

**MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

January 14, 2009

A meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:30 pm at the Whitaker Meeting House in North Conway, NH. Present were: Chair, Paul Pinkham; Rob Adair, Dan Lucy; Conrad Briggs, Chuck Broomhall and Linda Kearney (Alternate); and Acting Recording Secretary, Karen Hallowell. Jeff Lougee of the Nature Conservancy was also present.

The Chair appointed Alternate, Linda Kearney, as a full voting member.

Approval of Minutes

The Commission approved the minutes of November 12, 2008 as written.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Reports:

a. Don Johnson – Don Johnson was not present to give a report. Mr. Pinkham advised that with regard to the timber harvest there is estimated revenue of \$7,000 Mr. Pinkham distributed a report of Don Johnson's planning for the next couple of years.

b. Jeff Lougee – Mr. Lougee questioned where things stand with the budget. Mr. Pinkham advised there was a Budget Committee meeting and also there was an amendment to the budget at the Selectmen's meeting. Mr. Weathers had discussion with the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission budget was reduced \$1500 at the last meeting. Mr. Pinkham advised he also testified at he last Budget Committee meeting.

Mr. Lougee next questioned if there is a need for a new agreement. There was brief discussion and it was agreed he would work on drafting up and getting a new agreement to Mr. Sires at the Town Office.

Mr. Lougee next discussed road signs. Mr. Lougee advised the Nature Conservancy is thinking about different ways to get their name out their and ways to get people to the preserves statewide. One thing they have talked about is to talk with the NHDOT about getting road signs, such as the Green Hills Preserves signs. This is a good trail system at the Green Hills Preserve and the trail system is both the Nature Conservancy and the Town of Conway so they would want to ask the town about putting signs up at Hurricane Mountain Road and Artist Falls

Road first. They would like to start there with the signs and see what people's reactions are to the signs.

Mr. Adair stated that parking is an issue with the area, Artist Falls has 6 spaces and the Hurricane Mountain Road lot is always full. Mr. Lougee agreed both lots are always full. Mr. Pinkham pointed out the purpose of the signs are to increase awareness not just popularity. The Commission held discussion regarding the signs. Most agreed traffic in the area heavy. Mr. Pinkham questioned what action would be taken in this matter. Mr. Lougee stated the thoughts he heard he would take back to the folks he works with and will be in touch with the Commission in the future as to whether they are still interested. All agreed to discuss this again further at a future meeting.

Mr. Lougee next questioned if there has been talk at all with regard to the property on Artist Falls Road. Mr. Pinkham advised he did speak with Mr. Weathers and emailed Mr. Sires on this matter. The sense was it was interesting to know it was on the market however, it is unwise to purchase same at this time due to budgets. Mr. Pinkham further commented the location is good but the site itself is average.

c. Treasurers Report – The Treasurer, Carol Lyman, was not present at the meeting and no Treasurers report was given.

d. Selectmen's Report – Selectmen's Representative, David Weathers, was not present and no Selectmen's report was given.

e. Member Roundtable - There was no discussion on this agenda item.

Other Business

a. 2009 Budget – There was no discussion on this agenda item.

b. USVLT – Mr. Garland and Mr. Henderson of the USVLT were present for discussion. Karla Allan was also present for discussion. Mr. Garland distributed a copy of a Strategic Conservation Planning Project to the Commission for review. (Copy attached).

Mr. Garland explained trying to balance their priorities and offers of property to protect. Mr. Garland talked about mapping, etc and a strategic plan. Mr. Garland advised to do this work, it is estimated it would cost approximately \$35,000 for the first phase of a strategic plan. However, first they need to do an inventory. Mr. Garland advised they will be going to a number of different foundations for grants and also want to talk to the Town of Conway as part of their vision (the strategic planning). They will be able to use the MOU with the Town of Conway to work with other towns. Mr. Garland went on to state that currently 70% of the USVLT land is within the Town of Conway and that they

would like the backing of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Garland advised that Foundations they will be going to like to see support from the town when applying for grants. Mr. Garland advised they will be asking the town for \$10,000.

Karla Allan questioned if they have asked for the help of students with some of the work for this project. Mr. Garland advised they would advise them on this but would not do the GIS work and, also, would be helpful in referring them to resources.

Chuck Broomhall questioned how much of this is in Maine. Mr. Garland advised that three towns in Maine currently have land and one or two holdings in Maine had submitted a grant application to a foundation in Maine.

Rob Adair questioned if there are any other donations at this point. Mr. Garland replied in the negative. Mr. Adair questioned if any other towns are involved at this point. Mr. Garland advised they need to do inventory and then they will be engaging other towns.

Mr. Pinkham questioned if the inclination of this Board would be to consult with the Board of Selectmen and move forward with this request. Mr. Briggs stated that identifying more land such as Kennett lands and others would be positive for the town. Mr. Pinkham advised they are asking \$10,000 for the project. Mr. Pinkham advised that there are funds in one on the Conservation Commission accounts that could be used for this purpose.

Mr. Adair stated that he thinks the agreement with them is to identify strategic lands, etc. but specific to Conway. Mr. Adair asked Larry Garland if we will have a report specific to Conway. Mr. Garland stated first there will be a region wide report and then they will drill down to Conway but first they need to have an inventory of what is out there. Mr. Henderson stated this would be an investment on the part of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Henderson further stated what is important to protect in Conway might also be to important protect in the surrounding towns. Any surrounding towns should be demonstrated by the Town of Conway regarding the importance of this project

Mr. Garland next explained how everything would be identified and quantified on maps - the aquifers, soils, forestry, wildlife habitats, recreation, scenery, trails, canoe put-in areas, etc Mr. Garland further advised there then will be a way to overlap the maps to identify areas to be protected. Jeff explained that after they are all compiled you will be able to assign a resource value number to the parcels.

Mr. Pinkham pointed out the Conservation Commission set up similar maps a few years ago and followed similar guidelines, but maybe were not so strict. Ms. Kearney stated she understands what they want to do and this should pass by

the Board of Selectmen. There was further brief discussion. **Mr. Briggs moved, seconded by Mr. Adair, that we give them the \$10,000 they are requesting for this project.** The Commission discussed this matter going before the Board of Selectmen and also whether more information will be needed. Mr. Garland advised more information would be provided. Mr. Pinkham stated that Mr. Briggs' motion is bare bones and just what is needed to get started. All agreed. **The motion carried unanimously.**

OTHER BUSINESS

2009 Budget - Mr. Pinkham advised he has submitted \$18,750 for the 2009 Conservation Commission budget - \$16,060 was for forest and wetland detail. Mr. Weathers, at a Board of Selectmen meeting, reduced the Conservation Commission proposed budget by \$1,500. Mr. Pinkham questioned if the Commission members wanted to go through and see where to cut, if we can take this from Whitaker Woods trail work, or just whittle away the budget to \$1500. Ms. Kearney stated she felt we already did whittle away at the budget. Mr. Adair questioned the \$1500 that was taken out and asked if this number was arbitrary. Mr. Pinkham advised it was in the spirit of cutting and in savings to the taxpayer which we have to do this year. Ms. Kearny questioned what items are on the bottom of the list. Mr. Pinkham reviewed a few items including mowing, etc. Mr. Pinkham questioned if the Committee wanted him to work with Don Johnson to see what he may have to say. There was discussion by the Commission. Mr. Adair pointed out that we don't have anything major planning in Whitaker Woods. **Mr. Briggs moved, seconded by Ms. Kearny that we make cuts with Don Johnson along with Chuck and Rob's input. The motion carried unanimously.**

Whitaker Trail Plan/Work Progress - Mr. Broomhall pointed out there are a great deal of Mountain Bikers this year in Whitaker Woods. We don't have a lot of snow this year but they are sinking in deeper then they are able to groom and this is causing trouble for skiers and groomers. Mr. Broomhall asked if we can we go through the Board of Selectmen to get "x" date to "x" date for no bikers in Whitaker Woods. Mr. Adair advised that he has biked on hard snow with no problem. Mr. Adair further advised that he has been asked to send an email to bikers to alert them to this situation and, personally, he wouldn't want to see no biking as conditions in Whitaker Woods change. Mr. Adair stated he hopes people would use common sense and he would be happy to pass the word along. Mr. Pinkham commented the challenge is to promote this and make people aware of this and give it thoughtful consideration. There was no further discussion or action on this matter.

Trail Signs and Information Board – There was no discussion.

Whitaker Video – There was no discussion.

Wetlands Applications – There was no discussion

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Rules & Regulations – There was no discussion.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission is scheduled for February 11, 2009.

Adjourn

At 7:35 p.m. Mr. Pinkham moved, seconded by Ms. Kearny, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen J. Hallowell
Acting Recording Secretary