

**Parks & Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting MINUTES**  
 Town of Jay Community Center  
 Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at 7 p.m.

**Present:** Sarah Ducharme  
 Olivia Dwyer  
 Andrew Hamlin  
 Larry House  
 Grace Potthast  
 Tim Rowland  
 Knut Sauer

**General Updates:**

- 1) No update on Recreation Economy for Rural Communities technical assistance grant.
- 2) Discussion of upcoming grant opportunities:

Grant	Deadline	Discussion	Follow up?
<a href="#"><u>DEC Smart Growth Grant Program</u></a>	7/31/25	-Advised that Smart Growth looks for municipal partnerships -future application could partner with Wilmington to connect via Four Peaks and improve access via Stone House Road	-project not ready for application by 7/31/25 -monitor Smart Growth program for future rounds
<a href="#"><u>Community Forest Conservation Grant Program</u></a>	9/17/25	-discussion of private properties that may be available for sale to support community recreation, including Ward forestry properties between Ausable Acres and 9N north of Jay	-Knut to reach out to landowner to gauge initial interest
<a href="#"><u>Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program</u></a>	Closed	-purpose of grant is to reduce injury or death on roads; Jay doesn't have high rate of injury/fatality	-not a good fit for Town of Jay

### **Town Parks Updates:**

- 1) Six trash cans for us in public parks have arrived. Parks staff getting ready to install two trash cans at The Grove; two trash cans at the Village Green; and two trash cans at Douglas Memorial Park.
  - a) Olivia to ask about moving one trash can from Douglas Memorial Park to Children's Playground; suggested place trash can inside the perimeter gate.
  - b) Grace asked about water table replacement part. She will contact Parks staff about repair.
  - c) Grace updated the committee that the sand playground surface needs to be tilled so that weeds can be removed.
  - d) Noted that there are new "No Dogs Allowed" signs at the Children's Playground.

### **Dog Park Update — from Larry and Sarah**

- 1) Planning continues:
  - a) Sarah in communication with Saranac Lake volunteers; will ask for materials list and any guidelines they used in planning.
  - b) Larry discussed setting goals and a timetable to achieve them.
- 2) Discussion of possible sites considering limitations of FEMA buyout properties, which do not allow fences that would block the flow of water and the movement of flood debris.
  - a) Knut suggested looking into county foreclosure property downriver of Covered Bridge.
  - b) Olivia shared list of town properties from Town of Jay Assessor Tim Gay that likely do not have FEMA restrictions.
  - c) Town Supervisor Matt Stanley is reaching out to FEMA for a list of properties they monitor in Jay; this will reveal which land cannot have fences.
  - d) Larry will attend the next regular Town Board meeting to update all councilors on initiative and progress.
  - e) Larry and Sarah will table at Jay Day on August 9 to share information with the community and get more volunteers involved.
  - f) No response from Rotary Club of Au Sable Valley about being a fiscal sponsor. Knut to help Larry and Sarah coordinate meeting with the Club.

## Open Spaces Discussion:

### Black Brook Tract

As part of the Comprehensive Plan Work Group process, the committee is learning about and discussing public lands in the Town of Jay and serving the Jay community, including state, county, and town lands. At the July 2025 meeting, Andrew shared what he learned about the Black Brook Tract, a 1,140-acre parcel owned by Lyme Timber and under a conservation easement held by the NYS Department of Conservation that allows for public access and recreation.

### More info:

**Black Brook Tract:** <https://dec.ny.gov/places/wilmington-wild-forest>

**DEC Forester:** William Mashburn

- The DEC manages the Black Brook Tract with an Interim Recreation Management Plan; changes to this plan must be approved by both New York State and Lyme Timber, the landowner.
- Any changes to the conservation easement is a low priority for New York State.
- NY's priority with the conservation easement is that any recreation must be done responsibly without negative impacts on the surrounding ecosystem.
- Lyme's priority is also minimal impact; no interest expressed to DEC in creating new trails or new infrastructure.
- Public access is allowed through existing infrastructure:
  - Existing logging roads allow snowmobile activity.
  - There is a trail to rock climbing crag on Potter Mountain:
    - <https://www.mountainproject.com/area/107667134/potter-mountain-cliff>
    - Sarah lives nearby; sees cars for climbers there 3-4 times per week, including out of state license plates.
  - Parking on the side of the road.
- Developing more infrastructure (parking lots, trail system) could impede Lyme's primary use of the land, which is logging.
- DEC forester was not aware of any ongoing projects between Town of Black Brook, DEC, and/or Lyme.
- **Long-term considerations:** Could it be possible to improve access to the rock climbing crag on Potter Mountain?
  - With an informal, unmarked, unmaintained trail, the access trail gets very muddy, which encourages people to walk around and widen the trail and increases impact to surrounding areas.

- Resource protection could be improved by signage, hardening sections of the trail, re-routing around muddy sections, and making the trail more accessible to public use.

### **Fishing Access**

DEC Locator is an interactive map of DEC recreation opportunities with a GIS layer for trout stream fishing access: <https://dec.ny.gov/maps/interactive-maps/decinfo-locator>

Discussed conflict on River Road in the Ausable Acres; landowners maintain there is no public access to river through their properties while anglers say they can access the river.

Olivia to contact DEC to clarify who has the legal right to access the river and how they can access it (by land or by river). Further discussion on how this relates to rules about navigable waterway.