

**MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
September 10, 2008**

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, Carol Lyman, Rob Adair, Dan Lucy, Connie Briggs, and Alternate, Linda Kearney. Also present were Don Johnson, Cort Hansen, and Phil Haynes.

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

1. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 8/13//08 – See Pg. 4

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Reports:

a. Don Johnson reported the landings have been mowed (Pudding Pond, Whitaker Homesite off the power lines, and two on Hurricane Mt. Rd. and Common lands), also opened up the view at Shedd Woods. He noted that in Shedd Woods to the right of the entryway there is an increasing amount of poison ivy, thus some of that did not get brush sawn. He felt this should be addressed when it comes out again in the spring, using Round Up.

Mr. Johnson said he still has the Forest Management Plan to get done and will work on that within the next month to six weeks while recuperating from ankle surgery, finishing sometime in Oct. Also there is an update he wants to get done before year's end.

Mr. Johnson said he has been noticing white pines have a large amount of pine seed in them this year. He went in to Common Lands in East Conway and found a tremendous amount of seed there. He is looking for the blessings of CCC that, once there is snow on the ground to protect the seedlings, he would like to go back in with the Moose Mt. Logging Co. and have them take out about 25% of the over story. He estimated the timber sale will yield revenue of possibly \$6,000 to \$10,000.

Mr. Pinkham mentioned part of the intent of the Whitaker Woods Management Plan is to update our mapping.

There was question as to whether we have a name for the new trail. Mr. Adair stated it becomes the lower Wellinghurst, and what is now Wellinghurst becomes lower Lucy Traverse.

b. Jeff Lougee could not be present.

c. Treasurer's Report – Mr. Pinkham noted we had a budget of \$19,415, have spent \$11,745, leaving a balance of \$7,669 or 39% remaining unspent. He noted previously

revenue from timber sales went into the acquisition account; however, he is not sure where we stand with that now. Mr. Weathers said the town is operating within 1% or 1.5% of the budget and cautioned not going over. Mr. Pinkham said if we do not spend all of our money, by RSA we are allowed to retain it; we are allowed to encumber, with a cap, thus we do not have to ask for as much the next year. Mr. Weathers said the goal this year is to have a zero percent increase.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Adair, to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Carried by unanimous vote.

d. Selectmen's Report: Mr. Weathers said he spoke with the Public Works Director and the town will drop off the materials requested by Mr. Adair at the Pudding Pond gate along with the fabric needed at the mudhole. Mr. Adair will look into getting this work done.

4. Other Business: Trail Signs/Information Boards at Whitaker Woods – Cort Hansen joined the meeting to discuss installing seven information boards at key trail locations in Whitaker Woods, including a laminated map. They have the boards ready. Locations: Entrance of Bancroft ball field, John Fuller School and ball field, bottom of Gradual Trail, far end of Whitaker by the end of the power line, and opposite end and entrance to Cranmore toward the top vista, Gradual Vista (about mid way of the power line), also top of Vista. They have additional boards if interested. They will provide a map stating "you are here." Mr. Pinkham said we are discussing tonight Rules and Regulations which we might want to post there as well. Mr. Johnson noted also we have the yellow plastic tree farm signs which could be added which state "this is conservation land" and list what is allowed to happen there.

It was Mr. Haynes' opinion that it is nice to be informed, but he feels this is overkill and there may be too many boards. He felt that once people get started they know where they are going; however, Ms. Kearney disagreed, noting that she never knows where she is going, this aids those who have not been there before.

Mr. Adair agreed it seems like a lot and he hates to see it get cluttered up with signs. Mr. Hansen noted the signs done so far are tasteful, he has seen people pausing at intersections having no clue where they are. He noted also there are two sets of railroad tracks there which is confusing - it is potentially confusing for people who do not go there regularly.

Mr. Briggs stated there are too many trails, it is a problem, and you have to have the signs. Mr. Hansen pointed out four of the seven signs are right at the entrances, only three are internal to the forest area - top of Vista, bottom of Vista, and bottom of Gradual. Mr. Pinkham said we also need to look at it from the point of view of those who paid money to get into there for cross country skiing; we have an obligation to make it comfortable for a visitor here and should give them enough information to make them comfortable to come back. He suggested trying it the way it is designed and, if it is felt it is too much, revisit it. Mr. Hansen stated four of the boards will be on posts, three on

trees. Ms. Lyman said she cannot see how anyone could object to directional signs to help people, making note that we just approved the Literacy Program being put into place.

Mr. Hansen stated Ski Touring can take care of the materials. Ms. Kearney questioned whether they would change the map. Mr. Pinkham agreed it will have to be made accurate. It was felt that the boards should include notice that ski passes are required. Mr. Adair questioned whether those at the top of Vista could be made smaller, putting Rules and Regulations on those at the entrances only. He offered to donate the Plexiglas.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Lucy, that the Conservation Commission agrees to the installation of information signs with four to be the size presented here and the other three smaller. The motion carried.

b. “Pump Track” Proposal - Scott Lee of NEMBA made request for permission and proposal for a mountain bike skills track described as a small round dirt track that people ride mountain bikes on, on the east side of the power lines, south side of Thompson Road. He explained it is the hope to open up more mountain/BMX biking here. He noted that the Sticks & Stones area has been a great area for younger kids – it is safe and easy; this would be a similar track with no lights, electricity or parking. Size: a few hundred yards (smaller than a football field). He noted a big pump track is approximately 75x100. Everything stays on site, there is no run off leaving the site. NEMBA would design the site according to the track.

Mr. Adair said they would be reconfiguring the dirt, making mounds, taking a flat piece of ground, excavating in various places, berm the corners. He said they can build as small or as big as they need to. It would be no more impacting than Sticks & Stones. It would be more like a trail that winds around on itself; no cutting involved whatsoever. It could be tucked into the southwest corner of Mr. Johnson’s logging landing.

Mr. Lucy would like to see a proposed site plan to get a better idea of what it would look like. Mr. Pinkham questioned whether there would be any liability. Mr. Adair said the recreational use statute would apply because we are in charge. The goal is another activity for the kids. It is an upper body workout.

Mr. Haynes noted we have many Little League fields, most of which do not get used. He said he wants some assurance this would get used. Mr. Lee said a lot of people are taking advantage of mountain biking trails. One citizen said this can be used by BMX bikes and little kids bikes. NEMBA would maintain it. Mr. Lee stated the club is strong, lot of families, etc., maintaining it would not be an issue.

Mr. Pinkham summarized the instruction for direction: NEMBA will flag it, will meet with CCC members to look at it, a drawing will be made available. Mr. Lee said he would like to get it flagged out and approved before winter.

c. Appointments: It was noted there is a vacancy in the position of Alternate. Phil Haynes has expressed an interest in rejoining; he has retired from teaching, has more time

now, and would like to rejoin. **Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Mr. Lucy, that the Commission reappoint Phil Haynes as Alternate. Carried by unanimous vote.** Mr. Weathers will make notification of the appointment to Selectmen.

d. USVLT Relationship – Mr. Adair stated the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed. Mr. Briggs questioned what can or cannot be done to keep people from trespassing on easements? Mr. Weathers said unless it is posted, you cannot. He questioned why put land in conservation easement and then restrict use? Mr. Adair pointed out an easement does not mean you have to grant public access. Mr. Briggs said the Davis-Watson Foundation has been asked for some money for easements and would like to see signage stating that it is open to the public to come into; the Hussey's do not want to see signage on that easement because they do not want to encourage people to come on to the property.

e. Whitaker Trail Plan/Work Progress: Mr. Adair stated they have not discussed it. The Whitaker Trail plan will be updated and circulated – there is work to be done in 2009.

f. Whitaker Management Plan (2008): Discussed under Reports, Pg. 1.

g. Whitaker Video: No further action.

h. Wetland Applications: Mr. Weathers said there are no new applications. He said he spoke with Mr. Bacon at the Selectmen's meeting to get input. The DES has required additional information. Mr. Bacon is saying he based everything on the original application dated 1987. He had hired Thorne Surveys who did wetlands delineation. He is saying to the State "this is what you accepted initially, why not now?" Mr. Weathers said it was based on a soil survey – it is basically useless information. Mr. Bacon also contends there was originally a culvert that was supposed to go in there and there was no place for run off to go. He is saying part of the fluctuation on his property is from that culvert not being installed. Mr. Weathers said he does not envision him doing anything to remove that fill because he would lose a part of his porch.

Approval of Minutes 8/13/08: There was some confusion as to the intent of Pg. 4, 1st para., and Mr. Adair offered the following clarification:

Mr. Adair has been recruited to serve on the bike path committee. It has the support of the Carroll County Conservation District. Office space has been provided and they have requested Dick Demark's help with identifying funding sources. They will go to Selectmen and seek their support as well. He said the goal is to put a segregated pathway to allow cyclists, walkers and, if paved, roller bladers, to do those activities off the roadway. He noted there are some problems and part of it is going to require using the railroad corridor. DOT/Bureau of Rails is opposed to recreational use within the railroad corridor. We need a way to get people off the roads.

Mr. Adair would like a letter from the Commission that supports the concept of a bike path to connect Conway and North Conway. They would like to use some of Intervale Ski Touring trails; not one specific trail, more of a network. Mr. Haynes said part of an earlier plan was to have a walk/bike path from Conway to North Conway. Mr. Weathers said there is a path going from Rt. 113/302 down to Rt. 16 parallel to the river. Mr. Pinkham will draft a letter of support. Mr. Adair said he wants to go after grant money and wants to be able to say all these organizations support us.

Motion was made by Mr. Adair, seconded by Mr. Pinkham, that the Minutes of the Aug. 13th meeting be approved as amended. Motion carried.

i. Rules and Regulations – Mr. Pinkham asked that members review the most recent draft and get back to him within the week with comments or questions. With regard to Section #1 designating times use is allowed, Mr. Adair noted there are folks in Whitaker Woods at night all winter, they are not disturbing anybody. Mr. Briggs agreed they should eliminate all reference to hours.

#1 – It was agreed Sec. #1 should include the wording: *Use Conservation Commission lands in a responsible manner.*

j. Member Roundtable – Selectmen's meeting Oct. 7th - Mr. Pinkham and Ms. Lyman will attend.

Next Meeting – October 8, 2008.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Weathers and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary