

**MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
November 14, 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, Dan Lucy, Chuck Broomhall, Carol Lyman, and Alternates, Linda Kearney and Connie Briggs. Also present were Forester, Don Johnson, and Jeff Lougee representing TNC.

The Chair appointed Linda Kearney and Connie Briggs full voting members.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 9/12/07 – Notation was made by Ms. Kearney that on Pg. 1, last para., the price for signs was obtained from Gemini Signs by Ms. Lyman, not Ms. Kearney. **Motion was made by Mr. Briggs, seconded by Ms. Kearney and carried, that the Minutes of the Sept. 12th meeting be approved as amended.**

Minutes of 10/10/07 – Pg. 3, 3rd full para., 1st sentence, should read: “Mr. Pinkham questioned letting the Forest Service get that field *without* the ability to get the maintenance funded.” Ms. Kearney pointed out also that on Pg. 6, Wetland Applications, the wording “*submitted and approved.*”(after Phase II) should be included at the end of the 2nd sentence. **Motion was made by Mr. Broomhall, seconded by Mr. Lucy and carried, that the Minutes of the Oct. 10th meeting be approved as amended.**

Report by Jeff Lougee – The Nature Conservancy: Mr. Lougee was questioned as to why we have not as yet received a bill for work done in 2007 by TNC. Mr. Lougee responded that the grant person in Boston does not want to submit two different invoices, it is some work to present bills for grants of less than \$10,000, and is easier for her to send one bill at the end of the year. He noted that this year they came in under budget because the town found grant money to fund the project for the bridge work on Pudding Pond bridge.

Mr. Lougee estimated that by the end of the calendar year TNC will probably only charge a maximum of \$800. That is for staff time this summer – cleaning water bars, etc. He stated only about ten signs were contracted for with AMC at \$30.00 each. He will submit an Email with a picture of the proposed signs.

Report by Don Johnson: Mr. Johnson reported having been very busy getting the trail work done, and finished today within budget (about \$6,000). They put in the stone ford at the bottom of Wellinghurst, took out a pole ford and a large pine stump, brought in 6” stone and lined the ditch with it, as well as some 1-1/2” stone, resulting in construction of native material, stone, and native material. Mr. Johnson noted that just above that, they cut the slope back to reasonable depth and widened the trail. He reported they next moved to the top and developed a

borrow pit, widened the corner coming down to Quarry. Where it intersects with Wellinghurst, they cut out dead oaks, widened it all the way down through to Lucy Traverse.

Mr. Johnson stated they are trying some small water bars to see how they hold up. It looks to be more groomable. He stated then going back up Lucy Traverse they cut some trees for a gradual left turn down Vista, then across upper Schuss they flush cut some trees and pulled stumps.

Mr. Johnson noted there is a lot of fire wood up in there and suggested this time next year the CCC might want to get some volunteers to at least utilize the fire wood. Mr. Adair pointed out that much of what Mr. Johnson has done is right from the ski touring club's list.

Mr. Johnson said they got a good catch of pine seedlings where they scarified and it looks great. He suggested doing the seeding on these trails in the spring. He said the borrow pits are fairly good sized, they buried some stumps into them.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Pinkham said he met with the Town Manager two weeks ago – will bring a report to the next meeting. Mr. Pinkham reported there is an interest in establishing an agreement with the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT), joining our efforts other than in the casual way we have now. Mr. Sires has asked to receive the acquisition criteria document that was drafted. Of concern is the rather large amount we have in the acquisition fund (about one half million dollars). Mr. Pinkham thinks we can use some of that for conservation easements on some of that land that is not protected.

Mr. Briggs stated we need to put easements on the properties that the town owns now, noting this has been a frustration for years and has not happened. Mr. Pinkham stated there has been an effort in that direction, but to no avail. Mr. Briggs said the only property that is under our jurisdiction now that has adequate restrictions is the original Whitaker Woods property, and the Hubbard-Davis piece. He said nothing on Pudding Pond or the second or third pieces of Whitaker Woods has any real restrictions on it at this point in time, nothing else is adequately protected and could be sold - we could lose it and the town should have it protected. He suggested the CCC should direct the Selectmen to ask the town attorney to draft whatever documentation is necessary to get it added to the deeds of our properties.

It was Mr. Pinkham's thought that we might fund an intern for USVLT who would be knowledgeable and work on these easements. He noted we could get almost that protection by designation by the Board of Selectmen to see that the lands are appropriately used, or not misused. First step: designation by the Board of Selectmen, beyond that could attach the conservation easement step, going through it piece meal.

Mr. Briggs questioned whether it might be appropriate for CCC to get together with Wink Lees and draw up a suggestion? Mr. Adair noted Mr. Lees works for The Nature Conservancy and is very knowledgeable, but questions whether it might be better to have discussion with USVLT.

Mr. Weathers said if the Selectmen so desire, the town could liquidate these properties; they have the authority to sell these properties for the town's benefit.

Motion was made by Mr. Briggs, seconded by Ms. Lyman, to initiate discussions with Upper Saco Valley Land Trust to draw up a proposal for the Conway Conservation Commission to go forward on this issue.

Mr. Pinkham said he would like to see an agreement with the USVLT to have a town representative sit on their Board, or serve as ex officio member to represent the town, and determine when and how the town might get involved.

Ms. Kearney questioned what is the difference between the first piece of Whitaker Woods and the remaining portions, and questioned whether it is so difficult for the town to agree to put in the easements. Mr. Weathers stated the town will hold a tax sale soon and there are some pieces that the Selectmen have decided will not be included. He explained once we take those lands off the tax rolls there are no restrictions on them. In the future, the town may decide to put that land back in a sale; if there are no restrictions that go with the deed, whoever might buy it would have control without those restrictions. A conservation easement would put those restrictions on. Mr. Briggs commented that some of it is not a Selectmen's decision, but a decision of the CCC.

In answer to Ms. Kearney's inquiry regarding having the town put on the easements, Mr. Adair said you would have an easement document which gives permitted uses, excludes areas. Once it is in place, you have to have annual monitoring and annual stewardship reports forever. It was agreed Mr. Adair will bring the CCC's concerns up at the next USVLT Board meeting.

Mr. Briggs' motion carried by unanimous vote.

Financial Report: Mr. Pinkham reported we are several thousand dollars under-budget – about \$7,000.

Selectmen's Report: Mr. Weathers said the Selectmen have not heard anything more from Mr. Houghton of Innovative National Resources Solutions reference the purchase of 302 acres of land in Albany and Conway from the Kennett Company.

Whitaker Management Plan: Mr. Pinkham said we would have to look at where 2007 ended up.

Whitaker Signs: Mr. Pinkham announced the signs are done and we have them, the next step is to get them put up. We have \$1,000 put aside for signs. These cost less than \$500. He questioned whether it would be a good idea to hire Cort Hanson (who submitted the list in the first place) to hang the signs. Mr. Broomhall stated if he does not want to, he will get some people to help do it.

Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Mr. Broomhall, to hire Cort Hanson to install the signs. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Mr. Pinkham agreed to contact him.

Mr. Briggs reported that the Ski Touring Assn. has requested and received \$7500 to buy a rebuilt, used groomer.

Wetlands Applications: None.

Design Review Committee: Mr. Weathers reported their work was to review the designs, they were to look at when and what portion is to be built, which will not happen for 8 to 9 years. Nothing further has happened. He stated a letter has come from Commissioner O’Leary stating they are unable to change the southern terminus design, and the State has no inclination to do so.

Other Business: With reference to the fact that only about \$800 of the TNC allocation of \$3,000 would be used this year, Mr. Weathers felt if it was known there would be \$2,000 left over, Mr. Johnson should have been encouraged to do more work. Mr. Adair said he did mention to Mr. Johnson that TNC would be under-budget and there may be additional money for him. Mr. Pinkham said he had advised Mr. Johnson if he spent more, that would be O.K. He said he actually did do more than we had budgeted for – has done some of what we hoped he would do. Mr. Briggs questioned whether it is possible to transfer that \$2,000 to his account and ask him to come back. Mr. Pinkham stated we can encumber those dollars and have extra money in that account for next year. Mr. Weathers said he would rather have it put into trail work; we could say the \$2,000 would be used to stabilize the borrow areas he did this fall. It was Mr. Weathers’ opinion that if in the future Mr. Lougee knows the bill will be less than the amount allocated, we need to get that information earlier.

Mr. Adair reported the Sticks and Stones trail at Pudding Pond was developed. He noted that previously everything was focused west of the power lines and he wondered whether we should concentrate on developing more trails on the east side. He said it would be through strictly volunteer efforts, noting there are some wet areas there they would want to stay out of. Mr. Pinkham assured him the Commission would always welcome volunteer work. Mr. Adair questioned what would be the thoughts on developing more trails in that area since this is a good time of year for it. Mr. Pinkham said he cannot imagine that the CCC would not want to see improvement of any of its areas. Mr. Adair reported they had put in 270 man hours of work this year – had had 45 volunteers.

Mr. Broomhall said he questioned Don Johnson about where Gradual comes out toward the power line – he would like to know if he could do some trimming and make it a little smoother turn, ease the turn to go out into the power line. There were no objections raised.

Next Meeting Date: January 9, 2008.

Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Weathers and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary