

**Town of Nelson
Selectmen's Meeting
3:00 PM**

May 27, 2026

Executive Board Attending: Brenna Kucinski, Michael Blaudschun, Don Carlisle, Edie Drinkwater, Admin. Assist.

Others attending: J. Filipi, M. Collins, M. Nunnemaker, M. French, L. Smith, K. Castelli, G. Robinson, A. Whitney, R. Thomas, M. Iselin, J. Yardley, T. Newcombe

Absent:

Brenna called the May 27, 2026 meeting of the Nelson Select Board to order at 3:00 PM.

● J. Filipi came before the Board with an update on the J-ONE grant and opened a discussion on a Highway Patrol grant for Rt. 9 (approx. 3 miles in Nelson). Edie had prepared the final financial report for the J-ONE grant submission and once the SB Chair signs the form it will be scanned and submitted along with the last completed audit report. Filipi advised that the Highway Patrol grant is for a very targeted patrol on route 9 with an obligation to cover certain hours. The paperwork and documentation required to report the targeted activity is extensive and Filipi felt it takes away from any small financial benefit the Town would receive. Don noted that he regularly sees State Police and Sheriff's vehicles patrolling on Rt. 9 in Nelson. It was agreed to forgo this grant and focus on local traffic within town.

Filipi brought the Board's attention to the Police checking account which has been established for many years. While it grew slowly (mostly from pistol permits) in now has approx. \$3400. Filipi suggests using \$250 to donate to the Victims of last Friday's fire. As this is not restricted and up to the discretion of the Police Chief all agreed that the \$250 donation was a good use of the funds.

● Mike made a motion to approve the Public meeting minutes for May 13, 2026 as recorded.

Brenna seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

● Brenna made a motion to approve the Public minutes for April 29, 2026 as recorded.

Don seconded.

The motion carried 2-0. (Mike was absent from that meeting)

● Mike made a motion to approve the manifest for May 20, 2026 as presented.

Brenna seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

● Mike made a motion to approve the manifest for May 27, 2026 as presented.

Brenna seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

● Mike made a motion to approve an application for Solar exemption for 142-145 RHR, LLC (McKnight) For a new roof mount solar array.

Brenna seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

- The Board completed the signature page of a Building Permit denial that they missed from the previous meeting.
- After a checklist review of a Building Permit application and review of the plans, Mike made a motion to approve a Building Permit for M. MacKenzie for the construction of a 15' X 24' post and beam greenhouse. Brenna seconded.
The motion carried 3-0.
- A request came in from the Bergeron construction site on Granite Lake Road seeking permission to continue doing interior work on stairs at the site. The Board denied the request due to their concern that the foundation had been poured larger than the original existing footprint that was approved. The have been referred to the ZBA to seek relief from the zoning ordinances for multiple violations. The Board agreed that no further work should be done until the Zoning Board makes a ruling.
- At the last Select Board meeting Mike made a motion to approve \$2,900 for a new website design. Brenna received and signed the contract prior to the Board's review but it was for \$4,400 which included \$1,500 for the first year of maintenance. Mike made a motion to approve an additional \$1,500 to cover the cost of the design with the first year of maintenance.
Brenna seconded.
The motion carried 3-0.
- Edie noted that several items could not be included on the new website such as the tax maps, tax kiosk, and Annual Town reports and other items, if added, may incur an additional charge. Brenna suggested that things could be added in the future if found to be needed.
- J. Yardley and T. Newcombe came before the Board on behalf of the Conservation Commission to discuss their pending decision to donate \$100,000 toward the purchase of land known as the "Nelson's Highland Forest". The Society for the Protection of NH Forests and the Harris Center for Conservation Education are working together to conserve the 655 acres located in Nelson, Antrim and Hancock and overlooking Nubanusit Lake. Brenna stated that the Board wonders if this is the best use for the Partridge Fund money since it is unlikely that this land could be substantially developed. Janet said the goal of the project is to keep the land wild rather than for human use. Although it could be difficult, someone could purchase the land for development and keeping it wild is the goal of this project. T. Newcombe reminded everyone that the Partridge Fund donor wanted the funds used for conservation projects. Because some of the potential funding for the project may not come through, the Board wondered if the money could be pledged but not turned over until the actual acquisition takes place. Yardley indicated that if the project fails to be funded the Harris Center could offer a refund or request consideration of funding another project. The Board voiced concern over timber harvesting which would be allowed. The use of large machines could potentially be harmful to the forest they are trying to preserve. Don wondered if it would be possible to prohibit logging. Yardley indicated that is not an option. Yardley announced that a public forum will be held on August 13th with a speaker from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests will present information about the project and questions will be answered. Yardley is hopeful she can arrange some entertainment for the meeting as well. A written summary was presented to the Board from Yardley as well as a letter from Nina Iselin, each representing the Conservation Commission. Both will be attached to these minutes.
- Following a review of a proposal submitted by WH Richardson Builders, Brenna made a motion to approve the bid of \$18,850 to repair and restore the cupola and weathervane on the Old Brick Schoolhouse.
Mike seconded.
The motion carried 3-0.

● Brenna was concerned that there was a lack of organization for the Memorial Day event. For many years Kathy Blaudschun took care of all planning and organizing. E. Giacomo helped during the last couple years but does not want to continue. Edie suggested that Nelson-in-Common might want to assist. Brenna said she preferred that the Select Board take over the event and planning. All agreed.

● M. French came forward to express his thanks to the Nelson Fire and Police departments for their service at the recent house fire at his property. He was most appreciative of their efficiency and professionalism and was grateful to all who have helped.

● M. Collins came forward with a request for an update on a Right-to-know request from R. Thomas concerning email communication between Selectmen. Brenna stated that they have an IT person working on it and it will take a while longer.

● The Board has agreed to begin using a "Town" email address instead of their personal email for all town business. A. Treadwell will be contacted to set up a time to set this up for each Selectmen.

● The latest NH Bridge "Red List" has been posted and Nelson's Bailey Brook Bridge (at designation #2) remains one step away from closure due to the condition of the existing culvert. Several options short of a new bridge have been discussed but no action has been taken to come up with a firm plan for repair and reconstruction. Don mentioned a similar bridge in Stoddard that he believes was put in at around \$250,000. He briefly spoke with someone from the company and suggest that Nelson consider contacting them for their thoughts on this project. The company is believed to be Cold River Bridges in Walpole. M. Tarr will be asked to attend a meeting with the Board to consider the options further.

● R. Thomas noted that his road is very nice following the annual grading by the Highway department.

4:28 PM

● Brenna made a motion to go into Non-Public in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (a&e) Personnel and Litigation.

Don seconded.

The motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. Mike – yes, Don – yes, Brenna – yes

5:00 PM

● Upon returning to Public session, Brenna made a motion to seal the minutes.

Mike seconded.

The motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. Mike – yes, Don – yes, Brenna – yes

● Edie then asked the Board to confirm that she will still be working 40 hours per week.

Don and Mike confirmed.

● With nothing further Brenna made a motion to adjourn.

Mike seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

Meeting Adjourned 5:11 PM

Next regular meeting June 3, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Minutes for May 27, 2026

Brenna Kucinski, Chair

Michael Blaudschun, Selectman

Don Carlisle, Selectman

655-acre "Nelson's Highlands Forest" in Nelson, Antrim & Hancock

Executive Summary

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Harris Center for Conservation Education are working together to conserve the 655-acre "Nelson's Highlands Forest" in Nelson, Antrim & Hancock and overlooking Nubanusit Lake. The project, if successful, will see the Forest Society purchase the land while the Harris Center will hold the conservation easement. The property abuts and is a critical linkage to thousands of acres of other protected land. It is located within the 2-million-acre Quabbin-to-Cardigan (Q2C) Region that spans the Monadnock Highlands of north-central MA and western NH. The Q2C Region is largest remaining area of interconnected, ecologically significant forest south of the White Mountains. More locally the property falls within the Harris Center's "SuperSanctuary": 36,000 acres of protected connected lands in the Monadnock Region of southwestern NH.

Threat & Urgency

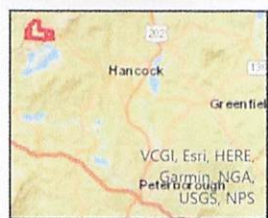
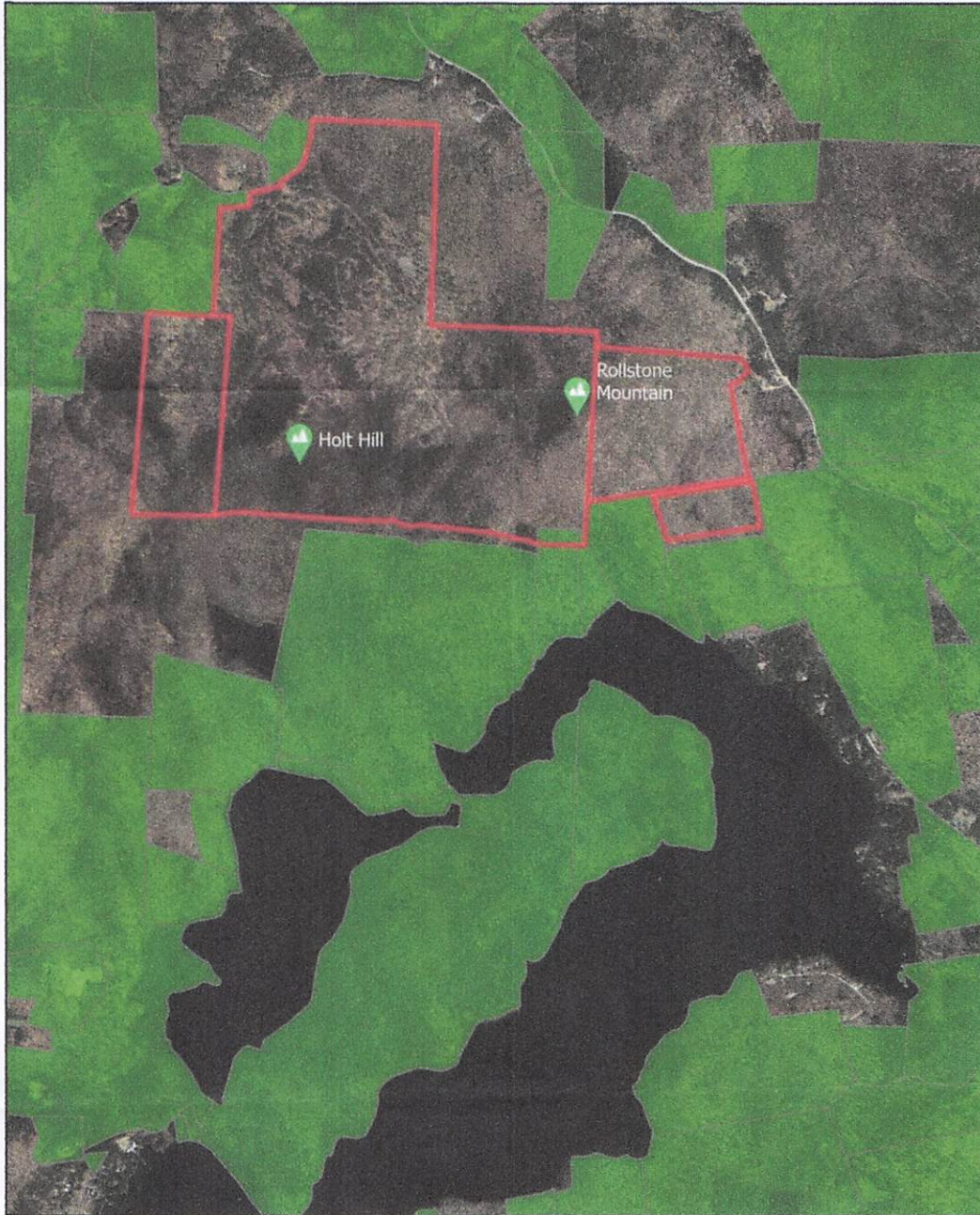
The two organizations have been working with the property owners over the last spring and summer to explore the sale of the land, and it is now under agreement. However, if the Forest Society and the Harris center cannot raise the funds to purchase the land, it will be listed on the open market and sold by the owners. Though it is unlikely to see intense development, the land could be acquired and divided up into multiple lots and resold to residential/recreational buyers.

Timeline & Funding Plan

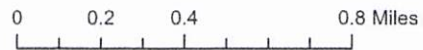
The Forest Society will acquire the 655 acres in fee from the landowner for \$1,523,000, slightly less than the appraised value of the property and will subsequently convey a conservation easement on the land to the Harris Center. The total campaign goal, including the purchase price, project expenses (survey, legal, title, insurance, staff time) and stewardship costs is estimated at \$1,675,000. State and private foundation grants are being sought along with private gifts from individuals. The closing is scheduled for March 31st 2027.

Key Stats

- Nubanusit and Spoonwood watershed includes 3,025 acres of upland (excluding the lake surface).
- 66% of the upland is in conservation. This figure will increase to 70% pending conservation of Nelson Highlands.
- The project will protect the summits of both Holt Hill and Rollstone Mountain, both overlooking Nubanusit Lake from the north.
- The project fits exceptionally well with the Harris Center's mission to connect large blocks of land into a landscape level SuperSanctuary – 60% of Nelson Highlands 5-mile property boundary abuts already conserved land.



- Conservation Land
- Nelson Highlands



Prepared by Eric Masterson, November 10 2025



May 25, 2026
Nelson N.H.

To the Select-board:

As you are no doubt already aware, there is a movement afoot to conserve a large block of land in the northwest corner of Nelson. The Forest Society, ("SPNHF"), in collaboration with The Harris Center, has an option to acquire 655 acres of forest land, 90% of which lie in Nelson - the rest in Antrim and Hancock. This property is a key piece that would create an expanded wildlife corridor connecting major holdings of the Harris Center's "Super Sanctuary", located on either side of Nubanusit Lake. The arrangement would have The Forest Society own the land, while The Harris Center would hold protective easements.

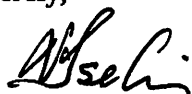
Wildlife corridors provide bridges between conserved areas allowing wildlife to move safely between different habitats and communities, thus helping to maintain genetic diversity. Nelson is home to species that require over 2500 acres to roam: coyote, bobcat, fisher, and black bear, while moose, eagles, and a number of raptors need close to that acreage to survive. Allowing ample territory for wildlife prevents encroachment on developed areas and minimises unpleasant encounters with human beings.

The Society chose to call this project "The Nelson Highlands Forest". It is well named, as the height of land includes two peaks, Holt Hill at 1925' and Rollstone Mountain at 1786', a hilly landscape well viewed from Nubanusit Lake. It is a bony piece with difficult access. The last logging operation there was around the early 2000's. The intention of SPNHF is to leave the land as wild as possible with no thought to developing a parking area, a trail network, or kiosks. As a policy, SPNHF does not allow motorized wheeled vehicles except in emergency situations, but it would be open to hunting. (Their Guidelines can be accessed on their website.)

If this project should go through, The Town of Nelson would reap the best of both worlds: we would enjoy land protection and open space without the responsibilities or liabilities implied by actual ownership. There would be essentially no change in taxes as that land is now in current use. In a survey of Nelson residents conducted by the Planning Board last year, a healthy majority were in favor of purchasing land for conservation purposes and preservation of open space.

Unfortunately, several sources of funding for the acquisition are now in jeopardy or have fallen through. Therefore the project will rely to a greater extent on private donations. The Nelson Conservation Commission is very much in favor of this project. It is our intention to support this extraordinary opportunity with funds derived from the legacy of Sid Partridge - funds that were specifically intended to be used in preserving Nelson's wild lands. We are hoping the Select Board will join us in our enthusiasm for this project.

Sincerely,



Niña Iselin,

Member, Nelson Conservation Commission