



ROCKINGHAM COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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AGENDA ITEM Corresp.

DATE: 7/27/26

July 21, 2026

Rye Conservation Commission
c/o Shawn Joyce, Chair
10 Central Road
Rye, NH 03870

Re: Rye Town Forest Conservation Easement – Response to June 17, 2026, Notice

Dear Mr. Joyce,

Thank you for your June 17, 2026, letter notifying the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) of the Rye Conservation Commission's intent to implement recommendations from *Trails for People and Wildlife – An Inventory of Trails and Assessment of Potential Impacts to Wildlife on Town Conservation Lands in Rye, NH* (the "Report") as they relate to the Rye Town Forest. RCCD has reviewed your letter and the attached materials. While the included map appears to depict an "ideal" trail configuration in which the existing Yellow Trail and Green Trail are no longer shown, your letter also references the potential implementation of new trails, trail closures, reroutes, signage, maintenance activities, non-native species control, habitat protection measures, and other management actions. As a result, it is unclear whether the Commission is proposing only the decommissioning of the existing Yellow Trail and Green Trail depicted on the map or whether additional trail modifications or management activities are also proposed.

The Conservation Easement distinguishes between the maintenance of existing trails and activities involving the relocation or construction of trails. Maintenance of existing trails is a reserved right of the Town and does not require an approved Forest Management Plan, provided such maintenance activities do not materially impair the conservation purposes of the Easement. However, relocation of existing trails or construction of new trails may only occur if those activities are included in an approved Forest Management Plan, as required under the Easement. See Section III(1).

Based on the information currently provided, RCCD cannot determine precisely which recommendations from the Report the Commission is pursuing and whether the proposed activities constitute routine trail maintenance or activities requiring review and approval under the Easement.

Accordingly, RCCD respectfully requests additional information regarding the nature and scope of the proposed work.

Specifically, RCCD requests clarification regarding the following:

- Is the Commission proposing only the decommissioning of the existing Yellow Trail and Green Trail depicted on the attached map, or are additional trail relocations, new trail construction, or other modifications to the trail system also proposed?
- Is the Commission proposing to implement only the "Ideal" trail configuration depicted on the attached map, or are additional recommendations from the Report also proposed for implementation within the Rye Town Forest?
- How will the proposed trail closures or decommissioning be carried out? For example, will the trails be closed through signage, brush barriers, restoration plantings, natural revegetation, fencing, or other methods?
- Are any additional management activities proposed within the Conservation Easement area, including invasive species management, habitat restoration, installation of structures or improvements, or other actions associated with implementing the report's recommendations? To the extent any of these additional management activities are proposed, how will they be carried out?
- What is the anticipated timeline for implementation of the proposed activities?
- Who will be completing the proposed work, the Commission or a third party?
- What work, if any, has already been done in the Rye Town Forest?

RCCD also notes your statement that the Town has engaged Charles Moreno to prepare an updated Forest Management Plan incorporating the Report's recommendations. As explained above, if the Commission is proposing trail relocations or construction of new trails, those activities may only proceed if they are included in an updated Forest Management Plan that has been submitted to and approved by RCCD in accordance with the Conservation Easement.

Once RCCD receives the requested information, we will review the proposed activities to determine which provisions of the Conservation Easement apply and whether any proposed activities require RCCD approval.

As a final note, your letter was the first communication RCCD received about the Commission's plans to implement recommendations from the Report. However, in the meantime, RCCD has received information that the Commission has already started carrying out work contemplated by the Report (e.g., some trails have already been closed). As we are sure the Commission agrees, the Conservation Easement is best served when there is open, direct communication between RCCD and the Commission. To the extent it is true that the Commission has already performed work in the Rye Town Forest before receiving feedback from RCCD, RCCD respectfully requests that, going forward, the Commission provide notice to RCCD and await RCCD's response before carrying out any work. RCCD has an obligation to ensure that the terms of the Easement are being followed, so even if any Commission actions in the Rye Town Forest end up not requiring approval, RCCD must still make that determination in the first instance. See Section X (requiring the Commission to provide RCCD with

prior notice and an opportunity to grant or withhold consent any time an act *may* adversely affect the Conservation Easement). RCCD will likewise ensure it meets its notice obligations under the Conservation Easement and otherwise maintains open lines of communication with the Commission.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Vicky Nelson", with a stylized, cursive script.

Vicky Nelson
District Manager
Rockingham County Conservation District
110 North Road
Brentwood, NH 03833
603-679-2790 ext. 161

C.C:
Rye Select Board
Rachel Stevens