

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MAY 9, 2012 at 5:00 PM  
TOWN HALL, 41 SOUTH MAIN STREET**

In attendance:

**Members:** Ed Chamberlain (Chair), Shelley Gilbert, Doug McIlroy, Alan Saucier, John Trummel

**Staff:** Jonathan Edwards, Vicki Smith

Others: See Attendance Sheet

**1. CURRENT BUSINESS**

*Mink Brook restoration*

Ron Rhodes, of Trout Unlimited and the Connecticut River Watershed Council, told the Commission of a proposal to protect about 1000 feet of the bank of Mink Brook through the cow field at the intersection of Ruddsboro and Hanover Center Roads. A preliminary proposal was filed April 30 with the NHDES Aquatic Mitigation Program. Whether it makes the cut for a final proposal August 1 will be determined in a month or so.

The plan is to create a vegetated buffer that would improve water quality by separating the pasture from the brook and moderate the water temperature for trout, whose presence has been verified upstream. Smith noted that current monitoring provides baseline data to measure water-quality improvement.

Smith asked how cows will be kept from browsing the plantings. Rhodes said that planting taller trees would prevent that. Willow stakes are also a possibility that can withstand some degree of browsing. Chamberlain asked about how cows can be made to respect the buffer. Rhodes answered that various grants are available for fencing. The exact buffer width depends on agency standards, but probably would not exceed 25 feet. Chamberlain also inquired about the effect of plantings on the view of stream and field. Smith said that some planting could be bushes from our holding beds. Saucier mentioned groupings of different size material to provide openings. His office can use photoshop to show what it would look like. Edwards noted that trees eventually would become tall enough to see under them.

McIlroy asked whether the project would affect the Commission budget. Answer: no. Smith commended the plan as an important step towards protecting the brook. Chamberlain thanked Rhodes for his efforts.

*Bike trail work*

Brian Riordan, of the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association, reported that Association volunteers have built the trail that was laid out at the Rinker Tract last fall. Bikes are using it now, and the previous route has been closed to bike traffic. The vulnerable side-hill part of that route will be erased and the brook crossing will be armored with stone.

Riordan contrasted the work at Rinker to the much longer (3 mile) trail that the Association is building at the Town Forest, where the work is much harder. To prevent interest from flagging, they will switch to a two-team approach where one group clears and rakes the route and a second team does heavy improvement such as trail-benching and rock-moving. This scheme should produce a visible trail much sooner than the synchronous-task approach they used last year. The first of four scheduled work periods is May 20. Smith will place a call for volunteers on the town website.

#### Greensboro Ridge

Adair Mulligan of the Hanover Conservancy told the Commission that she, John Taylor, McIlroy, John Joline and Nancy Collier had evaluated and decided among several alternative routes at the upper end of the proposed trail in the eastern part of the property. McIlroy agreed to the decision on behalf of the Commission.

## **2. RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**

Edwards announced a hydric soil workshop to be run by Joe Homer at Trumbull Hall, May 11.

#### Greensboro Ridge

Mulligan briefly described a management plan for Greensboro Ridge. Issues of particular interest included maintenance of some existing forest openings and deer control. The plan contemplates deer hunting, which is already permitted in the adjacent AT corridor. McIlroy commended the plan's recommendation of collaboration with the adjacent homeowner associations, and suggested invasive-plant control as a topic of mutual concern.

Mulligan identified several management topics as current priorities: the new trail discussed above, removing white pine saplings from the clearings, marking the southern property boundary, and installing a trailhead kiosk. She also suggested revising the Memorandum of Understanding between Town and Conservancy to transfer responsibility for trails to the Conservancy. McIlroy said the trails committee would favor such a move.

#### Invasive-plant interest

Michael Lunter of Lebanon expressed concern about invasive plants, a topic with which he had been involved at his previous home in Utah, and which he was also raising with the Lebanon CC. Commissioners told him about the biodiversity committee's efforts in this regard and suggested he could play a useful liaison role between the towns.

## **3. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### Open Space

Smith and Edwards had a productive meeting with the owner of the problematic Mt. Tug scenic easement. A more convenient easement definition (currently defined by ground altitude, without taking the height of structures into account) will best be marked on the

ground, and take into account specific features worthy of protection. Some public access may also be discussed. Edwards noted that this is one of the town's earlier easements and provides an object lesson about drafting restrictions to accomplish the intended goals.

Smith expects an application from the Robes brothers to obtain access to the Dana parcel via Pasture Road per Ordinance 4. This would involve building a significant bridge to cross the beaver-dammed stream. The town has repeatedly offered to buy or swap for the Robeses' half-interest in the parcel to no avail.

Annual easement-monitoring reports are being finalized with the several property owners.

### Trails

McIlroy said that nine people were on hand for a Youth in Action work session at the Tanzi Tract. They rerouted the Forest Loop to detour around a swale that the loop had previously transected at a very muddy crossing, and installed three bog bridges. The new alignment visits a rich stand of wildflowers. The high-schoolers on their own decided not just to remove debris, but to sweep the whole trail of fallen leaves and duff, so it is easy to follow and may not need any blazing.

Eagle Scout candidate Teddy Geraghty organized the construction of a trail through the Trescott Ridge conservation property from Woodcock Road to the Hayes parcel. Thence one can continue on foot to the Etna Library, though a little more cleanup is needed at Hayes (see last item of biodiversity report).

### Biodiversity

A workday for invasive-plant removal at Tanzi Tract yielded a comparatively small haul of buckthorn and honeysuckle that had sprung up since the multiyear attack on these bad actors that began in 2004. A previously unidentified and rapidly expanding stand of barberry north of the main Tanzi loop was also pulled.

Seventh-grade biology classes at Richmond School heard presentations about garlic mustard prepared by Barbara McIlroy. They followed up by pulling the plant on the school grounds and doing a lab experiment on allelopathy (suppression of other plants due to toxic effects of garlic mustard) under tutelage of Jeff Evans, an expert from Dartmouth. Neighborhood garlic-mustard pulls were also organized at several areas of town: Rip Road, Meadow Lane, Brook Road, and UVLT.

The biodiversity committee has prepared materials for the town website. Posters about barberry have been installed at town hall, where William Desch replaced these bad actors along the side, but some can still be seen in back.

Eagle Scout Fletcher Passaw has proposed to do a large community-service project removing invasive plants this summer. The Hayes parcel is a leading candidate location.

4. **MINUTES:** The minutes of April, 2012 were approved.

## 5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

It was proposed to have a commission member take official stewardship duty for each of the Commission's properties. Stewards would discuss work with volunteers, obtaining written proposals where appropriate, meet and greet at workdays, proactively bring issues to the Commission's attention, etc. Some assignments were arranged:

Hayes: Chamberlain  
Rinker/Steele: Saucier

Smith distributed DES permit applications from Ken Milkie to seek grants for building snowmobile bridges on Trail #37 at Bear Hill and the Marshall Brook Natural Area. Chamberlain moved that the Commission approve the latter bridge as proposed. McIlroy seconded. It was pointed out that this bridge made sense only if the much larger bridge at Bear Hill were built; it is encouraging that the proposals appeared together. The motion passed unanimously.

Chamberlain noted that a license agreement for Friends of Hanover Crew use of Wilson's Landing is before the Select Board.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Doug McIlroy