



# TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

**\*\* Groton Conservation Forum \*\***  
**Lawrence Academy Media Center**  
**February 15, 2018, 6:30 – 9:15 p.m.**

Attendees:			Visitors:
Chairman	Paul Funch	X	Groton Conservation Trust members
Vice Chair	Olin Lathrop	X	Conservation Commission members
Secretary	Tim Newman		New England Forestry Foundation employees
<b>Members</b>	Wanfang Murray	X	Mass Wildlife employees
	David Burnham		Squannacook Greenways members
	Stephen Legge	X	Friends of the Trees members
	Bob Ordemann	X	Groton Greenway Committee members
	Jason Remillard		Groton Turtle Conservation members
	Jim Peregoy	X	Invasive Species Committee members
	Dan Patnaude		Mass Audubon employees
	Darcy Schultz	X	Members of the general public

## **1. Call to Order**

Funch called the meeting to order with the above committee members present at 6:30 pm.

## **2. Groton Conservation Forum**

This special meeting of the Trails Committee was called to allow the full Committee to attend the Fourth Annual Groton Conservation Forum. This year, the Groton Conservation Trust was responsible for organizing the Forum. All major open space landowners and all known Groton conservation organizations were invited to attend. The general public was also invited to attend through notices in the local newspapers. Mr. Mark Gerath was the featured speaker.

The Conservation Summit is intended to provide an opportunity for municipal, state, and private conservation organizations to meet to develop collaborative strategies for addressing complex biohabitat and property management issues that impact all of Groton and that cannot be solved by any single organization with their limited resources. This year's program focused on an initiative of the Groton Conservation Trust aimed at increasing public interest in and knowledge of biodiversity and inviting public participation in a "citizen science" type of project they have organized.

In his presentation, Mark introduced the Groton Conservation Trust's project called "The Nature of Groton." This project has been set up using the web-based application iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/the-nature-of-groton>).

Mark noted that Groton boasts extraordinary biodiversity as a result both of the ecology of the region and the significant efforts to protect open spaces by different groups over many decades. Much of the town lies within two distinct Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and habitats of many rare plants and animals appear on the Commonwealth's Biomap Project. The Trust aims to supplement this information using iNaturalist by collecting data from the many people who hike, bike, and otherwise enjoy Groton's open spaces. The Trust is urging these people to submit their observations to the iNaturalist website so that they can be collated and organized for use by those working to protect and manage our natural resources. For example, our landscape is changing as temperatures warm and seasonal rainfall patterns shift. Some species will adapt to this new environment, others will disappear, and some will persist if we help. Knowing when plants flower, salamanders migrate to their vernal pools, insects emerge from hibernation, and other key ecological events occur will help managers to mitigate some of the effects of climate change. In addition, documenting particularly rich areas will help the various conservation organizations determine which spaces are most important to conserve and how best to manage those areas that are already protected. Large amounts of data will allow for the most efficient use of limited resources.

Mark also announced that the Trust has scheduled training in how to use iNaturalist by Dr. Nick Block of Stonehill College. Dr. Block will offer a classroom review followed by a walk at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. The training will be held at the Groton School but the specific location has not been chosen yet.

The Groton Conservation Commission will be responsible for organizing the Fifth Annual Groton Conservation Forum that is tentatively scheduled for February 2019.

### **3. Adjournment**

The Forum concluded at 9:15 pm.