

**CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 12, 2018**

The September monthly meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission took place at 6:30 PM in the Whitaker Home Site Meeting House in North Conway.

Present: Chairman Rob Adair, Vice Chairman Larry Huemmler, Linda Kearney, Treasurer; Pat Ferland (arrived 6:45 PM), Dan Lucy, Peter Minnich, Alternate; Selectmen Representative Dave Weathers, Theresa Gallagher, Recording Secretary

Absent: Nat Lucy

Also attending: Burr Philips, Civil Solutions; Mike LeBlanc, Vice President WMNEMBA

1. **Approval of the Minutes for August 8, 2018: Chairman Rob Adair asked for a motion to accept the August 8, 2018 meeting minutes; Vice Chairman Larry Huemmler noted one error: Section 2 b, he seconded the motion. Chairman Rob Adair asked for approval of the August 8, 2018 meeting minutes as corrected; Linda Kearney made the motion; seconded by Dave Weathers. Motion passed unanimously. Pat Ferland was not present for this vote.**

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Reports and Other Business:

a. Forest Land Improvement : Rob Adair reported that Forester Don Johnson called to say he will not attend this meeting, since he has not done any work on the conservation lands in the last month. He will attend next month's meeting.

b. NEMBA trail updates: Rob Adair introduced Mike LeBlanc, Vice President of WMNEMBA, who gave an update on the Hurricane Downhill Trail. Mike LeBlanc reported that the trail is almost finished. Chris did an excellent job with the machine. It's not open yet; there still is a little bit of handwork to be done. Some people are already riding it, and it looks like it will be a popular trail. Rob Adair clarified that the trail was approved as an expert only downhill trail, but it was built to be a "blue square" trail that almost anyone can ride, because that's what the terrain dictated. The trail is between Red Tail Trail and Hurricane Mountain Road. It has a low grade but still would be dangerous for people to hike up it, with the bikes coming down. Rob said there will be a sign at the bottom, stating it is one way only.

Mike LeBlanc spoke about the potential conflict that may occur. The Cranmore Connector Trail goes from the top of Hurricane Trail and the top of Red Tail Trail all the way down to Cranmore. Cranmore advertises that trail as a great way to get to the top of Black Cap Mountain, if you ride the lift during the summer. WMNEMBA has done quite a bit of construction on Cranmore land. The issue is that some people climb up the road, some drive cars and trucks up the road, and then ride down the Connector Trail; which is a narrow trail. The parking lot at Black Cap is getting very crowded. The concern is having conflicts on that trail. Mike LeBlanc said he talked with the General Manager of Cranmore, Ben Wilcox, and he is in agreement to build a new trail that is parallel to it. It would be a separate trail for climbers and hikers going up, and the other trail would be used for descending bikers. Rob

Adair said he has seen a steady stream of hikers taking the lift to the top of Cranmore and then they take the Connector Trail to Black Cap. Mike LeBlanc clarified that the concern is for the safety of people going up the trail. There are some blind corners on the trail. The reason for two separate trails is because, if the existing trail is widened, it encourages speed. Mike LeBlanc said WMNEMBA is looking for permission from the Town to put in a narrow single track trail parallel to the existing one. Dave Weathers asked if hikers will follow the one way directions for the trails; Mike LeBlanc said yes, they will put up Kiosks that warn of danger if they use the wrong trail. Rob Adair said there will be signs at the top and the bottom of the trails. Dave Weathers asked if there are other access ways to get onto the bike trail. Mike LeBlanc confirmed that there may be some people who will ignore the signs, but keeping the trails separate may discourage them. Dave Weathers suggested that Mike LeBlanc speak with Tom Holmes and Paul Degliangeli to make sure all the liability issues are covered. They might even have to go before the Board of Selectmen. Dave also suggested to draw a map of the proposed trail and the existing trail to present to the Town's Board of Selectmen. .

Rob Adair reported that a small crew has been working on the Quarry Trail in the Marshall Conservation Area. Some small crews have been working on the trail; they still have some saplings to pull out. Right now it is passable, but it has no signs on it.

Lucille's Loop was discussed at the last meeting.

- c. MWV Rec Path – Pudding Pond alignment: Burr Philips presented an updated map of the Rec Path, and pointed out where the crossings are at Thompson Road, the railroad tracks, and where it lines up with North South Road and the Pudding Pond Trail. Last month the discussion was about the access road, but everyone wanted to see it on a map. Rob Adair asked if anyone has any more discussion. There was none. Rob Adair asked for a motion to approve the alignment of the Rec Path as pointed out on the map presented by Burr Philips. **Linda Kearney made a motion to approve the re-alignment of the Pudding Pond crossings on the proposed Rec Path; Larry Huemmler seconded. Rob Adair asked for a vote to approve the motion; Motion passed unanimously.**
- d. Selectmen's Report: Dave Weathers reported that he and Rob Adair attended the first meeting for the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust's Pine Hill Community Forest property, at HEB Engineer's office with 11 members on the Management Committee. It was an introductory meeting, whereby they elected officers, and set up a schedule, meeting once every three months. The meeting was to set up the steering committee for the Pine Hill property that USVLT recently purchased. Rob Adair explained that Representatives from the Town, Land Trust, Forest Service and Tin Mountain Conservation Center were also present at the meeting. They prepared an interim management plan to present to the State when requesting grants for the project. The plan included timber management and trail development.

Dave Weathers reported that the Town of Conway Board of Selectmen met with the Forest Service, gate attendant Martha, a representative from the Town of Bartlett, and the Chief of Police Ed Wagner. The DOT could not make the meeting so they met with Town Manager Tom Holmes last week. The State Police did not attend. The discussion centered around the problem at Diana's Bath. Cars are queueing on the road, waiting for cars to come out of the parking lot, which holds 60 cars. Martha suggested having a gate and a gatehouse at the entrance, and two people working – one to direct the cars and another one to be at the gate. She is not willing to come back if the situation stays as it was this year. She had to call the

police almost daily. The Police are not willing to drive past there every two hours to check up on the situation. Dave Weathers and Town Manager Tom Holmes are planning to meet with the Police Commissioner to discuss Police involvement at Diana's Bath. The Forest Service has no plans to do an environmental impact study, to determine the appropriate number of visitors allowed at the site. The Forest Service Ranger said the law needs to be changed in order to change the situation at Diana's Bath. Dave Weathers suggested using the High School Work Shop to build a small gate house. Dave believes the Town could supply the materials; it wouldn't be a problem to get it in the operating budget. This year the gate keeper was paid for by the Forest Service and the Town's budget for Police Patrol at Diana's Bath. Peter Minnich suggested having the Forest Department use a system to reserve a parking place at Diana's Bath. Dave Weathers said they suggested that, but the Forest Service has no plans to start that procedure. Dave Weathers noted that someone was parking cars by Glen Builders, but it stopped. Then this year there was another property owner doing the same thing. They were not supposed to do it, because it was illegal. It stopped for a while but then they went back to doing it again. Dan Lucy commented that the attendant takes in a lot of money for the parking lot. Dave Weathers said she passed the envelopes to the people, but sometimes they would fill out the envelope and put no money in it, as they dropped it in the closed containers. The Forest Service didn't seem too concerned about that. Dan Lucy said the attendant charges the people a user fee, and they still parked on the side of the road. Part of the problem is that Diana's Bath is over promoted.

- e. Round Table: Larry Huemmler commented that the Conway Daily Sun had an article about the Marshall Conservation Area last week.

Rob Adair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 P.M. Linda Kearney made the motion; seconded by Pat Ferland. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Ann Gallagher

Recording Secretary