

**MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
April 11, 2007**

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, Carol Lyman, Chuck Broomhall, and Alternates, Connie Briggs and Linda Kearney. Also in attendance were Don Johnson and Jeff Lougee of TNC.

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

Approval of Minutes (1/10/07 & 3/14/07): Ms. Kearney pointed out that on Pg. 1 the spelling of Linda Como's name should have been "Comeau." Mr. Weathers stated Pg. 2, under Dredge and Fill Applications, 2nd para., the last sentence should *read* "...*should be brought down to somewhere near existing ground elevation so that the road does not act as a dam under flood conditions.*" **Motion by Ms. Kearney, second by Mr. Weathers, that the Minutes of the March 14th meeting be approved as amended. Carried by unanimous vote.**

Motion by Mr. Weathers, second by Mr. Briggs, to approve the Minutes of the January 10th meeting as submitted. Carried by unanimous vote.

Reports: Mr. Johnson, noting that it is time to start planning for upcoming activities, said part of our plan laid out last fall was to create a stewardship plan for the Schiavi property as the town will own it; however, that is not going to happen for some time so now is probably not a good expenditure of that money. He suggested those funds be used to totally update the Forest Management Plan on Whitaker Woods and the Homesite, noting the plan is over 20 years old and with all the new technology we should try to get into GIS mapping. The map itself would be in a digital format versus what we are doing now, which means it can be changed relatively easily - when it is time to update the plan again, the map is 2/3 done, it is totally flexible. He noted the Conway town office already has quite a GIS data base. Mr. Johnson, as an example, pointed out the bypass would impact our access off Kearsarge Road - he found by looking at the map that Kearsarge would be an underpass and will require a tremendous amount of fill to be dumped there so will no longer have any access - the only point of access would be through Burke's pasture. He feels the swap from Schiavi to Whitaker Woods would give "more bang and more relevancy for our buck."

Mr. Johnson reported we have to get the Lower Gradual Trail that was rebuilt last fall seeded, assuming water bars did their job. Mr. Broomhall reported it was great. Mr. Pinkham suggested Mr. Johnson proceed with the Whitaker update as opposed to doing the Schiavi project at this point. There were no objections voiced. Mr. Adair offered to contact Larry Garland to get the trails on GIS. Mr. Johnson felt in terms of timing, by the end of the summer he would have this done. Mr. Lougee pointed out that GIS maps are not just maps, but data sets with which one can track management practices.

Mr. Johnson reported he has been notified that Conway has been selected to receive the NH Tree Farm of the Year award, as a community, the first time that type of award has been given (it is usually to an individual). He said it is a special award and will be looked at as a real feather in our cap, other communities will compete for it. We have been invited on Sept. 22 to Whitefield to the Tree Farm Field Day. They have encouraged us to have a field day of our own, put something together where we might showcase what we have been doing here. He said Shedd Woods comes to mind and suggested maybe we could hold a cookout and discussion there, or also Whitaker Woods or Pudding Pond. He feels it is something we should do, that the Commission deserves a lot of recognition. Ms. Lyman questioned whether it would benefit us and garner some support if we did something at Pudding Pond.

Mr. Weathers stated this has been tried before, but did not get response from the community; however, he has attended similar events for individuals and they seem to be well attended. Mr. Pinkham felt “the bang for the buck” lies in the press – getting pictures out, advertising, etc.; possibly something on Channel 3. He felt if we had a technical outline we could put it together. Mr. Johnson offered to put an outline together of how he would do it. The Commission agreed.

Whitaker Trail Plan: It was felt the Whitaker Committee needs to take a look at what we want to get done this year and enter into a work agreement with the town, revisit the existing trail plan and what’s reasonable to get done for the coming year, and get that information to Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson announced receipt of an e-mail from the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program which is hoping to help communities purchase community forests through the farm bill. They are recognizing that a lot of community watersheds and water supplies are being developed – they want communities to understand what stewardship is. He noted also the Wilderness Society in VT is working on a cost-share program with USFS and federal government.

Mr. Lougee wished to know if the Schiavi property is for mitigation of impacts that are North/South bypass wide, or just for impacts to town-owned conservation land. Mr. Weathers said the total project will impact 38.5 acres from Coleman’s (south of Conway Village) to here (in the area of the Whitaker Homesite), designed for impact on town property on a recreation basis; there is some wetlands mitigation. Mr. Lougee questioned the outcome if the northern half of the bypass did not end up going through? Mr. Pinkham said the State is required to offer it back to Schiavi first, after that it is up to the State. Mr. Briggs noted that when Schiavi and Coleman bought the property they had an idea of putting houses up there and that became not feasible. Mr. Lougee questioned whether the State will retain any kind of deed restriction on the property when it transfers to the town. The feeling was they would not, there are no restrictions on it now. It was noted the town has not as yet offered any money, the sense is if that property become surplus, it is not going to become highly desirable. It was suggested that we possibly could buy it for the \$20,000 we did not give to the State.

Nature Conservancy Report: Agreement with TNC – Mr. Lougee reported they approved it at the last meeting, it was signed by TNC and forwarded to the Town offices. For all intents and purposes we have something in place for this year.

TNC Tasks – routine trail maintenance, stocking kiosks with maps.

Mr. Adair said he thinks he has found some left over money from building the Pudding Pond bridge (about \$1100) and can get the money for materials for bog bridges. He will get a quote from White Mt. Lumber for Tamarack and cedar rounds and will follow through to get the grant money. The work is to be performed through TNC.

Mr. Lougee has put in a proposal for conservation grants to do a 3-year project and map invasive plant species specifically on the upper Saco water shed. It would include outreach to the communities in the upper water shed and landowner outreach for permission to look at the property. They would go out and collect GIS data in the field and bring it back and download it on the computer. This will tell us what it looks like out there, making it possible to strategize about how to work on it. The focus area will be the main stem of the river, the 100-year floodplain, going up some of the tributaries. Mr. Weathers questioned if they map these areas whether that puts any restrictions on them for the land owners and what they can do there? Mr. Lougee stated no. He said the benefit for landowners is that these invasives are just that, and can cut into the bottom line with hay fields.

Selectmen's Report: Mr. Weathers reported when they met two weeks ago with North Conway Business Assn on 5B resuming construction, etc. Crow Dickinson put in a bid for Ralph Wiggin to revisit the southern terminus of the bypass. He said last year they did this, but were told then by the Commissioner they were not going to change anything. He said the State will respond by May 11th if they are contacted by then. Any change would mean the wetlands program would be void, or they would need additional land to do an off ramp and drive underneath – it is probably not going to happen. Once the southern terminus is completed they will come back in and change it – they have a plan once this area is built - they will keep coming back.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Weathers questioned income under Conservation CU (\$16,462.45). Mr. Pinkham suggested it might be interest – Current Use penalties \$91,123, Interest \$16,462.

Motion by Mr. Briggs, second by Mr. Weathers, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as submitted. Carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Pinkham questioned ending balance of \$8,223 under the Conservation Account noting if there has been a change in policy the Commission should be so advised. He referenced the \$16,000+ for 2005 noting, however, nothing shows for 2006. Also Mr. Adair questioned reimbursement on Redstone Property of \$20,000 for Nov. 2006. Ms. Lyman will inquire about the balance and whether we reimbursed the town's general fund and our expenses last year.

Roundtable Discussion: Mr. Adair stated he would like to invoke a voluntary closure on Red Tail Trail for mud season, noting there is a lot of fine soil there which does not drain well. He said it is not his intent to tell people they cannot use it, but posting signs explaining what and why would, hopefully, minimize the trail getting churned up.

Motion was made by Mr. Briggs, seconded by Mr. Broomhall and carried, that the suggested signs be posted. Mr. Adair volunteered to do the work, making sure it is monitored twice a week.

Appointments: It was reported that the terms of Paul Pinkham and Dan Lucy are due to expire and both up for reappointment. Mr. Pinkham explained that Mr. Lucy is uncomfortable with the fact that he has recently been unable to attend meetings and he is willing to not be reappointed if it is the Commission's wish. Mr. Pinkham, however, encouraged a positive approach, advising Dan that members understand and respect his views and opinions, and encourage him to be responsive if the Commission would be willing to reappoint him. **Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Ms. Lyman, to approve the reappointment of Paul Pinkham and Dan Lucy. Carried by unanimous vote.**

Signs: Mr. Broomhall said he has inquired about them, but to date has no signs and has about given up. The School Dept. was going to rout them out of wood and bring them to Gemini Signs to be finished. Mr. Broomhall will check with Gemini to find out the cost for producing 60 signs.

Wetlands Applications: Mr. Weathers reported that David Smith had been cited for violation in Center Conway near Trafford RV. They now have a permit for restoration and have started work.

Mr. Weathers reported Wade Tambour, Conway Lake, received correspondence from DES requesting an additional nine items before they can issue a permit. The stipulation is a reduction from 60' seasonal docks to 30', and making restrictions to the beach area.

Acquisition Criteria: This has been sent to the Town for review.

Rules & Regulations: These need to be revisited with regard to hunting, who has authority, etc.

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

Motion was made by Mr. Adair, seconded by Mr. Broomhall and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary