

**Conservation Lands Advisory Committee  
Report for September 8, 2025, City Council General Meeting**

**The City of Gustavus Conservation Lands Advisory Committee was established by Resolution CY24-2** in May 2024. We now have seven members:

John Barry  
Tanner Horst  
Larry Landry  
Colleen Stansbury  
Kathy Streveler  
Mike Taylor (Chair)  
Susan Warner

Shelley Owens graciously serves as a non-voting secretary preparing our minutes.

**Our charge from Resolution CY 24-2**

**Mission:** Provide recommendations, strategies, and supporting documentation to the City on oversight and stewardship of conservation lands within the City boundaries.

**Scope:** The committee's efforts shall be limited to undeveloped lands recognized or formally-identified for their conservation values. Developed properties and City lands with industrial or intensive recreational uses are outside the committee's scope.

**Activities may include:**

- Develop a framework for Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), comment on management plans, joint projects, and title transfers with owners of conservation lands and conservation easements on those lands;
- Help to develop formal deed instruments for full protection of all conservation lands;
- Participate in management planning on the City's behalf;
- Advise private owners in designating protection for the golf course area;
- Advise or facilitate transfer or association of private parcels to larger conservation units.

**We last reported to the council on June 9, 2025** at which time we were working toward a major objective of securing a conservation easement on the DeBoer beach meadows tracts to be held by the Southeast Alaska Land Trust, with committee leadership by Susan Warner. John Barry was completing mapping and description of all conservation lands in Gustavus and Kathy Streveler, Colleen Stansbury, Tanner Horst, and Larry Landry were exploring opportunities to strengthen the City's relationship with The Nature Conservancy of Alaska and build assurance of the sustainability of TNC lands comprising the Gustavus Forelands Preserve.

**The Committee met monthly in posted public meetings** to coordinate our tasks, while individuals worked on their assigned tasks between meetings. We are pleased to report significant progress toward our assigned directives.

### **Beach Meadows Conservation Easement**

In July, we achieved a major objective as Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALT) signed an agreement and recorded a temporary five-year conservation easement with the DeBoer family covering 187 acres of beach, and uplands meadows that once comprised the Fairweather Golf Course. While the property remains in the private family ownership, it will remain undeveloped and open to public use for the period of the easement. The terms include an option for SEALT to purchase a perpetual (permanent) conservation easement if funding for it is acquired. The temporary conservation easement was enabled by the 2024 Endowment Fund grant plus substantial supplemental private donations from Gustavus residents. SEALT enabled an extension from the anticipated 2-year period to a full five years by committing additional funds from SEALT sources in case funding for a perpetual easement is not secured during the first two years. Committee members are exceedingly grateful to the DeBoer family for their generosity toward our community regarding use of their property and to SEALT for their expertise and hard work to secure the easement.

SEALT prepared and submitted a grant application with the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to fund the perpetual easement. Additional conservation lands committed by another Gustavus family will contribute toward a non-federal match. A NAWCA funding decision is expected around the end of 2025. There are other grant possibilities if the NWACA grant is not awarded to the Gustavus project.

As SEALT develops management planning for the Beach Meadows with the DeBoer family, the committee will monitor and assist if requested, in accordance with our remit.

Susan continues to track developments on the conservation easement and SEALT grant applications and will report updates to the committee at each meeting. Thanks to Susan for her leadership toward conservation of the beach meadows tracts for the benefit of present and future Gustavus residents!

### **Conservation Lands Mapping and Descriptions**

Using Alaska Mapper, John Barry completed new consolidated maps for the key areas with summary descriptions, deed restrictions, easements and other protective measures for each tract. He submitted the files to Clerk Barker for posting when the website is reconfigured soon. We also plan to print large maps suitable for posting or use in public meetings at any time in the future. Thanks to John for his detailed and careful work in assembling this information and to Clerk Barker for making it available to the public soon.

### **TNC Gustavus Forelands Preserve**

TNC representative Julia Nave visited Gustavus on June 9, 2025, and walked the Nagoonberry Trail and the Preserve tract east of the trail with Committee Chair Mike Taylor, Karen Taylor, and Jim Mackovjak. (TNC local Preserve Manager Hank Lentfer was away at the time.) We reinforced the appreciation Gustavus residents have for the TNC Forelands Preserve and our hope to sustain it in natural condition and open for public use by present and future generations. We discussed community input to any Preserve management decisions the Preserve and how to work most effectively with

TNC going forward. Concern for the long-term protection of the Preserve Lands was a major reason for forming the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee. Julia said TNC intends to continue to own the Preserve lands and to manage them as intended in the original Gustavus Land Legacy purchase. TNC Alaska currently lacks a Director and Conservation Manager as needed for any formal work, such as on a Gustavus MOU. Julia knows we stand ready to participate further with TNC when conditions allow.

A committee team of Kathy Streveler, Colleen Stansbury, Tanner Horst and Larry Landry worked with TNC representative Hank Lentfer toward a celebration of the Gustavus Forelands Preserve that was *tentatively* scheduled for September 13. The idea was to raise awareness of the Preserve lands, locations, and natural values, and to promote sustainable use. The team, however, concluded at the end of August that both the City committee and TNC currently lacked organizational resources and time for a successful event. I agreed to their recommended cancellation, so the event *will not* be held this fall. With more time we may be able to organize a successful event sometime in 2026. For now, we will use the committee's web site and other means to build understanding and appreciation for the Gustavus Forelands Preserve.

#### **Trails on Conservation Lands.**

At our August meeting we discussed whether to identify and promote new or improved trails as access to Gustavus conservation lands. Trails have their proponents and critics. Some areas may be suitable and others not. Trail policies need active public input. Trail development is not specifically within our remit. However if new management planning by TNC, SEALT, or ADF&G considers trail development for conservation lands, the committee is prepared to weigh in and to insist planning be informed by public meetings. If the Council wishes us to take a more active leadership role on trail planning they may direct us to do so.

#### **Public Zoom participation in Conservation Lands Advisory Committee meetings.**

At our August meeting we again discussed whether to offer public participation in our meetings by Zoom as requested by a community member. We already use Zoom to record our meetings, so would need only to include the Zoom link in our meeting postings. Committee members have mixed views but none strongly disapprove. Mayor McLaughlin supports Zoom participation for the public. As Chair, I decided to include a Zoom link in our postings. Our agendas include opportunities for public comment by those in physical attendance at the start and end of the meeting and we will hear from anybody over Zoom similarly. Committee members should be present in the meeting room unless extenuating circumstances prevent.

**The committee meets next in November on a date to be determined.** Member travel and work schedules did not align for a meeting in September and October. Interested members of the public are welcome to join us in person or by Zoom. In the meantime, members will continue to work tasks assigned at previous meetings.

*Mike Taylor*

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Chair