

Cornish Conservation Commission Minutes
July 26, 2017

Present: Jim Barker, Bill Gallagher, Dale Rook, Steven Wilkie, Stuart Wilkie, Bob Taylor, Rickey Poor, Corey Fitch, John Hammond, Deanna Fitch Visitor: Kimberly Patterson

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Jim Barker, Chair.

Corey moved to approve the June meeting minutes as submitted, Dale seconded, approved unanimously.

Jim asked if members would prefer to receive the meeting minutes as soon as they are ready or closer to the next meeting. The general consensus was that as soon as they are ready would be preferred so Jim will now send them out as soon as they are ready.

Topical Reports:

Monitoring: (Rickey) Monitoring of four of the seven properties are complete. Rickey sent info into the UVLT to let them know about the White Swan Farm sale and to ask them for any specific information they might include with a new owner information package. Rickey spoke with Brian Meyette – he's not available until mid August so Rickey is thinking about late August or early September to walk the Meyette properties and also White Swan Farm. Jim did hear back from the new owner of White Swan Farm, and her daughter will be living at the Farm.

Education/GPS: (Corey) Andrew is available on Saturday September 9th to present the GPS class for the public. He is recommending a three-phase class with a limit of 15 people. Start off inside the school with the visual presentation, then field data gathering outside using an app or two and devices, and finish with uploading the map(s) into a program like Google Earth. Probably a start time of 9:00 a.m. People would enroll on-line and complete a brief questionnaire as to what they want to get out of the class and what, if any, GPS experience they have. (The link to the draft of the GPS Sign-up is below – please look at it and get back to Corey with any comments or suggestions for changes.) Corey will contact Dale Lawrence to see if we can use the school on that date.

GPS Sign-up

<https://goo.gl/forms/lxkcyacoradKD5hB23>

Corey will also set up a Google Docs document for the CCC's internal use to post and share our own ideas for education, projects, etc. among all the other members of the group. Here is the link to that document: (no password or sign-in is needed in order to edit or amend)

Education Ideas

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gSybAVLpamxJesisONvZCe06CxoRT5tTkzpJGqQLV3A/edit?usp=sharing>

Education Boards: Corey printed out a sample of one of our education boards with an example of how many pieces of 8"x11" pages and 11"x14" pages can fit along with the types of permanent and rotating information that could be included. Corey will send Stuart a pdf of his sample to include with the meeting minutes. Steve will make some vinyl signs for the tops of the boards, and Corey would like the boards to be painted white. Kimberly volunteered her time to paint the boards.

Water: (Jim) Jeff Katchen tested water from a number of additional places on Blow-Me-Down Brook. The samples are way below the acceptable levels of e coli for surface water. Seth Wilner from the UNH Cooperative Extension reported back saying we are well within safe levels – and even then, there are other reasons for temporary spikes in e coli levels which are not out of the ordinary and shouldn't raise red flags. After getting the water test results, Jim decided it wasn't necessary to go back to the Select Board with any concerns. DES has a volunteer river water assessment program, and the data collected by various groups is compiled and shared among users. The kit is \$2200 and would last 5-7 years. It might be something worth applying for grant money in order to buy in the future.

John reported that just below the Town Garage there is the pond near the ball field. In the past it has been used by the Cornish Fair for watering livestock, etc. (but never for human drinking). There is an aluminum pipe sunk down into the pond and in the past before the state tested the pond each year, Wayne scrubbed and cleaned the pipe, and there was never a problem with its passing a test. However the state showed up this year before the pipe was scrubbed and cleaned and when the state examined the pond and the uncleaned pipe, they said a new well would needed to be drilled. In the meantime Wayne cleaned the pipe and the state has come back to re-test and it passed. Although it passed this year it may not again in the future

There is some old beaver activity near the fire pond as well which needs to be cleared up. Some dredging might be required.

Jim will reach out to Leo at the Boy Scouts to see if they would be interested in making signage for the CREA property specifically about the beavers, baffles, and the importance of wetlands.

Set Goals & Objectives:

Conservation Plan: The top three focuses for our work going forward in the immediate future will be:

- 1) Quarterly Educational Seminars for the general public
- 2) Develop a plan for the management and protection of the town watersheds and for handling pollution
 - a. What should be our goal? 1) Education and 2) Monitoring
 - i. Perform our duties so that the citizenry assumes stewardship of the watersheds that provide their water and where it goes. Teach people how to discover one's personal "watershed address"
 - ii. Focus on education – including how to report when something appears awry
 - iii. Perhaps add a monitoring component as well – some even focused on monitoring after a special event such as a flood
 - iv. "Best Watershed Management Practices" training for homeowners
 - v. Program on beavers and the flood control they provide
 - vi. Maybe provide links to videos, etc. that might educate people on various related topics
 - vii. Jim will submit a little blurb to Connect Cornish with a general overview of the water quality test that were recently performed
 - viii. Maybe something educational at the Cornish Fair. Years ago the Conservation Commission would show educational films in the school library during the Fair at certain scheduled times. We should aim for something for the 2018 Fair. Even an education board in the CREA parking lot across from the school.
 - ix. Look for photos from the 1973 flood

3) Identify types of land or specific parcels of land that should be targeted for conservation and work with landowners to obtain easements.

a. What should be some of our goals and objectives:

i. Get to 25% of land into conservation easement asap

Find out where we are now. (Jim can do easily.)

Increase the wildlife corridor outside the park.

Look at places where there are already large parcels conserved and tacking on to those.

Are there any areas in the town that aren't conserved that we should focus on now?

Should we talk with the planning board to see where people tend to want to build homes to see if some of those places might be better conserved than built up? (Jim will follow up.)

Put as much agricultural land into easement as possible to preserve it.

Look at our current priorities for selecting conservation targets.

Kimberly Patterson brought a map of her property and her mother's two properties that are adjacent to Schad's property outside the park. There is also a 12-acre parcel, Deming Memorial Park, that is owned jointly by all property owners adjoining Beachwood. The park could possibly be put into easement. Some research will need to be done but it's a possibility. Jim thinks that we as a Commission could follow up on this.

Wetlands on Jackson Road: Jim walked down around the property in question and didn't see any beaver activity nor anywhere where there was anything illegally done just a lot of ground moving. Steve maintains that there were multiple beaver dams present in the past that are no longer there. This is evident by a Google Earth map from 2013. The town of Cornish owns property adjacent to the Richardson and Furgot properties along Jackson Road. Perhaps we should consider placing the town owned land into conservation easement and possibly the owners of the Richardson property would be interested in placing their property into conservation easement as well.

One of the field trip options during the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests Annual Meeting in Claremont on Saturday September 16th will be to the Cornish Town Forest and the Cornish Arts Colony between 11:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Jim anticipates their arriving at the Town Forest, Tandy Brook Rd entrance, around 12:30 p.m. that day.

Bench Update: Stuart and Steve delivered the bench that was awarded to Colleen O'Neill today. Colleen was there and chose the specific location for the bench. She was very happy with the plaque identifying the bench as being from the Conservation Commission.

The group discussed how a member of the Town Select Board should fit into the Commission and what voting rights, if any, should accompany that responsibility. Rickey asked if the State of New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions has a policy or recommendation regarding town officials serving on the Commission. Steve mentioned that he doesn't recall any close or contentious votes since he has been on the Commission but Rickey does recall a few such votes in the past. Bill said in his experience that at times he was grateful certain Select Board members were NOT on the Conservation Commission. Bill also suggested that we might want to ensure that we have voting members that are pro-conservation however Jim said that he sometimes likes having an opposing point of view on the Commission. Bill also asked about how we make that Select Board member accountable for attendance, etc. and if we would need to track that. Rickey brought up a number of questions about the necessity for having a Select Board as a voting member on the Commission. Jim asked John if he had a preference. John explained that the reason why this came up was because the Select Board was talking about the Planning Board where the Select Board representative DOES have a vote on that board. Jim will follow up with the State Association to see what precedents there are for this situation. The discussion was tabled for now and it will be on next month's agenda with more information.

Rickey brought up the topic of having a drone fly over CREA to get some good video and photographs for us. She spoke with her son-in-law Will who is willing to come and do that for us but not until September probably. It was mentioned that maybe we want to wait until the leaves fall to do it for some improved visibility from above.

John mentioned an upcoming public meeting on August 8th in Windsor at the old high school to share information regarding the work that is going to be done on the Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge because of some scouring on the abutments.

Jim asked about any update on the proposed roadwork to Saint-Gaudens Road which was being spearheaded by the state. One of the biggest holdups right now is most likely the changes to the guardrails that would be required and who would pay for that. It appears the project is on the slow track right now which is fine with many members.

Rickey moved and Corey seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. by unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,
Stuart Wilkie
Secretary