

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
August 9, 2006**

A meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitaker Homesite in North Conway, NH. Present were: Paul Pinkham, David Weathers, Rob Adair, Carol Lyman, Dan Lucy, and Alternate, Linda Kearney. Also present was Jeff Lougee of The Nature Conservancy.

The Chair appointed Ms. Kearney as a full voting member.

**Approval of Minutes (7/12/06): Motion by Mr. Adair, second by Mr. Weathers, that the Minutes of the July 12th meeting be approved as written. Carried by unanimous vote.**

**Public Comment:** None.

**Foresters Report:** Don Johnson was not able to be present, but provided the following report to Mr. Pinkham: He has begun on the list for the trail work in Whitaker Woods and will continue until he runs out of money. Mr. Johnson reports that it does not look good for the seed drop for eastern white pine.

Shedd Woods – Mr. Pinkham stated we have a 30' road to block off in some fashion and he does not want to see 30' of rocks there which would make it look tacky. Mr. Johnson has some plans to "dress it up" with trees and is comfortable with it if the State does the right job of filling and restoring the grade to what it was before. Mr. Weathers noted the curbing is all in, but we still need something at the northern end to keep people from driving around it. He will speak with the State about it.

Mr. Pinkham said that Mr. Johnson had thought \$2,000 to \$3,000 would more than cover the cost of restoration. It was noted the town was paid \$30,000 by the State when they destroyed the place by building the 30' road. Mr. Weathers said it was his understanding that the State will extend the curbing, bring the grade back up, and loam and seed it, and that the CCC would do any plantings it wants in there. It was noted they have already paid us for that work.

Ms. Kearney questioned what happened to the trees [that the State removed]. Mr. Weathers stated that is included in the \$30,000 they paid us. Mr. Johnson will come back to us with a plan and a cost estimate. Mr. Weathers suggested we lean more toward softwood as screening which will respond faster than hardwood.

**Nature Conservancy Report:** Jeff Lougee gave a presentation on TNC's Saco River Conservation Plan which was completed in Nov. 2004, noting the focus area is the Upper Saco River watershed, from Crawford Notch to the Highland Dam in Maine. He outlined key points of their five "S" plan: systems, stresses, strategies (what they are going to do to get conservation done over time), and measures of success. There are eight conservation targets identified on the plan some of which are the main stem of the river, the fish that are in there, and aquatic plants. Their goal is to try to get good buffers along

the river. Mr. Lougee noted that water quality in the Saco is really good and they want to keep it that way. He stated that about 98% of the total watershed is natural land cover so they do not have a lot of impervious surfaces.

The second target is floodplain forest, relatively intact, about 7,000 acres. The goal is to try to get about 2,000 acres of the 7,000 in reserve status; that 2000 acres roughly corresponds to all the best sites on the river (many on the Maine side, but a couple in the Town of Conway). Non-forested floodplain systems are targeted – areas of critical habitats, rare plants were found there. Another target is in trying to protect some area of connectivity in the uplands; and lastly is floodplain ponds.

Mr. Lougee provided a matrix showing how they look at threats and identify things like incompatible development, or incompatible recreation use, noting one of the key things on the river is incompatible development and trying to protect the buffers along the river – recreation, traffic down the river, people building camp sites and cutting vegetation [they have actually been buying firewood and putting it at the campgrounds to discourage people from cutting their own]. Mr. Lougee said the biggest concern is invasive species – they try to figure out which ones are the big problem and come up with a solution. They are presently working on trying to figure out worth and where they would raise the money to acquire property to get it into conservation land and for purchasing conservation easements. Mr. Lougee stated this plan identifies about 20,000 acres at a rough estimate of \$15 to \$30 million, mostly on the Maine side.

Mr. Weathers questioned whether there is a comparison in acreage of Conway's floodplain, how much is open and how much is forested? Mr. Lougee said he does, but not at his finger tips. He noted a staff member is also working on the invasive species angle to go out and do some recon to get a better sense of what the size and scope of the problem is. Another goal is to develop an education program for the private landowners who can identify and send in information to them.

Mr. Weathers questioned whether he is advocating no selective cutting at all within the 100 year floodplain. Mr. Lougee stated no, they have a goal to protect about 2,000 acres of the 7,000 acres, with good management for the other 5,000 acres. Mr. Lougee also provided maps of aquifer overlay, dams, and road crossings – places where blockages can occur.

Mr. Lougee reported that Peter Benson has replaced some bog bridges. TNC has printed up a batch of the new maps and will deliver some to the Town Office.

Mr. Lougee stated regarding Bear Paw, they are getting very close to finalizing a sale on the property. USVLT will hold the easement, a local person [name to be made public shortly] will take over the fee ownership.

**Treasurer's Report:** There was no Treasurer's Report available. Mr. Pinkham reported the CCC received \$600 from the State for wildlife habitat improvement on Hurricane Mt.

**Selectmen's Report:** Mr. Weathers has been contacted by an engineering consultant working on the Fryeburg Water System with East Conway. Application has been made for a DES permit to put in the pipe line. He has not seen the permit yet, but the pipe is

being laid out. The engineering company contacted him addressing the oxbow crossing across from Sherman's Farm.

Wetlands Applications – Mr. Weathers is working for a landowner on Stark Road for a culvert that was installed without a permit.

**Schiavi Property** – They are waiting for Thorne Surveys to finish the work they were doing for them. It was reported there is a relatively small piece of land involved which Mr. Schiavi wants to retain for access to his own property. Nothing has been submitted in writing as yet. In response to Mr. Adair's question as to whether he has agreed to give up his logging rights, Mr. Pinkham said he thinks we are about there with the price of the land, and Schiavi is holding onto a piece to keep or get access to his own land.

**Capital Improvements** – CCC was asked to advise the Town if they envision having any capital projects in the foreseeable future. It was agreed there are none to be submitted at this time.

**Conservation Land and Open Spaces Rules and Regulations** – Mr. Pinkham noted that what prompted this was discussion of a mining issue and it was felt there was a need for some rules for the use of conservation lands. Mr. Adair said what we wanted was language regarding mineral mining. Mr. Weathers referred him to Item #3 of the Rules and Regulations; however, it was pointed out that it does not specifically mention mining of minerals.

Mr. Adair questioned #8 & #9 dealing with hunting rules and fines for violations. Mr. Weathers noted the need for refining of #8, that it should be spelled out if we are limiting hunting on CCC lands, that the language is vague and those areas where it is *not* allowed should be listed. He cited proximity to homes and businesses. Also there was question of postings. Mr. Pinkham will redraft to clarify.

**Kennett Land-Conservation Easement** - Mr. Pinkham noted the CCC is scheduled to appear before the Board of Selectmen on Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> with the USVLT to discuss funding of the Kennett conservation easement acquisition for \$10,000. It requires only Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission approval. It will be used as a document to support the rationale to support the USVLT. Mention has been made that the document lacks a recreation component and Mr. Pinkham will draft something that addresses that in a generic way, that gives an extra value to those conservation lands that may have a recreation value.

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David Armstrong and Steve Swensen of the White Mt. Milers joined the meeting. Mr. Armstrong noted that a year ago they presented a map of Whitaker Woods Trail; they are now ready to help and give support for whatever it is the CCC decides to do, offering people to work or walk the trails.

Mr. Armstrong questioned what is happening with the railroad crossings and Mr. Pinkham explained that the Town installed the plankings; however, Mr. Seybold removed

them because they were higher than the rails themselves. The Town will shave them down and reinstall them.

Mr. Pinkham reported boulders have been placed at the entrance to Pudding Pond at Thompson Road.

Steve Swensen said he has read CCC's long range plans and is excited to see we are talking about the same things. Mr. Adair told him we have given Don Johnson a list for short term items which he will cost out for us. Mr. Swensen offered help from the Milers. Mr. Adair suggested they could spread wood chips. Mr. Armstrong said he does not feel just putting them on top of roots is as good an idea as on graded trails since if the chips are just barely covering the roots, a runner can twist an ankle a lot easier. He said he would like to walk the trails with the Whitaker Trail Committee. Mr. Pinkham said the CCC would welcome the opportunity to work together.

Mr. Armstrong questioned whether a professional trail designer could be hired to come in and look at a ten year plan, that if the Commission is interested the Milers would try to find funds for that. Mr. Pinkham explained we would have to understand the perceived value as opposed to the real value. Mr. Armstrong said "something really good for walking and snowshoeing," an overall plan for the woods - he would like to do it once and do it right, he would like better trails. Mr. Weathers stated the last time we reviewed this our inclination was to close off some of our trails. . Mr. Swensen said a lot of trails have been closed; we have to think about the bypass. He stated we do not have anywhere near the flexibility of ski trails or running trails with the bypass going through. Mr. Pinkham stated part of the State's plan is relocating trails and that is part of the Commission's plan as well.

Mr. Armstrong questioned whether the CCC has given any thought to the Lynch property which will be for sale at some point. Mr. Pinkham said we have talked to the State about acquiring additional property to make that piece on the northern side of the bypass cut more useful. He noted, however, there are other places in town that are more valuable from a Commission viewpoint.

**Next Meeting Date:** The next regular meeting will be held on September 13th at 6:30 p.m.

**Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Ms. Lyman and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier  
Recording Secretary