a circle of approximately 40 feet in radius (or approximately one-tenth of an acre). In that area of transgression was observed:

- 11 saplings cut off around 2 to 3 feet above ground level
- 13 trees (predominantly, if not all, hickory species) between 5 to 12 inches diameter at breast height (DBH), averaging 50 feet height, chopped down approximately 2 to 3 feet above ground level
- 10 trees > 5 inch DBH with damage (some cut marks, some nails, etc.)
- two metal ladder sections and a variety of lumber pieces strewn about, including some with protruding nails

Augur read Meigs' thoughts on restitution, as she could not attend, and then the Commissioners discussed those ideas and others further. Consensus was reached on recommending to the town's chief law enforcement officer, the First Selectman, that the following be pursued:

- All stumps (sapling and larger) be professionally cut off at ground level prior to Dec. 21, 2025.
- The entire area to be professional treated for woody invasives.
- All felled limbs to be moved into a shaded area to the northwest of the damaged area in a single neat brush pile for wildlife habitat.
- All pieces of commercial lumber (ply wood, two-by-fours and larger boards, etc.) and any metal (nails in trees, metal ladders, etc.) to be removed.
- The stumps of the 13 trees of ≥ 5 inch DBH to have deer protection installed post cutting,

The professional hired to cut the stumps should be reported to the Commission so there is awareness of when the work will occur should the public notice activity and report it, and so that if there is any question on the work to be done it can be noted before proceeding. The deer protection could be installed by the transgressor. The transgressor can move and pile the brush – no additional cutting is to be done at that time.

The Commission then proceeded to the area of trespass topic 2. Commissioners observed signs posted on Town land, cutting done on Town land, and a rutted out trail entering Town land from the back yard of 57 Saw Mill Road. The Commission will remove the signs on Town land, and will request of Public Works that a bolder or two be placed to prevent motor vehicle trespass.

5) CVEF Grant award announcement – at a prior meeting Dudko had shared plans for a floating bridge over the wettest portion of the trail through Otte Meadow, which he had approval from the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency for, and applied for a grant to the Conn. Valley Educational Foundation. That grant has been awarded and Dudko will organize another volunteer work party in due course.

6) Cordes motioned adjournment at 8:05, Devito seconded, all ayes.