

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**July 12, 2006**

A meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitaker Homesite in North Conway, NH. Present were: Paul Pinkham, David Weathers, Rob Adair, Chuck Broomhall, Dan Lucy, and Alternates Linda Kearney and Connie Briggs. Also present were Forester, Don Johnson, and media representative, David Carkhuff.

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

**Approval of Minutes (6/14/06): Motion by Mr. Adair, second by Mr. Weathers, that the Minutes of the June 14th meeting be approved as written. Carried by unanimous vote.**

**Public Comment:** None.

**Foresters Report:** Don Johnson reported that on June 17<sup>th</sup> Peter Pohl and Phil Osher, of Cooperative Extension Service, requested that he conduct a guided tour for some 7 or 8 Costa Rican natural resource professionals. They compared trees size and age with those of Costa Rica. It was noted they have about 40 different species growing on an acre in Costa Rica as opposed to about 15 in the U.S. They cannot cut any tree without permission from the provincial government; there is not much private ownership of any natural resource allowed in Costa Rica. They spent two hours touring Whitaker Woods.

Mr. Johnson received an e-mail from Mr. Pinkham regarding a big boulder at the landing on Hurricane Mt. Rd. which was moved and someone had driven in there. The boulder was put back in place. He decided it was time to mow - did Pudding Pond landing and road, Whitaker Woods power line road, and landing used by R.H. Wales. Also did some brush saw work and will finish with two landings on Hurricane Mt. Rd.

Mr. Johnson said he has been watching pine trees in Whitaker Woods and feels we may have a good seed drop in the white pine trees coming up this fall. He usually advises harvesting at or just before a good seed drop. He noted that the pine cone beetle can get into the cones and kill the growing stock, so does not want to harvest if it is not a good seed drop. Mr. Johnson provided a map of the area he would like to do - going up old Quarry Trail, down hill of that to the Oak Street railroad tracks (an area that has been neglected). Mr. Johnson contacted Moose Mt. Logging and walked the area. The trees would be processed right in the woods, picked up and carried out – no skidding done.

Single tree selection and some group selection work: Part of the area would be a thinning. Boulder Narrows and Wellinghurst have some beech that is in bad shape which he would like to get cleaned up. Uphill and down hill of the Lucy Traverse pine seedlings are not getting enough sunlight - he would like to open up there so they will start coming in. Ultimately he wants to get a diverse age structure in there; would like to

take out possibly 15 to 20% of the volume. He acknowledged that it is not in our long term plan because it is something that you have to move on when it happens. He noted the wood market is a little edgy right now. Hardwood and oak are down, pine has held on.

Mr. Broomhall questioned whether he would keep going north in future years. Mr. Johnson said he has done very little in the upper northeastern corner; if it looks like the bypass is going to go through there we should at that time look at forestry management there or we will lose that activity. Mr. Pinkham said the aim is not to be denied the use of the trails there. Mr. Weathers stated the southern end will go first and it will be at least a 4-year project. Mr. Johnson said he would like to use our landing at the end of Oak Street, for the Whitaker work. He previously could not use that because there was a day care center there; however, that is now closed. He suggested we publish a public notice of our intention and request input if there are any concerns. Mr. Briggs noted that the gate is broken, but people do not seem to be abusing it. Mr. Pinkham commented that when we find one that is in need of repair we repair it as a matter of course, and should do that in this case.

Mr. Johnson said he would like to use the Lucy Traverse for carrying the logs down to the landing – it is packed hard and he sees no problem in doing that. Mr. Adair expressed concern that the Lucy Traverse gets a lot of sun and wonders if opening that up would make it worse for the skiing situation. Mr. Johnson agreed it would open it up and there would be more sun. Mr. Broomhall felt taking some of those pines out would be good for us. Mr. Pinkham questioned whether we could reach a reasonable compromise. Mr. Johnson agreed he could make some adjustments.

Mr. Johnson reported he put up some signs to keep people off the Armstrong Alley Trail because it is coming in really sparse, there is not a severe erosion problem, but the grass is not as good as Lucy Traverse. Mr. Adair said he has looked at it and it looks pretty stable.

**Motion was made by Mr. Briggs, seconded by Mr. Broomhall, that the Commission approve Mr. Johnson going forward with his proposal if he determines that the seed drop is adequate. Carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Weathers advised that the later we wait to mow into the season the better. It is a good idea if there is a choice, to wait a little longer into the season for mowing because of nesting birds, golden rod, wild seeds, etc.

**Whitaker Trail Plan:** Mr. Adair said he has a list of items to be presented to Mr. Johnson for him to figure out how they fit into the budget and when he wants to do them. Mr. Broomhall has met with Cort Hansen about what needs to be done. Mr. Adair has included those items and will provide a prioritized listing to Mr. Johnson on Thursday. The following is a brief description of Whitaker Trail work assigned to Mr. Johnson:

Fill low spot in Bancroft Loop behind Whitaker Meeting House  
Raise grade of Whitaker Lane between Gradual and Schush  
Remove large tree at intersection of Broomhall and Whitaker Lane  
Widen, remove rocks, and grade lower Gradual Trail  
Remove corduroy logs on lower Wellinghurst and re-grade and/or rock armor as needed.

**Nature Conservancy Report:** Mr. Pinkham reported that Mr. Lougee will be putting together a presentation on The Nature Conservancy Saco River Plan for the next meeting.

**Selectmen's Report:** Mr. Weathers reported official notification has been received from the DES regarding the complaint made on the Smith property in Center Conway. He is not sure about any follow up.

The Selectmen voted 5-0 to go along with the CCC recommendation not to accept the house lot offered as a gift to the town on I Street in Cranmore Shores.

Mr. Weathers discussed with Paul DegliAngeli elimination of some of the trees at the scenic overlook on Rt. 16 north of the Elks Club to maintain that view, and suggestion was made that we go down and mark the trees and then make a determination as to whether we could get the wood up and out of there or just leave it.

Railroad Crossings – Mr. Adair reported the planks are gone and he assumes the CSRR has them. It was noted the town put them in there, CSRR did not like the construction in one location; however, they took them out of both locations. Mr. Adair noted there is some cost in the 6x6 timbers and they should return them to the owners. Mr. Pinkham said they should have contacted us and let us know there was a problem there. The town has agreed to reinstall the crossings.

Schiavi Property – Mr. Weathers said there is still some question regarding one piece of land Schiavi wants to retain access to rather than having a right of way, and they are looking at feasibility of a boundary line adjustment. There is question of how much land that would entail. Thorne Surveys is working on a site plan. When they have that together we will sit down and discuss it. Mr. Briggs said it appears to him that the piece of land Schiavi still owns abuts Thad Thorne's land; however, he can get into both of his other parcels from Mountain Rd.; he has an easement through TNC land through some land high up that he owns, and he is giving an easement to TNC. It was Mr. Briggs' opinion that it seems there could be a swap there.

**Other Business:** Mr. Pinkham had a letter from Earl Sires advising that the Planning Board is planning a capital improvements program for physical development and a plan for infrastructure improvements, and is inquiring whether the CCC envisions any capital projects outside normal maintenance work with gross cost of over \$20,000, or a project which might require bond funding. We must respond by Aug. 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pinkham suggested giving this some thought and addressing it at the August meeting.

Mr. Briggs said he does not think there is anything there that affects us or that we need to do anything about - we have no projects that would cost the Conway taxpayer \$20,000 in the next 5 or 6 years and he does not feel we have to do anything about it. Mr. Weathers explained the reason is so there are not any surprises if we come up with a project so they can plan accordingly. Mr. Pinkham said at one point it was noted we have properties where there is historic signing and description of beaver ponds, etc., and there is an intent to make those educational and more useful. We also could have self-guided trails, etc. Also there is the possibility of something taking place at the quarry, there is a lot of history there.

Mr. Pinkham reviewed correspondence from the Cooperative Extension Service – Wildlife Management course being offered. Boundary line identification course is being offered, and a seminar is being offered on testing of private wells.

Mr. Pinkham stated CCC members previously had individual responsibilities assigned to evaluate or oversee conservation sites that each member kept an eye on. He noted we have abandoned that practice and need to reconsider the appropriateness of the need for that responsibility, and asked members to think about that for discussion at the next meeting.

Wetlands Applications: Mr. Weathers reported no new applications. He noted that by consensus inspectors agreed that “permit by notification” was not working.

Mr. Pinkham stated the Design Review Committee meeting is scheduled for July 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. and suggested the Shedd Woods issue should be on the agenda, noting we investigated the Shedd Woods problems, sent it to the town, the State responded that they are not going to do much. It was Mr. Pinkham’s opinion that response was inadequate and we need to pursue it at the DRC meeting. He will send the memo to the Chairman and request that it be put on the agenda. Mr. Weathers agreed it should be on the agenda, but does not feel it is cast in stone. Mr. Adair said they have a lot of boulders on the side of the road and, if nothing else, should place them so that people cannot drive into the field there. Mr. Weathers noted there was an entrance to the north of there for access for mowing and maintenance, and he would rather see the boulders there than at the entrance path. He does not see it as a really big problem.

Criteria for Conservation Land Acquisition: Messrs. Pinkham and Adair have together developed a brief draft of criteria and are inviting comments. Mr. Pinkham noted the intent is to submit it to the Selectmen for review and comment eventually, that will allow us to move ahead more promptly with the Upper Saco Valley contribution to the Kennett property. Mr. Adair noted it was two or three months ago that we voted to proceed and he would like to make sure to keep it rolling. Mr. Pinkham said it needs the opportunity for discussion. Ms. Kearney pointed out that we cannot give the money to them until we get this together. Mr. Pinkham said we cannot seriously consider it until we have some sort of a reason for doing these things. Mr. Adair said he does not see it as a very controversial document and suggested taking some time to review it tonight and take some action. Mr. Pinkham’s concern was that those not present would not have an

opportunity to comment. Mr. Weathers questioned how many of the items would be needed to make the project feasible on any given tract? Mr. Pinkham said he assumes one, citing #1 as it relates to the Kennett property [*The property is in active agricultural or forestry use.*]

Mr. Weathers questioned #2 [*The property has high quality agricultural soils.*], noting there is a rating system for forestry and soil potential index and we might want to consider including “soil potential index for forestry lands”. It was Mr. Weathers’ opinion that the more criteria you can incorporate on a given parcel the more value it would give it, and the easier it would be to sell.

Mr. Briggs questioned #9 [*The development of the property would diminish scenic views or interfere with views across protected open space.*] Mr. Weathers said if a person had an agricultural piece he could build on, it would diminish the view if he put houses on it.

Ms. Kearney questioned addressing the recreational aspect, her feeling being that #6 [*The property is visible by the public from roadways, waterways, or recreation areas.*] does not cover that. Mr. Pinkham noted recreation is a function of land conservation. Mr. Adair said we could add a #12 [*property has high recreation value*]. Mr. Briggs pointed out we can amend this at any time in the future.

**Motion was made by Mr. Briggs, seconded by Mr. Adair, that the Commission accept the proposed criteria as is with addition on item #2 referencing soil potential index.** Mr. Weathers agreed that all members that are not present should be made aware of the draft and have an opportunity to respond. Mr. Pinkham said as a courtesy he will e-mail a copy to Mr. Haynes and Ms. Lyman and advise that the Commission has approved it. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

It was agreed Conway Conservation Land and Open Spaces Rules and Regulations would be included on the agenda for the August meeting and Mr. Pinkham encouraged all to review prior to that meeting.

**Next Meeting Date:** The next regular meeting will be held on August 9th at 6:30 p.m.

**Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Mr. Briggs and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary