

Adopted: September 14, 2005 – As Amended

**MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
August 10, 2005**

A meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitaker Homesite in North Conway, NH. Present were: Chair, Paul Pinkham; Dan Lucy, Carol Lyman, Rob Adair, David Weathers, Chuck Broomhall, and Alternates, Connie Briggs and Linda Kearney.

The Chair appointed Mr. Briggs and Ms. Kearney as full voting members.

Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Mr. Adair, seconded by Mr. Briggs, to approve the July 13th Minutes as submitted. Carried by unanimous vote. Mr. Pinkham suggested there be a “run through” of the Minutes at the beginning of each meeting.

Public Comment: None

Whitaker Woods Trail Management Plan: Mr. Pinkham noted we have been talking for a year about putting together a long range plan, have budgeted for it and need to complete it in order to schedule the work for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Adair explained the draft trail management plan provided reflects items that CCC has discussed or were brought up at the public hearing. He said he sees this as a document that is constantly being revised and upgraded as things get done and we set new goals.

Short Term Projects – *[Erect trail network maps and signs to adequately identify trail locations and allow users to navigate through the trail system.]* – Mr. Pinkham noted we got a list of 50 to 60 signs and directionals from Cort Hansen and if we did half of that we would have a pretty well marked place. He is now trying to find a less expensive source to obtain signs – we have \$500 in the budget. Mr. Adair said the cost of a single sided cedar routed sign is about \$25, both sides \$50. Mr. Pinkham felt that to be rather expensive and questioned whether anyone knows of a reasonably inexpensive sign source. Mr. Broomhall suggested the school might be able to make some and will check that resource.

Mr. Weathers questioned why signs are disappearing - are they not up high enough? Mr. Broomhall noted that a lot of the signs that were originally there are still there, but he feels we have gone overboard with the number of signs. Ms. Kearney suggested maybe we should not make them too attractive. Mr. Broomhall noted some users have the map with them which is color coded for skiers. Ms. Kearney questioned whether we would save some money by making them smaller. Mr. Pinkham will contact Paul DegliAngeli to see what the town might be able to do. Mr. Broomhall agreed to handle the signs.

[Update existing trail map to reflect new trail construction and trail closures.] Mr. Adair has met with Larry Garland regarding updating the map; Lucy Traverse has been added.

As for closure of trails, Mr. Briggs suggested simply dropping a tree, and Mr. Johnson added that brushing in the trail is effective. It was noted that Schuss is the only one that is really bad and Mr. Pinkham agreed that getting Schuss blocked is the right thing to do.

[Work with user groups to designate a graded 5k loop trail suitable for XC skiing and running.] Mr. Broomhall provided a map of a suggested 5k loop trail provided by an interested party. The route included some new sections as well as sections thought to be appropriate to close, Upper Quarry among them. Mr. Pinkham noted people are free to go where they want to go, and that closing a trail is not meant to prohibit people from using them.

Mr. Lucy noted there is also a section of the original, Wellinghurst, that we have discontinued but is still part of this map, if we are going to make it a maintained trail, it is a trail and we have not eliminated anything. He pointed out there are at least two sections that we voted to eliminate and we are bringing them back in. Mr. Adair acknowledged that for skiing it may make sense, but for summertime there are probably better trails.

Mr. Pinkham commented that that was a 5k that the committee that was originally appointed to look at these trails is knowledgeable about what is desirable or not desirable. Mr. Lucy stated our purpose was to eliminate trails and we have eliminated one and added three. He felt it should be a committee decision.

Mr. Weathers asked Mr. Johnson whether he uses existing trails that are there. Mr. Johnson said he tries not to skid on any recreational trail because it damages them. A main drag many times turns into a new trail. Mr. Weathers said he does not see the harm in using an existing trail and then going back and stabilizing it afterward. Mr. Johnson said you have to use some real discretion on that – with some trails you would end up with a lot of root damage and exposed roots, which could be a problem after reopening. Some of the old trails where the root systems are on the surface will be ripping those root systems out. Trees would be compromised as regards stability.

Mr. Lucy said we got started on this a long time ago and had to put a stop to it. He disagrees with the idea that you cannot close off and make a trail disappear. Mr. Broomhall said close off the lower part of Schuss and the entire Hell's Kitchen. Mr. Lucy stated he is not against new trails, some are better than older ones, but our plan was to eliminate some trails. Need to close off Schuss and Hell's Kitchen and both are on Mr. Johnson's to do list now. All were in agreement with that. Trails that are x'd on the map need to go.

It was determined that the consensus of the committee was to go forward with the reduction in the number of trails at Whitaker Woods.

Mr. Pinkham questioned the requirements for eliminating the railroad crossing and improving the two we are supposed to be improving; however, the State expects us to do more. Mr. Adair said the State would look to the town to block them off.

Mr. Boomhall noted unless it is a major winter, Gradual Trail on the other side of the power line is not usable without some work being done in there, and the Perimeter Trail would need some work done on it.

Mr. Johnson said one of the problems with forest management he had there was that he got into a number of places that if looking at trying to do Silva culture or harvest he was always faced with hitting a trail if he wanted to fell a tree.

It was agreed that item four on the Long Term Projects [*Decommission/close Schuss, Side Track, North-South Connector, Quarry Hill.*] would be moved to the short term projects list.

Railroad Crossing to be constructed: Mr. Johnson said he has not done that sort of thing in the past. Mr. Briggs said the last time we did that the CSRR was happy to supply the materials to do it (not in Whitaker Woods); however, they came and took one back out. Mr. Johnson said when we crossed by John Fuller School it cost about \$1600 to have CSRR come and put it in. Mr. Lucy noted one year the ski touring association built one on the other end, to the railroad's specs, and the next year the railroad took it away - there needs to be some communication before putting any money into it. Mr. Adair said Mr. Sires has things in place to put those in. Messrs. Pinkham and Weathers will follow up with Mr. Sires.

Develop Gravel Source on the power lines: [*Develop gravel on the power lines to fill rooty/wet spots/uneven spots. Utilize existing wood chips where appropriate.*] Mr. Johnson stated it would be nice to have that if we could find a spot to develop some gravel. Maybe a project for this fall would be to see what we've got, stockpile it, then when we need it we will have it. It was agreed this would be done this fall. Mr. Johnson stated there are a number of spots under the power lines where we could get some gravel; we need to at least define it.

In summary, Mr. Pinkham stated in the meantime we will take a closer look at the 5k loop, close Schuss and Hell's Kitchen, revisit the signage, pursue gravel source, to have a better sense of what we need to do.

Mr. Weathers noted with signage we want to make sure that whatever we put up this year will match, also we need to come back with a more manageable number of signs. Ms. Lyman suggested there may be a saving in using symbols as opposed to numbers, color coded.

Long Term Projects: Move 5k into longer term. [*Work with user groups to designate a graded 5k loop trail suitable for XC skiing and running.*]

[*Create groomable connector trail joining Swenson's Folly with S-Turn to avoid the steep "ski jump" pitch on Swenson's.*] Mr. Adair said that is something that is in there and is suggested as a possible groomed trail. Will leave the long term as is – let it ride.

Mr. Broomhall questioned where we stand after all the work we have given to Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson said trail closures (Schuss and Hell's Kitchen are both easily done), and look for gravel. Also he will not be re-establishing the 300' of property line because the town cut the budget. Mr. Weathers said we have \$6,000 to find some gravel and put it out there, fell some trees to close those trails, and dress up the 5k loop. Mr. Pinkham said we need to update the activities list Mr. Johnson put together.

Ms. Lyman questioned the work done at Shedd Woods. Mr. Weathers said he went to Don Lyford to find out what was going to be done about blocking that off and he will get back to him. He may not have an answer as to whether there will be curbing placed there.

Reports: Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Weathers whether the town has looked at the digging going on at Black Cap. Mr. Sires was to have looked at that and seek advice from Town Counsel.

Mr. Weathers questioned whether Mr. Johnson will be doing the crossings. Mr. Pinkham stated we have to hear from Earl Sires, but he does not know yet what to do. Mr. Adair offered to provide information that he has. Messrs. Johnson, Adair, Broomhall and Lucy are to schedule a meeting.

School Education Program - Ms. Lyman questioned the school education program, noting it has been discussed at John Fuller and they were enthusiastic about it, waiting to hear back from us. Mr. Johnson agreed it deserves a phone call, noting that Project Learning Tree might be a more sensible program; however, he is not a teacher and what he came up with may be over-ambitious. He felt it would not be a bad idea for the teachers to come and speak to the CCC.

Nature Conservancy – Mr. Pinkham stated that part of the reason we did not get a bill from TNC is because they cannot deal with expenses of less than \$10,000. Jeff Lougee has expressed an interest in continuing the work relationship that Peter Benson had with CCC. During discussion with Mr. Lougee Mr. Pinkham questioned, if their accounting system will only allow them to deal with \$10,000, whether we could put together a work program that would span 3 or 4 years? Mr. Lougee will check first with TNC. Mr. Pinkham saw this as a case for having the CCC build a budget and be able to retain that portion not spent. He noted if we do not do it with TNC, we will have to hire someone else to do it.

We need permission from the town to cash the check from Fish & Game for Wildlife Habitat Improvement. A public hearing will be held at the Aug. 23rd Selectmen's meeting to approve expenditure of those funds.

Treasurer: A report will be provided at the next meeting.

Selectmen's Report: Mr. Weathers had nothing to report. Mr. Adair questioned use of conservation land funds for conservation easements? Mr. Weathers stated they need to check with Town Counsel.

Other Business:

Kearsarge Brook Sewer Crossing – Mr. Pinkham has not heard anything on this. Cort Hansen is concerned about the lack of a bridge there. Fish & Game will be checking closely to see that the crossing is used appropriately.

Redstone Property/DOT - Nothing has been heard from DOT; however, Mr. Pinkham has had conversations with Mr. Schiavi. Mr. Weathers noted Redstone residents are requesting to be involved and kept informed on the Schiavi property so he has invited them to come to a CCC meeting to hear how we handle it.

Wetland Applications – Mr. Weathers reported the Jawitz Sanctuary Trust on Gotzen Road was approved for a 6800 sf pond for wildlife/fire protection.

General – Ms. Kearney reported on a drainage situation on Rebecca Lane near Saco Bound where a development on the Saco River recently dug a ditch along their access road and the water from bottom land is draining into the ditch, then they ran a culvert under their road and a trench that runs straight into the Saco River, and she questions whether this is legal. Mr. Weathers said it has to be posted and he cannot remember an application coming in on that. The town does not have regulatory powers, the Wetlands Board is the regulatory agency. Ms. Kearney said she has seen water flowing there and it concerns her that people throw things there. It is a dirt trench into the Saco; she does not know whether it has been stabilized with either vegetation or stone. Mr. Weathers advised we can look at it as a body and send a letter to DES. Ms. Kearney will get a lot number and advise Mr. Weathers.

There was question of a situation at the Muddy Moose Restaurant regarding fill which was put in and is eroding down into the brook. Mr. Weathers advised he does not have the right to walk onto the property. Mr. Pinkham informed him it can be seen from the bridge over Artist Falls Brook.

The next meeting will be held on September 14th.

Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Ms. Kearney and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Currier, Recording Secretary