

**CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 11, 2023**

The January monthly meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at **6:30 PM** at the Whitaker Meeting House in North Conway, NH.

Present: Chairman, Rob Adair; Vice Chairman, Nat Lucy; Selectmen's Representative, David Weathers; Peter Minnich; Dan Lucy; and Recording Secretary, Jacqueline White.

Absent: Larry Huemmler; Treasurer, Linda Kearney

Also Attending: Greg Bjork, Upper Saco Valley Land Trust; Mike LeBlanc, Ride NoCo; Corbett Tulip, Tulip Trails

1. Approval of the Minutes for December 14, 2022:

Mr. Nat Lucy made a motion to accept the December 14, 2022 minutes as written; seconded by Mr. Peter Minnich. Motion passed (4-0-1) with Mr. David Weathers abstaining.

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Reports & Other Business:

A. USVLT – Greg Bjork

Mr. Greg Bjork with the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) came before the Commission to discuss a parcel of land currently owned by the Town of Conway surrounded by land owned by the USVLT known as the Kearsarge Brook Preserve. The USVLT would be interested in discussing with the Town the possibility of maintaining these parcels as one. Mr. Bjork handed out a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and maps to the Commission.

Mr. Nat Lucy asked what types of projects does USVLT envision on this lot. Mr. Greg Bjork stated there is already an existing trail that is still used. USVLT would like to maintain the portion of trail on the Town land along with the trail on their land. Mr. Bjork said the trail is not groomed and is accessed by walkers and bikers, and pointed out there is a rustic bridge that could be upgraded for safety reasons.

Mr. Rob Adair asked about the annual payment of \$2,000 in the draft MOU. Mr. Greg Bjork stated they left that in the MOU, because it was in there for a previous property MOU, and USVLT would only be looking for a one-time payment of \$2,000. The payment would be for stewardship and maintenance costs.

Mr. David Weathers asked what the condition the rustic bridge is in. Mr. Greg Bjork responded it is made of rustic logs nailed to posts, it would be a use at your own risk type bridge. Mr. Weathers recommends to repair it or remove it.

Mr. Nat Lucy shared his concerns on paying annually and does not think it will be the best use of the Commissions funds. Mr. Greg Bjork said this would be the first agreement of its kind between the Town and the USVLT.

Mr. Nat Lucy asked if the Town could just give it to the USVLT. Mr. David Weathers said the usual process is he goes out and looks at the property to see if it's protecting something i.e. waterfront properties. If the land does not protect anything, they most likely would not be interested in keeping it. Mr. Weathers suggests bringing this up before the Board of Selectmen and see if they are interested in letting the USVLT have the land.

Mr. Nat Lucy motioned to ask the Board of Selectmen if they are willing to give this parcel of land to the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust; seconded by Mr. Peter Minnich. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

B. Hurricane zone trail planning – Mike Leblanc, Ride NoCo; Corbett Tulip, Tulip Trails

Mr. Mike LeBlanc with Ride Noco and Mr. Corbett Tulip of Tulip Trails came before the Commission to discuss potential maintenance and planning of the Hurricane Trails. Mr. Tulip handed out a revised proposal and map to the Commission of the work they would like to do to the trail system. Mr. LeBlanc stated getting permission from the Commission is their first step of this project, before they start applying for grants to fund the project.

Mr. Corbett Tulip stated the scope of their proposal impacts three existing trails: Red Tail, Kettle Ridge, and the Cranmore Connector and the construction of one new trail, referred to as "Trail 2" that would connect Red Tail and Kettle Ridge. The purpose of what they are trying to do is for maintenance on trails that were built by hand.

Mr. Mike LeBlanc states that since COVID there has been even more traffic on these trails. During the pandemic they saw an influx in bikers in the area. The Town Hall received many complaints about people parking on the side of the road on Hurricane Mountain Road to access the trail system. Part of their proposal is to rework the trail system so most, if not all bikers start from the Cranmore Mountain parking lot, resulting in cars being parked at Cranmore and not on Hurricane Mountain Road. Mr. LeBlanc said to make this happen they are proposing $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a new trail. The rest of the proposal is maintenance on existing trails.

Mr. Rob Adair stated in the past for proposed new trails, they would be marked out and the members of the Commission would walk the trail and view the proposed work. Mr. Adair said the Commission would expect a similar process with this proposed new trail.

Mr. Corbett Tulip, owner of Tulip Trails and a member of Ride NoCo introduced himself to the Commission. Mr. Tulip said part of the work they want to do on Kettle Ridge trail is to make it a dedicated climbing trail, and making it easier to climb. They are also looking to do general maintenance on the trails, widening trails in part. Part of Kettle Ridge trail is on Town owned land. They would also like to do work on the Cranmore Connector trail, which is on Cranmore land and Town owned land. Where the trail is very steep, they are looking at adding switch backs. Mr. Tulip said the Red Tail project would be an extensive repair to the existing trail, and the repair work would be kept inside the existing corridor. Mr. Tulip said the next part of the proposal is "Trail 2", the only new construction proposed, this trail would connect Red Tail/Hurricane trails and the top of Tornado, Sendero, and Kettle Ridge trails. This new section of trail would be approximately 4,000 feet long and built for two way traffic.

Mr. Rob Adair said the section of Kettle Ridge on Town owned land could use work and he would have no opposition to letting them address that. Mr. Nat Lucy asked if they endeavor to make Kettle Ridge an only uphill trail. Mr. Corbett Tulip said it would not be restricted, just recommended as an uphill trail. Mr. Mike LeBlanc said they want to make it the best alternative uphill trail as opposed to Hurricane Mountain Road, as one of their long term goals is to get cars to stop parking on Hurricane Mountain Road.

Mr. Peter Minnich questioned if the Kettle Ridge trail will be a dedicated climbing trail. Mr. Mike LeBlanc said they just want this trail to be the best alternative climbing trail as opposed to Hurricane Mountain Road and they will revise their proposal to explain that better. The members of Ride NoCo requested to have a better alternative climbing trail.

Mr. Nat Lucy asked if there was a better alternative than machining the trails and asked what is the cost difference between machining the trail as opposed to bringing in fill. Mr. Corbett Tulip said bringing in material would be far more expensive. Mr. David Weathers asked what do you have to work with after pulling out the roots. Mr. Tulip answered the mineral soil. Mr. Rob Adair clarified they dig small pockets near the trails for mineral soils. Mr. Tulip explained in some places he wouldn't dig up the root ~~map~~ mat, he would preserve it. He is careful with digging pits because of drainage, and the most important is addressing the corners of the trails; widening out the corners.

There was further discussion on the maintenance of the trails.

Mr. Peter Minnich questioned if they are trying to make this a down hill biking park. Mr. Mike LeBlanc answered the purpose of their proposal is to make the trails easier to maintain and to get people to stop parking on Hurricane Mountain Road. Maintenance done on these trails is by volunteers only, and has turned into a lot of work for those volunteers.

Additional discussion followed over the popularity of this trail system and concerns the Commission has.

Mr. Rob Adair said he supports making trails more sustainable; therefore, he supports Items 1 and 2 on Ride NoCo/Tulip Trails proposal, but would like more information on Items 3 and 4; including a walk through.

Mr. Peter Minnich stated he feels the Commission should speak amongst themselves first before making a decision, and with the two members that could not attend this meeting. Mr. Dan Lucy agreed; he would like more discussion as well.

Mr. Corbett Tulips suggested a walk through of Red Tail in the Spring with members of the Commission.

Mr. Dan Lucy said he supports Items 1,2, and 3, but would like the Commission to discuss increased traffic and the effects.

Mr. Nat Lucy made a motion to make Conditional Approval on Items 1, 2 and 3 on Ride NoCo/Tulip Trails proposal; seconded by Mr. David Weathers. Motion passed unanimously (5-0). Conditions of this approval will be set at the February Meeting.

C. Selectmen's Report:

Mr. David Weathers said the Selectmen voted yesterday to refuse that piece of land from NHDOT behind Napa in Redstone. The State gave the Town first refusal.

D. Member Roundtable:

Mr. Rob Adair said he would like to talk about the election of officers, he is planning a lot of travel this year and is wondering if he is the right guy to be the Chair. Mr. Nat Lucy said he would not mind doing it for a year, but also feels we need to find new members to join the Commission. Mr. Adair said we have two openings for alternates right now.

Mr. Nat Lucy stated he would like each member to try to find two (2) candidates to be members of the Commission before the next meeting.

Mr. Rob Adair made a motion for Mr. Nat Lucy to become the Chair; seconded by Mr. David Weathers. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).


Mr. Rob Adair made a motion for Ms. Linda Kearney to stay the Treasurer; seconded by Mr. David Weathers. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Mr. David Weathers made a motion for Mr. Dan Lucy to become the Vice Chair; seconded by Mr. Rob Adair. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Next Meeting: The next CCC meeting will be on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whitaker Meeting House in North Conway, NH.

Adjourn: Mr. David Weathers made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 P.M.; seconded by Mr. Rob Adair. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Jacqueline White
Recording Secretary