

**MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
April 9, 2008**

A meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:31 p.m. at the Whitaker Homesite in North Conway, NH. Present were: Paul Pinkham, David Weathers, Rob Adair, Dan Lucy, Chuck Broomhall, and Alternates, Connie Briggs and Linda Kearney. Also present were Forester, Don Johnson, and representatives of USVLT, Linda Comeau and David Brooks.

The Chair appointed Ms. Kearney and Mr. Briggs as full voting members.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 3/12/08 – Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Mr. Adair and carried by unanimous vote, that the Minutes of the March 12th meeting be approved as presented.

Forester's Report: Mr. Johnson reported he has compiled the budget as a work agreement, reviewed it with the Town Manager, and signed it, resulting in an agreement for projects for the upcoming year.

Mr. Johnson noted Messrs. Adair, Lucy and Hansen have proposed a new trail measuring about 700', construction for which would go from the intersection of Lucy Traverse and Wellinghurst to Schuss Flats and Whitaker Lane. As regards what to do with slash and stumps, Mr. Johnson proposes bringing in a bulldozer, doing some logging, piling the logs beside the trail, transporting them out to the trail head and moving them with a small truck. He noted there had been some thought of trying to chip the brush; Mr. Adair suggested burning the brush. Mr. Weathers cautioned they would not be able to leave it unattended if it is still burning. It was agreed Mr. Johnson will move the bulldozer in on Thursday afternoon so he can start right away.

Mr. Johnson expressed concern about the trail construction budget (\$5,000), noting 700' of trail at \$10 per foot would make it a \$7,000 trail. He will try to keep it to that, it usually does not include seeding. Mr. Pinkham suggested at the outset we will stick to the \$5,000 budget, look at things on other construction projects, and see if we can find a way to go ahead, otherwise Mr. Johnson would have to stay within the \$5,000. He wished to look at the work order Mr. Johnson has with the town to see whether there is a lower priority item that would allow us to complete the project. Mr. Johnson said he would not want to lose the update of the Forest Management plan. He acknowledged there are some items we might forego for another year, i.e. Shedd Woods brushing. Mr. Weathers urged that the mowing on Hurricane Mt. Road still get done.

We need a brief written description of tree cutting in Whitaker Woods. Mr. Johnson said he will not be in that section until next week, but before then he will put together a description.

Mr. Pinkham reported that Mr. Lougee was not able to be present at tonight's meeting. He is working on a Memorandum of Agreement with the town. We had budgeted \$3,000 for The Nature Conservancy work, it may be a little more modest than that so there may be about \$1,000 remaining.

Upper Saco Valley Land Trust [Conservation Easement]: Linda Comeau reported they closed yesterday on the Justin and Julie Hussey project [see narrative attached]. Federal funds have come through and USVLT is requesting support by the CCC. The property abuts the Kennett easement which closed in 2006 (just the section on the east side of West Side Road). The Hussey property is two parcels totaling 75 acres – one 10 acre piece near the Smith Allard farm, and a 65 acre piece known as Cross Farm. Ms. Comeau noted this is the property that Hussey inherited from his grandfather and has stated if this one goes well, he would be willing to consider looking at another project.

The appraised value of the easement is \$118,000, the owners have offered to contribute \$31,500 as a reduction in sales price, USVLT is requesting \$15,000 from the Conservation Commission, support from the Ham Foundation in the amount of \$10,000, and from the Connie Davis Watson Fund \$10,000 and \$2,000 from Pequawket Foundation. Mr. Weathers questioned the outcome if one or more of those grants does not come through. Ms. Comeau stated they would have to “knock on doors,” but assured him there is a lot of community support for this type of project. Mr. Briggs questioned whether this would have to go before the Selectmen. Mr. Pinkham stated it would and there would also have to be a public hearing.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Lucy, to approve the expenditure of \$15,000 for the so-called Justin and Julie Hussey project on West Side Road, tax map 247, parcel 111, and tax map 250, parcel 165. Mr. Briggs felt it should be noted that the federal gov't. has “X” number of dollars involved in this as well as contributions from various charitable organizations. It was noted this will be made known at the public hearing. Mr. Weathers suggested also the public be made aware of the benefits of putting this land into an easement. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Pinkham commented that among things that we have discussed at previous meetings is Memorandum of Agreement between the town and USVLT. A draft agreement was reviewed which identifies the parties involved – USVLT and CCC – the intention being conservation easements and land acquisition, as well as other provisions, looking for the Commission's general agreement to the intent and how to go about it. Ms. Kearney's concern was whether this would mean anytime the USVLT seeks to purchase something the CCC would be connected. Mr. Pinkham assured her we have the option of participating with them or not. It was noted that Ms. Comeau and Messrs. Adair and Sires have reviewed the draft agreement.

Mr. Briggs questioned whether this is a vehicle to get some of the existing lands we have into easements, noting the only ones protected are Whitaker Woods and town forest, and he felt it disgraceful that we have 2,000 beautiful acres of town land that we do not have protected. Mr. Adair said that was the discussion that precipitated this agreement.

Mr. Lucy questioned whether there is any such thing as protection for any of these lands against highways. Mr. Weathers stated no, that the only thing that would protect it would be lack of funding.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Lucy, that we go forward with Memorandum of Agreement to the town office for execution. Carried by unanimous vote. Ms. Comeau stated this will go before her Board on Monday.

Mr. Adair made note that at one point a natural resources inventory had been done and suggested that be retrieved from the files.

Orienteering Project: Claire Long, with the USFS, reported on a map and compass program being offered at Pine Tree School in an effort to get the kids outdoors, using orienteering as a tool. She noted there is CCC land next to the school which would be perfect for setting up an orienteering course and would like the Commission's permission to be on that land. Mr. Adair recalled that there was a strip of private land between the school property and Walker's Pond land; however, Ms. Long stated that is at the back and they could get access without going onto it.

Ms. Long explained the kids would be going through a series of check points, creating a base map and each year they can make their own map to add to it. The project will take place in conjunction with the physical education and math and science programs. It would not take place until Sept.

Motion was made by Mr. Briggs, seconded by Mr. Adair, that the Commission endorse the project. Carried by unanimous vote. The Chair requested that Ms. Long submit the request in writing. Mr. Weathers asked that there be an update provided between now and the time it starts. Ms. Long agreed.

Selectmen's Report: None.

Acquisition Criteria: Mr. Pinkham has requested that Earl Sires review this in order to get it to the Board of Selectmen, including USVLT relationship.

Appointments: It was reported that three positions will become vacant with Town Meeting now over: Messrs. Broomhall and Adair, and Ms. Lyman (one vacancy was created by the resignation of Philip Haynes). The Town is required to advertise vacancies. This will be addressed at the May 14th meeting.

Trail Signs: Those in Whitaker Woods have not yet been installed. It is hoped this will take place over the summer.

Wetlands Applications: Mr. Weathers reported there had been a notice from DES to Robert Jawitz requesting information on his proposed hydroelectric system, and an application has been made by the town for culvert replacement on Brownfield Road beyond Conway Lake – a 6x6 box culvert.

Next Meeting Date: May 14, 2008.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Briggs and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary