



# Minutes of Casco Open Space Commission Zoom Meeting April 20, 2026

**Attendees:** Sam Brown, Jim Arsham, Mike Bolk, Courtney “Coco” Walsh, Eric Dibner, Tom McCarthy, Steve Whitman (Resilience Planning & Design), Amy Brown, Roger Deitz, Bob Learner, Chris Jordan.

**Main Focus:** Finalizing the Casco Open Space Plan (COSP), Berry Property updates, trail projects, Casco Days planning, and water quality coordination.

**Quorum Present.** Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM.



## 1. Casco Open Space Plan (COSP)

### • **Final Revisions:**

- Minor text edits (clarifications, spelling out committee names, consistent references).
- Agreed to **add missing page numbers** for clarity (per Jim’s suggestion).
- Cover page design debated: whether to include “Maine” and where. Decision: Steve to create **two versions** (“Casco Open Space Plan” vs. “Casco Maine’s Open Space Plan”) for members to vote on.
- Subtitle retained: *“Preserving Our Woods, Waters, and Open Spaces.”*

### • **Strategy for approval:**

- Select Board will hold **a public hearing** (not a Town Meeting vote).

- The plan will be a **living document**, guiding future ordinances and projects.
- Printing options discussed — printed copies for Town Office, Library, and regional partners pending cost estimates. **Jim Arsham suggested a minimum of 50 copies.**

- **Content adjustments:**

- Strengthen messaging on open space vulnerability — only one-third of mapped open space is **permanently protected**. Steve's team will adjust visuals to better communicate this risk.

- **Next steps:**

- Revised version expected the following week.
- Sam to update the Select Board on adoption timeline and hearing date.



## 2. Berry Property Committee

- **Committee changes:**

- **Tom McCarthy** stepping down due to time limits.
- **Courtney Walsh** to join; **Mike Bolk** will attend the next meeting.

- **Issues:** Lack of clear town vision for the property leading to slow progress.

- Tom: "The town must define a vision first — professionals can then make it real."
- Courtney: "Professional planning and fresh energy will help move this forward."

- **Next meeting:** May 28, 3:30 PM (same evening as Village District engagement).

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### □ 3. Trail Initiatives

#### • **Brymar Rattlesnake Trail:**

- Partnership with **Loon Echo Land Trust** and **Raymond** volunteers.
- **Recon walk:** May 11 (now moved to May 12 after reschedule).
- **Trail maintenance:** May 31 (formal landowner permission required).
- **Landownership:** Hounsell/Huntress family and Hancock Lumber; liability discussions ongoing.
- Aim: Take small volunteer steps to trigger long-term conservation talks for Rattlesnake area.

#### • **Other Trail Collaboration:**

- Sam attended **Lake Region ATV Club** meeting; Snowmobile Club partnership pending.
- Encouraged all members to **join both clubs** to build a regional Trails Alliance.
- Awaiting results of the **Maine Community Foundation** grant.



### 4. Casco Days & Community Engagement

- **Theme:** "Trails for All" joint parade float with Open Space, Safe Streets, Water Quality, and trail clubs.
- Use last year's signage and seek a **flatbed trailer** or ATVs for display.

- **Volunteers:** Needed for parade and fair booths (especially Thursday–Saturday nights).
  - Courtney and Tim volunteering with their children.
  - Mike offered early-week setup help.
- **Town logo:** Courtney presenting the **new Casco logo** to the Select Board; potential reveal on parade float.
- Other key dates:
  - **Bike Rodeo:** May 2, 1–3 PM.
  - **Open Space Meeting:** Rescheduled to **May 12**, post-trail walkthrough.
  - **Village District/Comprehensive Plan meetings** and **Berry Property Committee:** both on **May 28**.
  - **Mayberry Hill Trail Reveal:** June 11, 4 PM.

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## 5. Water Quality & P&K Gravel Quarry

- **Tom McCarthy's report:**
  - P&K requests **25-year contract zone renewal** for Heath Quarry (between two waterfowl sanctuaries).
  - No current restrictions; operation **grandfathered pre-2006 DEP rules**.
  - Runoff variance allows discharge into surface water — currently **unmonitored**.
- **Action Plan:**
  - Tom researching DEP and habitat rules to draft new **restrictions and monitoring clauses** for the contract.

- **Proposal:** Open Space Commission to **co-sign with Water Quality** for a unified presentation to Planning and Select Boards.
- Deadline: approx. 4–6 weeks.

- **Concerns raised:**

- Eric: Ensure quarry closure or ownership change includes **ecological restoration.**
- Amy: Praised Tom’s diligence; DEP insights exceeded what was shared in public meetings.

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## 6. Additional Notes

- **Public awareness:** Roger Deitz suggested adding a **one-page executive summary** to highlight urgency: much open land appears safe but is unprotected.
- **Next steps for COSP:** Use “Our Vision” section (page 52–54) as the document’s guiding narrative; potential for a summarized version.
- **Youth involvement:** Encourage high school participation on commissions to sustain engagement.





## Action Items Summary

<b>Steve Whitman / Resilience Team</b>	Submit final COSP edits (layout, cover options, table update) Next Wk
<b>Sam Brown</b>	April 21 meeting Request Select Board hearing date for COSP
<b>Courtney Walsh</b>	Before May 28 Replace Tom on Berry Property Committee
<b>All members</b>	May–July Join/Support trail groups & volunteer at Casco Days
<b>Tom McCarthy</b>	Within 4–6 wks Draft quarry restrictions & summary for joint commission statement

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**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:29 PM

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, **May 12, 2026**