

Washington Conservation Commission
Minutes - February 15, 2012

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

Present: Jed Schwartz, Carol Andrews, Arin Mills, Nan Schwartz,
Johanna Young, Ken Eastman

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from January meeting, Arin made a motion to approve, Johanna seconded, all voted in favor.
- 2.0 Old Business:
 - 2.1 Permits Committee – No new permits to look at. Arin asked about the new stream crossing rules. Carol said they took effect about a year ago. Arin didn't realize they had changed until she looked at a permit application at work. Carol mentioned that DES has updated their website and there is a lot of good information there. Nan said she thought their website was hard to navigate before so it is good that they have fixed it.
- 3.0 Committee and Board reports:
 - 3.1 Land Protection Committee – Nan mentioned the Public hearing we are holding on February 29th, at 7PM in the Town Hall regarding funding for the Eccardt Farm Conservation Easement addition project. The plan is to spent up to \$6,000 for the transactions costs, with all but \$1,000 for the stewardship fee to be refunded by the Q2C grant we received. The public is invited and as many CC members who can should attend.
Jed mentioned meeting with a group from the Millen Pond area to talk about conservation easements, we are planning a hike on Farnsworth Hill in the spring.
 - 3.2 Energy Committee – Johanna reports that the Energy Committee is planning a “Button Up” presentation but the date hasn't been set yet, it may be later in the spring or in the fall. They are looking for a local business to sponsor and Bob Fraser is contacting people. It won't cost anything to sponsor the evening. She said the

Elementary School is considering using some surplus to do a few energy projects that the audit pointed out. EC are planning to bring some gizmos to Town Meeting. Johanna reported that three EC members are hoping to attend an Energy Conference on March 30th, she said they were hoping the Selectmen might help them pay the fees to go. She will contact the Selectmen about it.

- 3.3 Planning Board – Nan reported that the PB will have 2 items on a special ballot at town meeting. The updated sign ordinance and an update for LUO section 200 concerning minor home businesses, which will help make it easier to classify businesses and decide whether or not they need permits.
 - 3.4 Forestry Committee – Tom wasn't here tonight but Jed mentioned the warrant article for town meeting concerning the Town Forest additions. We think that Tom Taylor will present the warrant article and we can speak in favor of it. Nan asked Ken if the Selectmen were going to speak about the town owned lot assessment process that lead to these lots being picked for protection as town forests. Ken wasn't sure. Jed will speak to Tom Marshall.
 - 3.5 Legislative update – Carol said that the six bills that were worrying to CCs have been killed in committee. HB1515, HB 1512 and HB1540 are all gone. HB1545 and HB 1586 still need to be voted on by the body but are declared "ITL". HB1542 which is a bill about municipalities spending on lobbyist was declared "ITL" but may still go to the floor for a vote. She said three of the bills came out of Raymond where they have had problems. Jed asked if there are widespread problems in the state between towns and their conservation commissions, Carol said that only a very few towns have these kinds of problems and for the most part working relationships are very good.
- 4.0 Public Presentation possibilities:
 - 4.1 Arin wasn't able to view the Watershed on Wheels power point presentation so Nan will post it to the FTP site so Carol and Arin can look at it. They are scheduled to visit the Elementary School

on May 21st. Arin will ask the coordinator if the public could participate. More information on WoW here: http://www.fws.gov/r5soc/educational_resources/watershed-on-wheels.html

Carol said she had spoken with someone at the Upper Valley Land Trust meeting who had WoW visit and they said they had done an extra presentation that was local to their town (they did something on invasive species). We will think about something we can do about local issues.

We talked about a winter hike but with the lack of snow we will not plan anything right now. We will talk about it again next month and try to plan something.

5.0 Web Mapping:

Arin asked Nan to work on figuring out how to embed the recreation map she made on our web site. Nan will explore doing this and let everyone know if she gets it done. Arin is going to talk to Katie Callahan at Fish and Game about doing a wildlife sightings map.

6.0 New Business:

7.0 What's Happening in Nature?

Arin said she was out trying to walk on the ice on Millen Pond with her kids but she didn't get very far out from the boat launch and the ice was creaking so much she didn't feel safe. Ken said that Millen Pond ice makes lots of noise, creaking and groaning, sometime sounding like whale sounds. She took her kids back to Ashuelot Pond where she felt the ice was more stable to explore. Nan said that the Ice Fishing Derby is this coming weekend and hopefully the ice will be safe for the fishermen. She said that the Mill Pond in East Washington has open water in the middle of the pond and there were a couple of ducks swimming there. It is very early for this. We have had no new snow in the last month and a lot of comparatively warm weather. This is turning out to be an unusual winter. It is easier for animals to move around and find things to eat but not so good in other ways. For more information

about our snowless winter click here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html

Johanna said her beavers have been busy and have taken down over 100 trees including large and small ones.

Jed said beavers are working on a dam on Purling Beck brook (Island Pond outlet brook) near the cornfield. He said Lynn has harvested lots of cord wood from trees the beavers took down on her property. Carol said we should have the “Beaver Deceiver” guy come and do a talk.

Jed reported that Sandy Eccard had called him because they found a large snapping turtle that had been dug out of the mud when they were cleaning out the trenches late last fall. It was still mostly covered and appeared to be alive. He suggested they cover him up and suggested she call David Carroll (the turtle guy) in Warner for more suggestions.

Johanna saw a group of partridges (or grouse, she wasn't sure) up near Pillsbury walking in the road. She has also seen lots of squirrels running around.

Arin has also seen lots of squirrels and saw a mole crossing the road. Nan commented that moles and mice usually make lots of tunnels through the snow to get around in winter and they are missing their cover this winter.

Nan and Jed had a pair of cardinals at their bird feeder.

Johanna saw some Robins in Concord and also some crocuses in bloom and thought it is pretty early for both sightings.

Jed commented that the maple syrup season may be effected by the weather.

7.0 Correspondence:

Copy of letter from DRED, Division of Forest and Lands notifying us of a planned timber harvest on 112 acres of the Max Israel tract to improve wildlife habitat, cut to be put out to bid summer 2012.

Copy of NH DES “The Source” Winter 2012

6.0 Adjourned at 8:00 PM, our next scheduled meeting is March 21st at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz
Secretary