

Washington Conservation Commission
Minutes – July 18, 2012

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

Present: Jed Schwartz, Carol Andrews, Nan Schwartz, Arin Mills, Sandy Robinson, Johanna Young, Tom Taylor and Ken Eastman.

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from June meeting, Sandy made a motion to approve, Ken seconded, all voted in favor.
- 2.0 Permits Committee – No new permits.
- 3.0 Committee and Board reports:
 - 3.1 Land Protection Committee – We continue talking with a group on Millen Pond about a possible land protection project on Farnsworth Hill. John Brighton spoke at the MLA annual meeting to gauge interest in the project. The next day 25 people turned out for a walk to look at the property in question. Pledges are being sought from interested people.
 - 3.2 Energy Committee – Johanna reported that there is no longer funding for the Button Up program due to cuts in RGGI funding, so they can't schedule a workshop this year. They are thinking about other educational presentations they could do about energy or energy conservation. They thought of doing a tour of a solar energy installation in town, maybe Al Krygeris would be interested in showing his system and talking about it.
Don't forget that PSNH has money available for energy efficiency improvements, see if you qualify for home energy assistance by visiting: <http://www.psnh.com/homeperformance/>
 - 3.3 Planning Board – Nan reported that the PB approved the cell tower project and after the 30 day comment period construction will begin.
 - 3.4 Forestry Committee – Tom spoke for the Forestry Committee and

said a letter has been sent about the disputed six-acre parcel that was deeded out of the Farnsworth Hill Town Forest. The Selectmen signed the letter along with the Forestry Committee.

- 3.5 Legislative update – The legislators are now on vacation. Ken asked if, because of HB 514, we want the Selectmen to put in some language on permit applications giving all town officials permission to visit a property during the permitting process. We thought this could be helpful.
- 4.0 Public Presentations and workshops:
 - 4.1 Arin and Jed are planning a hike in East Washington doing a loop through the cornfield to the farm, then back around the cornfield to the snowmobile trail ending up back at the East Washington Mill Pond. They are going to meet on the 29th to do a trial run. Sandy suggested Labor Day weekend for the actual hike, Saturday, Sept. 1st or Sunday, Sept. 2nd for an alternate (rain) day. We will plan for hiking in the morning, with a 9:30AM start, then we can stop at the farm store for ice cream and finish the rest of the hike afterward. Jed figures it should take 2 hours or so. They will check at the trial run. Arin will work with Nan on a poster for the hike.
 - 4.2 We discussed doing a presentation on aquatic invasive plants. Arin said that Milfoil has been found in a Greenfield water body, which is not very far from here. She asked if any of the ponds in Washington have “Weed Watchers”. Ken said that Millen Pond has both Lake Hosts and Weed Watchers. He said that the water bodies in NH that have Lake Hosts have not had Milfoil introduced so far. They are doing a good job educating boaters. Carol said people conducting water testing through VLAP have a good chance to look for invasive plants too, when they are out on the water. Nan suggested contacting Amy Smegula (at DES) to come do a presentation in town. Ken said he would contact people he knows at NH Lakes about a presentation. We could do it at Camp Morgan. We talked about doing a separate presentation on Upland invasives in the future. Carol mentioned that PSNH has some grant money available for this sort of thing, if we wanted to do some

print materials and handouts.

- 4.3 Nan mentioned receiving information on the NH Coverts training session coming up in October in Greenfield at the Harris Center. She has information if anyone is interested in applying to attend. She mentioned several upcoming workshops:

Anatomy of a Drumlin workshop, NHANRS, in Weare, Wednesday, July 25th, 8 – 4PM, \$50

Soil Classification Workshop, NHANRS, In Rindge, Friday, August 24th, 9 – 3PM, \$60

And also some presentations that are available:

NH Wildlife Stewards, free public talks available through the UNH Cooperative Extension

Speaking for Wildlife, free public talks available through NH Fish & Game

- 5.0 Adopt-a-Highway – Our next pick up day is August 18th. We will reschedule if we need to.

- 6.0 Town Owned Lots – Nan said that the site walk was done and we now need to meet to come up with recommendations for the Selectmen on these lots. Nan will coordinate with PB and come up with a date for this meeting.

- 7.0 Johanna's 2nd Annual Memorial Swim – The date is set for Johanna's swim and it is July 28th, Saturday at 8:30AM. She will be joined by Heather Cooper, Rich's daughter, and maybe a few other triathlete friends. They will depart from Camp Morgan beach and end their swim at Brighton's beach at the far end of the pond. Johanna will check with Bob Fraser about a small motorboat to follow them. Jed will follow in his canoe. Nan showed a poster she has made for the swim. She will put them up around town.

- 8.0 Other business –

- 8.1 Tom brought up the fact that he and Steve went for a hike in Andorra Forest and there is a problem with the trail. He said that

on Jeft's Road, when they entered near the pillars there is bad erosion on the trail. He thinks there is a need for waterbars to stop the washout. Carol said that the trail is maintained by the Monadnock/Sunapee Greenway trail keepers and he should let them know about the problem. Tom said that the hike in Andorra Forest is one of his favorites in town and it is very beautiful.

8.2 Arin said that the updated Granit Data Mapper has a trail layer and she wondered where they got the information for that layer. Carol said that maybe it is snowmobile trail information. Check out all the cool things you can do with these maps and the many available data layers here: <http://granitview.unh.edu/>

9.0 What's Happening in Nature?

Carol remarked that it is still HOT and very dry! We have had little rain and gardens are suffering.

Johanna had an otter with some pups on her pond and a beaver chased them and went after the otter. There was lots of splashing. Fortunately everyone was safe in the end. Johanna's wood ducks are still in her beaver pond and they are growing.

Arin had a Silver fox in her backyard getting trash and running through the yard near her kids' sandbox. She was probably feeding some pups, Arin saw it three days in a row. Tom said that there has been more than one Silver fox seen in LAE recently. Johanna also has a mink family of about 4 or 5 individuals in her beaver pond. Johanna had a flying squirrel swoop by one evening. She also saw a porcupine wander by. Carol said that a friend had a cat with quills, which is unusual. Cats, unlike dogs, don't usually mess around with porcupines. She said it was a young cat with small quills and it probably got stuck by playing with a baby porcupine.

Jed asked if anyone was seeing bats or evidence of them. Sandy said she has seen some evidence but not as much as she used to see. Jed said that he has seen bat guano in his barn but not nearly as much as in the past.

Arin saw a Nighthawk fly over her house and it was making its call. She was on a controlled burn in Maine and saw a Whip-poor-will!

Sandy said that a blue heron has been hanging out in East Washington and nearby in Bradford. Sometimes it hangs out below the dam and it seems to be making the rounds of all the ponds to eat frogs, fish and tadpoles.

Jed said that there is a pair of snapping turtles living in the pool below the dam, too. If you go when the sun is high (middle of the day) you can watch them moving around.

Nan mentioned seeing a Baltimore Oriole in her blueberry bushes and they also have some Cardinals in the neighborhood.

Johanna said that while training for her swim in Millen Pond she has seen more fish this year than in years past. Ken mentioned the 4 ½ pound trout someone caught in Millen earlier this season.

Nan has received a bunch of wildlife pictures from around town. To see what fellow Washington neighbors are seeing click here:

http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html

9.0 Correspondence:

UNH Cooperative Extension - Info on Coverts project and free talks available

10.0 Adjourned at 8:20 PM, our next scheduled meeting is August 15th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz
Secretary