

For the Week of June 21, 2021

Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Conservation Commission Trip to Law Island

The Colchester Conservation Commission gets an “A” for outreach. On Sunday, June 13, members of the Conservation Commission met on Law Island for the first of two yearly visits to inspect conditions on the island. The island is owned by the State of Vermont and maintained by the Town of Colchester. This 9-acre island is on the Paddlers Kayak trail and hosts frequent visitors and campers. Each year as part of their inspection, the Conservation Commission breaks down multiple rogue campfire sites. In some cases, these sites are abandoned with active embers. The Conservation Commission encountered a group of campers and provided education on the location of the two approved sites for fires and explained the dangers to the island associated with the unapproved campfires.

Gypsy Moths are Making a Comeback in Vermont. Why?

Judy Rosovsky, Vermont State Entomologist

State of Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Many people in Vermont are encountering gypsy moths (GM) for the first time. This invasive species arrived in the United States over 100 years ago and has been expanding its range ever since. They can be significant defoliators (leaf eaters) of trees and shrubs. They prefer oak trees, but when there are a lot of caterpillars around they will eat any type of leaf, including maple and pine.

Vermont has not seen an outbreak of GM since 1991. At that time a fungus called *Entomophaga maimaiga* became prevalent in the area and significantly decreased the GM population. But the dry weather that we've experienced over the last few years has not been good for fungi, and the absence of fungi has allowed the GM numbers to increase.

Trees can survive a year or so of defoliation, but defoliation and dry weather are stressors on tree, shrub and plant health. Keeping your plants watered will help offset defoliation stress. We may see another year or two of high levels of GM unless we get some rainy seasons, which should increase the GM killing fungi.

There are traps for caterpillars and for adult gypsy moths. See below for more information on caterpillar control.

General resources: <https://extension.unh.edu/resource/gypsy-moth-fact-sheet>

The following advice for dealing with GM caterpillars is from Vermont Forest Biology Lab pathologist Savannah Ferreira:

Mechanical control: If you have a few trees, caterpillars can be squished, or pruned out of the trees and submerged in soapy water. The egg masses can also be scraped and submerged or squished until you hear a “popping” sound.

Installing a band of burlap around the trunk of the tree this year will encourage egg masses to be laid on the burlap this fall. After the eggs are laid, you can remove the burlap and destroy the egg masses. This can help reduce populations next year.

Sticky bands can also be installed this year on the trunk and/or lower branches of high-value trees. When caterpillars crawl up the trunk, they will get stuck and die. If you use this method, a piece of chicken wire or plastic covering should also be used to prevent wildlife such as birds or small mammals from getting stuck on the bands.

Other control: The most commonly recommended pesticide treatments contain the bacteria, *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk). Btk is applied to foliage where gypsy moth larvae will consume it and are then killed. This strain of bacteria is specific to moth larvae, and its toxic properties get activated when it interacts with particular enzymes in the caterpillar’s digestive tract.

Here are a few additional caterpillar control resources that you may find helpful:

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/gypsymothinwisconsin/pest-management-2/management-guide-for-homeowners/>

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/gypsymothinwisconsin/making-a-burlap-barrier-band-trap/>

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/gypsymothinwisconsin/making-a-sticky-barrier-band/>

Juneteenth

The United States Government this past week recognized June 19th following the separate and individual acts of 49 states, including the State of Vermont. Here is a brief background leading up to this historic event and acts that followed.

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863. It declared that enslaved people in Confederate states “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” This was not respected as the Confederate States were at war with the Union States.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865. Other Confederate Generals surrendered later. The last surrender on land was June 23rd.

On June 19th, 1865 when 2,000 union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas Union Army General Granger, proclaimed freedom for enslaved people, reading General Orders No. 3: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.”

In December 1865, slavery in the United States of America was formally abolished with the adoption of the 13th Amendment. In 1866, freed people in Texas organized a celebration on June 19th which continued and became “Jubilee Day.”

Congress passed the first Civil Rights Act in 1866 which granted all citizens the “full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property.”

Tragically, discrimination and violence against Black Americans continues 156 years after the Civil War and the passing of the 13th Amendment to our national Constitution.

Last week in Colchester, some young people of color were called racist names and had a smelly substance sprayed at them. We don’t know if the perpetrators were from Colchester but an overt act of racial hate happened here and I’m sorry for that.

Constitutions, laws and government proclamations alone can’t abolish racism and racial violence. Consider exploring whether we have achieved the goals of “forever free” in the Emancipation Proclamation, the 13th Amendment and successive Civil Rights laws. Here is Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech from almost 60 years ago: <https://youtu.be/vP4iY1TtS3s>

Changes in Planning & Zoning

The Town of Colchester evaluates the efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance of its services on an ongoing basis. In the summer of 2020, the Selectboard asked the Town Manager to evaluate its services to see if there was anything the town could consider discontinuing, to save financial resources provided by taxpayers. A series of changes has followed that request.

In October 2020, the position of Zoning Administrator was discontinued effective June 30, 2021, due to a need to broaden the position to include other duties. A Development Planner was hired in May of 2021 to integrate town planning and land-use regulations with the review of projects proposed for development. These positions overlapped to provide a smooth transition to serve both permit seekers and the volunteers on the Development Review Board who review the more significant development projects.

In May 2021, the Selectboard approved a change to cease implementation of the State of Vermont's Fire and Building Safety Code, which eliminates the need for Colchester taxpayers to pay for both the State and town inspectors. Following these changes, the town also eliminated the full-time position of building inspector. The same month a review of the on-site wastewater permit process was conducted which led to the decision to contract the wastewater permit review to an engineering firm. The Wastewater Official/Assistant Building Inspector was subsequently provided a different position of Permit Specialist, which incorporates review and intake of permits.

Finally, in June 2021, the town discontinued the use of a code for single-family homes, as it was deemed to have little practical value, again overlapping many state requirements at a significant cost.

The town continues to inspect commercial and single-family buildings for compliance with town-issued permits. The town also retains the function of building inspector.

We thank Lisa Riddle, and Derek Shepardson for their hard work and dedication over the years for the Planning & Zoning Department as they depart the town's employ. We also thank Denise Johnson-Terk for her hard work and her flexibility in the recent changes, taking on the role of Permit Specialist and Renae Marshall for stepping in as Interim Director of Planning & Zoning. We also welcome Zach Maia back to the department as Development Planner after his internship several years ago and are excited to work with him!

COVID UPDATE

Vaccines Reduce Risk of Infection by 91%: A new study from the CDC finds the risk of COVID-19 infection for those who are fully vaccinated is reduced by 91%. The study is also the first to show that the vaccine benefits those who get infected despite being fully or partially vaccinated, indicating a milder and shorter illness as well as a 60% lower risk of developing symptoms compared to those unvaccinated.

The study used data from 17 weeks of the CDC Heroes-Recover study on healthcare workers, first responders, frontline workers, and other essential workers, who were more likely to be exposed to the virus due to their line of work. The study also suggests fully or partially vaccinated people might be less likely to spread the virus to others.

Overall the study's findings support the CDC's recommendation to get fully vaccinated against COVID-19. For more information on the study, visit the CDC webpage:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0607-mrna-reduce-risks.html>.

Recent Cases: Chittenden County has had 24 new cases in the last 14 days.

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/current-activity/vermont-dashboard>

Vaccination Eligibility: Registration for the COVID-19 vaccine is officially open to all Vermonters age 12 and up. Sign up or login to your Department of Health account here:

<https://vermont.force.com/events/s/selfregistration>. Those without internet or who speak a language other than English can alternatively call 855-722-7878 to make an appointment.

Vaccination Progress: View the COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard here:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/covid-19-vaccine-dashboard>

Upcoming Town Meetings

Agendas available at: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt>

- **Planning Commission:** Next meeting TBD
- **Development Review Board:** Next meeting: July 14 at 7:00 PM
 - Live stream: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
 - Mail or email public comments prior to the hearing (zmaia@colchestervt.gov) or Town of Colchester, c/o Development Review Board, 781 Blakely Road, Colchester, VT 05446)
- **Recreation Advisory Board:** Next meeting: TBA
- **Conservation Commission:** Next Meeting: July 19, 6:00 p.m.
- **Library Board of Trustees:** Next meeting: July 15, 2021 at 4:30 PM. Dial in (929) 205-6099; Meeting ID: 951 5132 1071; Passcode: 761145
- **Selectboard:** Next meeting: June 22 at 6:30 PM at 781 Blakely Road in the third floor Outer Bay Room. Attend in person with masks if you are unvaccinated. Masks are optional for



Colchester Town News

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Colchester – What do you want to do today?

fully-vaccinated folks. Alternatively, send a note to TownManager@colchestervt.gov with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and your name. As with in-person Citizens to be Heard, we ask that you SHARE YOUR ADDRESS. The email will be shared with the entire Selectboard prior to the meeting and included in the information packet at the next meeting. Watch the meeting online via live stream: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>

Selectboard Agenda: www.bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas

Subscribe to the Town Newsletter: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/jkMAO2v>

For more information or to comment call 264-5509 or email townmanager@colchestervt.gov