

**CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 13, 2023**

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

Present: Chairman, Nat Lucy; Vice Chairman, Dan Lucy; Treasurer, Linda Kearney; Rob Adair; Peter Minnich; Larry Huemmler; Corbett Tulip; Paul Getchell; and Recording Secretary, Jacqueline White.

Absent: David Weathers, Selectmen's Representative.

Also Attending: Tim Nolin, Forest Land Improvement.

1. Approval of the Minutes for June 14, 2023:

Mr. Peter Minnich made a motion to accept the June 14, 2023 minutes as written; seconded by Mr. Rob Adair. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Mr. Peter Minnich asked if the drone trials have been done. Mr. Tim Nolin said he believes it has been done, but we have not received results yet.

2. Public Comment: None.

Mr. Larry Huemmler joined the meeting at 6:39 P.M.

3. Reports & Other Business:

A. Forest Land Improvement – Tim Nolin:

Mr. Tim Nolin stated the salvage cut on the DOT mitigation lands will be finished in the next week and the payments have started coming in. Mr. Nolin said the first two payments for the wood are approximately \$20,000 and there will be two more payments. Mr. Nolin shared that over Labor Day weekend the logging company's service trailer was broken in to and several items stolen. The homeless encampment in the area really expanded during the project and as part of the investigation of the break in, the homeless encampment was disbanded. Mr. Nolin said based on the health of the trees and this late summer die off of trees, he is suggesting not seeding the area, because depending on how spring goes, they might be back in there next year for another cut. Mr. Nolin stated that everything from the salvage cut got marketed well. Mr. Nolin said there was an area that was thinned several years ago that are starting to get new growth ie. green ferns, and it is not as brown and barren as a normal clear cut would look. Mr. Nat Lucy asked what is coming back for new growth. Mr. Nolin answered a hodgepodge of stuff; some junk hardwood, and virtually no oak regeneration. Mr. Nolin said there is a surprising amount of tiny pine seedlings mixed in that will certainly respond to the sunlight and over time maple and beech will filter in and will sprout. Mr. Nolin stated most of the hemlock got killed by the gypsy moths, so that is not there, but there is a lot of black berries.

Mr. Peter Minnich asked if this is a cycle with the oak trees and he noticed a lot of oak trees that did not leaf out this spring and have turned brown. Mr. Tim Nolin said consensus is that the oak trees barely had the energy to leaf out this spring and probably will not leaf out next year. Mr. Nolin stated the big oak tree in the middle of the Marshall parking lot leafed out in the spring, but then a frost hit it and it never came back.

Mr. Nat Lucy stated there is going to be a lot of dead oak and Mr. Tim Nolin agreed. Mr. Nolin stated that Whitaker Woods is full of dead oak, as well as the Marshall land, but the issue with the Marshall land is it was cut prior to the Town getting the land, so if you went in for a salvage harvest, the good regeneration growth would be flattened and ruined. Mr. Nolin shared there is a lot of dead oak at Pudding Pond as well, but the problem with that is the new Rec Path that comes out on the access road is too narrow to run trucks down, with sweeping corners and the culverts too narrow. So, at this moment we have lost management access there. Mr. Nat Lucy asked what the dead oak was like on other Town lands. Mr. Nolin said Whitaker Woods has a lot of dead oak, but we would have to run trucks up over the power lines to the upper landing. Mr. Nolin stated that he would recommend a salvage cut at Pudding Pond, but with no access, that is not doable.

Mr. Tim Nolin said they have done the cutting and clearing for the parking lot expansions at Pudding Pond and Marshall. The Town hauled fill in to the Marshall parking lot as planned. Mr. Nolin said the fill is better material than expected. Mr. Nat Lucy asked if they leveled out the fill. Mr. Nolin answered in the affirmative. Mr. Nolin suggested getting a handle on what we have left in the budget, so we can use it and suggested gravel for the Marshall parking lot or Pudding Pond parking lot expansion.

Mr. Nat Lucy said he would like to improve the access around the big gate that was put in at the Pudding Pond parking lot. Mr. Lucy stated just to the left of the gate there is a culvert and it drops down on both sides and said if there is any money left over in the budget that is one idea of where it could be spent.

Mr. Peter Minnich suggested having porta-potties all year long at Marshall and Pudding Pond. Mr. Minnich asked how much the porta-potties cost. Mr. Nat Lucy answered \$175 a piece, per month. Mr. Lucy suggested adding money to next year's budget for year-round porta-potties in the parking lots at Marshall and Pudding Pond. This was a brief discussion on what other organizations could potentially share the cost of the year-round porta-potties.

B. Selectmen's Report: None.

C. Member Roundtable:

Mr. Rob Adair discussed the NHDOT mitigation lands and said the Conservation has been managing that land since 2013. Mr. Adair said this land was supposed to become Town land if they built the ByPass through Whitaker Woods, which is now not happening. Mr. Adair stated at some point DOT will give the Town first refusal on it. Mr. Adair shared he is putting a meeting together with the Nature Conservancy, Conway Historical Society, Trails Association, Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, and Paul DegliAngeli to discuss the access and development potential of this land. Mr. Peter Minnich asked what the acreage of the land is. Mr. Adair stated 460 acres.

Mr. Tim Nolin asked if the Town has approached the condos on Thompson Road about the encroachment on Town land. Mr. Nat Lucy asked if the boundary was marked. Mr. Nolin said he flagged it the best he could.

Mr. Rob Adair asked if we could ~~pele~~ **poll** the members of the Conservation to see if everyone is in favor of trying to preserve the NHDOT mitigation lands (460 acres). All Conservation members were in favor.

Mr. Nat Lucy shared he and Mr. Corbett Tulip met at the top of Hurricane Mountain Road with the Nature Conservancy to address the trail from the parking lot to the top of Black Cap Mountain. Mr. Lucy said the trail is a disaster and crosses State land, Town land, and Green Hill Conservancy land. Mr. Lucy stated they walked the trail and discussed how to fix it. This trail gets a lot of use, year-round. Mr. Lucy said the powers to be at the state level felt it ranked high on the list for grant money because of the synergy of being connected to other existing trails and the year-round use of multiple groups. Mr. Tulip said this is the second busiest trail in the Valley.

Mr. Nat Lucy said he was notified on Monday that HEB is coming in to Whitaker Woods to conduct borings for the Phase 2 of the Rec Path in early October. Mr. Lucy said he was part of a group that walked a potential corridor in May and since that walk it has been surveyed and some grade stakes put out. Mr. Lucy stated he thinks this is a good project, but would like better communication. Mr. Lucy said he is concerned with getting the equipment into Whitaker Woods, the memo from HEB said they will probably have to cut a few trees. Mr. Lucy said we need to be in tune with these activities, because they are on conservation land. Mr. Lucy stated he asked for a map of the proposed path, but there is not one ready yet. Mr. Larry Huemmler said he thinks someone should come to a Conservation meeting and fill them in. Mr. Peter Minnich asked what is the option for crossing to the Scenic Vista. Mr. Rob Adair said he heard they are considering not trying to cross Route 16 at this point. Mr. Adair said it makes more sense to see if you can create a parking lot across from the Post Office and have the pathway terminate there. Mr. Lucy said he is not sure who the point person is on the project. Mr. Adair said he believes it is Paul D. Mr. Lucy said he is going to have a conversation with Paul D.

Mr. Nat Lucy said one more Whitaker Woods item; back in May, he and Peter Donohoe from the Ski Touring Association and someone from the Walkers group came up with a little bit of more trail work to help with some issues identified after last winter, which he reported on already to the Commission. Mr. Lucy said they will be starting that work next month.

There was a brief discussion on small projects that could be done to use up left over money in the budget.

Mr. Dan Lucy said one small project could be the Marshall property could use some gravel in low spots and earth work.

Mr. Peter Minnich said he has a concern for the interaction between mountain bikers and tourists that are on the new Rec Path near the Quarry. Mr. Minnich said the library put up informational signs and the quarry is now a tourist spot and he suggests warning signage.

Ms. Linda Kearney said she has brought this up at several meetings in the past; the trail across from Conway Lake needs some attention. Ms. Kearney stated the signs need to be upgraded and there is a big dead tree.


Ms. Linda Kearney left the meeting at 7:31 P.M.

There was a brief discussion on the trail across from Conway Lake and work that could be done to the trails and signage. Mr. Nat Lucy asked Mr. Paul Getchell to draft up a proposal of work to be done at this site.

Next Meeting: The next CCC meeting will be on Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whitaker Meeting House in North Conway, NH.

Adjourn: Mr. Rob Adair made a motion to adjourn at 7:46 P.M.; seconded by Mr. Dan Lucy. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Jacqueline White
Recording Secretary