

**Hanover Conservation Commission  
Minutes, June 8, 2011**

**Present:** Ruth Bleyler, Edwin Chamberlain, Ray Hogue, Michael Mayor, Douglas McIlroy (scribe), Judith Reeve, Vicki Smith (staff)

**Current Business**

*Hanover 250th celebration.* McIlroy suggested a ``cellar-hole hike" in connection with the town's anniversary events. One concentration of historic traces can be seen along Pasture Road: mill sites, stone walls, building foundations and worked granite. The Commission encouraged the undertaking, and authorized McIlroy to propose that the celebration committee bless such a walk for some Sunday afternoon in September.

*Storrs Farm.* Smith reported that 59 donors have contributed about 45% of the \$28,000 fund-raising goal for the Storrs Farm easement in Etna, with more contributions arriving daily. Several thousand dollars more are known to be ``in the mail". One donor expressed concern about the effect of the cow pasture on water quality in Mink Brook. Smith said that section of the stream will be added to the town's water-sampling program, with some support from the donor. Meanwhile the pasture has been fenced off from the brook, except for one crossing.

**Resource Stewardship**

*Balch Hill.* Smith said the Balch Hill management committee has arranged a site visit June 9 with forester Ben Hudson to discuss his thoughts about revisions to the management plan. The use of NRCS grants for enhancing the Hanover Conservation Council's portion of Balch Hill is anticipated. (The grants are not available to government bodies.)

*Hayes property.* Reeve reported the completion of removal of invasives and new planting on the Nan and Alan King memorial Sanctuary. The work was done by E. C. Brown and volunteers coordinated by the Council. Volunteers have been lined up to keep the new plants watered. Some of the water comes from Jay Pierson's; Tim Bent may supply a second source. Mr. Havarda will mow paths through the field. A draft invitation for a dedication ceremony June 30 was circulated; some editorial changes were suggested.

Smith has located a potential trail connection from the sanctuary through the town's Trescott Ridge Wetlands to Woodcock Lane. One bog bridge would be needed; a neighbor has expressed interest in taking it on as an Eagle Scout project. McIlroy said that the job might be too small to meet scout requirements, but perhaps could be combined with a similar project elsewhere in town.

**Administrative business**

*Annual election of officers.* Reeve moved that Chamberlain be elected chairman and Hogue vice chairman. Mayor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

*Budgetary matters.* Smith said there was not enough money left to make a contribution to the Goose Pond Lake Host program. UVTA will be paid the previously committed amount for the services of John Taylor.

McIlroy said naturalist Alice Schori had surveyed the proposed bike-path layout at the Goodwin tract. Her written report included an inventory of plant species and recommended one realignment (which was adopted) to avoid soils that support unusually rich herbaceous diversity. Impressed by the quality and quantity of the work, McIlroy moved that she be given a \$200 honorarium, although she did not ask for compensation. Reeve seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Committee Reports**

*Open Space.* Report by Smith. Forester Rick Evans, whose services have been donated by David Roby, visited the Hayes property and the Marshall and Pressey Brook preserves. He found the existing management plans for the latter two areas adequate, and recommended that a proposal to enhance woodcock habitat there be shelved at least until the next round of logging activity.

The owner of a 12-acre parcel surrounded by town forest on North Tunis Road may be interested in conveying it to the town. An appraisal will be arranged.

*Trails.* Report by McIlroy. On National Trails Day, June 4, eleven volunteers recruited by the Council and the trails committee extended the Quinn Trail from the entrance to the Mink Brook Nature Preserve to the sewer pump station, thus providing an off-road connection between conservation lands on both sides of Route 10.

Also on Trails Day, eight volunteers organized by the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association began constructing the single-track bike path laid out in the Goodwin Tract last year. They cleared downed timber from about 1/2 mile and completed treadway on half of that distance. Another workday is scheduled for June 18. Many of the volunteers live nearby or have seasonal homes on Goose Pond and look forward to adopting the completed trail as maintainers. Chamberlain commended this "buy-in".

A grant that DOC had sought for materials to replace a long-lost bridge across Slade Brook did not come through. There is some talk of boy scouts taking this on as a project, but it is not clear how they would obtain funds.

Peter Kulbacki checked a historic culvert on Corey Road, which had silted up, causing a brook to overflow and cut through the treadway. He opined that the culvert would be easy to dig out and restore. This could make a nice volunteer project.

Representatives of the Mountain Bike Association, Dartmouth Outdoor Program, and the Upper Valley Trails Alliance visited the bandit bike trail at the Rinker Tract and verified that an alternate route across the northeast corner of the parcel should be feasible. The mountain-bike community will propose a layout for the Commission's approval.

*Biodiversity.* Report by Reeve. A draft mission statement for the committee was introduced, and minor amendments were suggested. Mayor moved the statement be approved as amended. Reeve seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The biodiversity committee chose not to ask the Commission to recommend town-wide adoption of an accompanying landscaping policy, but instead to use it to guide their own activities and discussions with officials responsible for lands that are not directly overseen by the Commission. One concern in this regard is the invasive barberries planted at town hall. Smith suggested that participation in planning for the Hayes property will help build acceptance of the policy's principles.

A presentation about Garlic mustard by Jeff Evans of Dartmouth was well attended. Barbara McIlroy has charted more than 20 colonies (mostly small) of this rapidly spreading invasive plant. Several neighborhood groups have undertaken to attack it before it gets unmanageable. Bleyler cited Ithaca as an example of where it has escaped beyond any possibility of control.

Other invasive-control activities will be organized on Balch Hill. The appropriateness of spraying, which happened once last year, versus more labor-intensive methods of herbicide application is under debate. In the watershed of the Hanover reservoirs herbicide use is forbidden, but invasives are rampant. Doug Cygan of DES is expected to visit the Trescott Company property to confer about managing the problem.

### **Approval of minutes**

Mayor moved that minutes of the May meeting be approved. Bleyler seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Other business**

*Rain gardens.* Reeve announced a rain garden workshop to be held June 11 at the Black Center under sponsorship of many conservation organizations, regional planning commissions and garden clubs. A demonstration rain garden is to be constructed there on June 22.

*Hanover Center.* Chamberlain said park benches and a monument have been installed at the Hanover Center parade ground and cemetery. They will soon be formally dedicated.