

Washington Conservation Commission
Minutes – September 19, 2012

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

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

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from August meeting, Arin made the suggestion that we add something about the discussion we had with Ed Thayer and Tim Ferwerda about the dangers to amphibians and snakes of using the synthetic erosion control netting that has been used on other projects. They assured us that this would not be used on the Faxon Hill culvert replacement project. Nan will add that to the August minutes. Arin made a motion to approve, Carol seconded, all voted in favor.
- 2.0 Permits Committee – Ken reported that the Faxon Hill culvert replacement project has been delayed until next year due to the unavailability of the required cement culverts before frost sets in. Ed has decided to go ahead with the Dole School House Rd. bridge replacement first. Nan mentioned the notice from NHDOT for headwall repair for Rt. 31 bridge at Halfmoon Pond outlet that we received, There is no action needed on this.
- 3.0 Committee and Board reports:
 - 3.1 Forestry Committee – Tom was not present to report but Nan mentioned the resolution of the 6-acre parcel issue. The parcel was claimed to be in the Farnsworth Hill Town Forest and was proved not to be.
 - 3.2 Land Protection Committee – Jed said that The Farnsworth Hill Forest land protection project is moving forward. The Forest Society has agreed to hold the land as a reservation after it is acquired. The group are busy doing fundraising to buy the land. One parcel has already been closed on or will be shortly. Ken reported they raised \$41K last week. An article about the project was published in the Villager and afterward they had several calls

from people in LAE, but they still need lots of donations to make it happen. You can donate directly to the Forest Society for this project and all donations are 100% tax deductible. WCC has put up an informational web page for the project here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/FarnsworthHillLPP.html

You can make donations here: <http://www.forestsociety.org/howyoucanhelp/special-projects.asp#sp40>

Time is short, they need to raise \$208K by October 31st. Jed said that Sandy wanted us to consider picking the date for our public hearing for this project. We settled on October 10th at 7PM in the Town Hall, Nan will check with Michelle, write a notice for the Villager and get it in the Selectmen's minutes important dates.

3.3 Planning Board – Nan reported that the PB is has rewritten the RV section of the LUO and is holding a hearing on it prior to their next PB meeting, October 2nd, at 6PM in the Town Hall. The second hearing will take place before their November 6th meeting at 6PM, also.

3.4 Energy Committee – Johanna reported that they are planning a green film series. They have scheduled the first movie to be one on solar power. They are having it at the Church and may have a speaker from SunRay Solar - NH Solar Energy Installers from Concord, NH. The tentative date is October 15th but the details will follow. She said they may have desserts and snacks and maybe the popcorn machine could be borrowed.

Al is following up with the CIP subcommittee about energy conservation projects for the town buildings.

3.5 Legislative update – None

4.0 Public Presentations and workshops:

4.1 The Eccard Farm hike on the 1st was a big success. We had about 20 people attending and about half of them were kids. Arin commented that on subsequent hikes we need to be sure we keep it

interesting for both the kids and adults. We will bring more maps on the next hike, as more were needed.

- 4.2 The Aquatic Invasive Plants presentation by Andrea LaMoreux of NH Lakes Association on August 25th was also a success. There were about 30 people there and some of them brought aquatic weeds to be identified. Andrea spoke for a long time and it was very interesting. She had lots of handouts and encouraged everyone to send weed samples to the DES lab in Concord for identification. Ken has bags for this purpose from the Lake Host program, so contact him if you need any. Johanna asked about Weed watchers and if it would be good for her to grab weeds for identification when she is snorkeling in Millen Pond. Ken said that would be helpful, this is the second line of defense for catching invasives before they take hold in a pond/lake.

We talked about a potential project for the summer program at Camp Morgan. They could build some viewers and look for weeds in the lake when they are canoeing or kayaking. It could also be a community service project for town teen. We will propose this next year to Parks and Rec.

Ken talked about his idea for the NH Lakes Association to help towns install wash stands to remove weeds from boats entering or exiting town. He said the Lake Host program did over 500 inspections this season (on Millen Pond) and caught one native milfoil plant on a boat (a good save).

- 4.3 Oak Hill Hike - Arin is leading a second hike being sponsored by the Harris Center. It will be on October 6th or 7th (rain date) at 10:30AM and is going to be the 2nd Annual Rich Cook Memorial Hike. We will have people park their cars on Faxon Hill at the radio tower site and do a Camp Morgan trail loop then cross the road and hike the Oak Hill trail to the top, take in the view and hike back to Faxon Hill. Nan made posters that she is putting up and Arin will give flyers to Mrs. Lull again for the school kids. She and Jed, and those who want to join them, will do the hike once prior to the hike, this Friday at 5:30PM.

- 5.0 Adopt-a-Highway – Our next pick up day is rescheduled to October 13th, Saturday, meet at the Library parking lot. We had originally scheduled for October 6th but because of the hike we chose the 13th.
- 6.0 Other business – Carol mentioned the annual NHACC meeting and conference scheduled for November 3rd at the Rundlett School in Concord. You can sign up and register online here: <http://www.nhacc.org/annualmeeting42/registration/>
There are lots of great workshops to attend, to check them out, click here: <http://www.nhacc.org/annualmeeting42/workshops/> including one about Understanding Beaver Behavior: Resolving Conflicts While Protecting Infrastructure and Habitats – Skip Lisle, Beaver Deceivers International, she hopes everyone will attend.
- 9.0 What's Happening in Nature?
Jed said we had 2.5” of rain last night in East Washington. Both Arin and Carol said they lost power for several hours during the storm.
Johanna has been watching her baby beaver swimming in the pond with a yearling and the parents. She and Lindley bring green branches for the beavers and they eat them while making cooing noises. They watch them every night and they see they are making a new lodge on the pond where the water is deeper. Carol mentioned the beaver guy who will be speaking during two sessions at the NHACC conference.
Carol showed us a picture that her brother had taken of a very large “Hen of the Woods” mushroom that he found when climbing Lovewell Mountain recently. Johanna found one near her house and thought it was growing on a swamp oak. She tried cooking some but she didn't really like it. Carol said the taste can be effected by age and where it is growing.
Jed talked about the odd squirrel and chipmunk behavior he has observed this year. They have been stealing the sunflowers off the plants and eating corn off the stalks in the garden. They took all the pears off the tree and have been taking lots of strawberries, raspberries and blueberries as they ripen on the plants and bushes.

Nan said it seems like there is a lot of mast this year for them, which is their usual food source. Ken thought maybe there is a population boom and more are looking for food. Carol said she lost sunflowers right out of a vase on her porch and suspects the squirrels did it.

Arin saw a pair of Bald Eagles on Ashuelot Pond but didn't have her camera handy. Phil saw an Osprey flying over Town Hall one day. Johanna also saw a Bald Eagle near a swamp off Rt. 393 in Concord. Nan commented that this is the time of year to watch for raptors riding the thermals during their migration. To learn more about this yearly migration and where to go to observe them, click here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html

Johanna saw a weasel looking for frogs near her pond. She said the otter family returned to her pond to catch fish after they were treated badly by her resident beavers earlier this summer, they left for a while but now they are back. She has wood ducks in her upper pond and thought she may have had a sand piper like bird near her pond.

Arin said she and her family took a hike up to Sand Pond and said the water was very clear there.

Jed said they have had a great variety of waterfowl this year on the pond. Huge flocks of Canada Geese flying in and going out, lots of smaller ducks, a great Blue Heron has spent a lot of time fishing on the pond, near the beach and below the dam. Arin mentioned that Don Damm is spraying the beach area in Ashuelot every few days with grape juice to keep the geese away. Ken mentioned the use of monofilament line overhead to scare the geese as they are landing to keep them out.

9.0 Correspondence:

Notice from NHDOT for headwall repair for Rt. 31 bridge at Halfmoon Pond outlet

Copy of executed renewal for Adopt-a-Highway program

Copy of CIP request form for 2013

10.0 Adjourned at 8:05 PM, our next scheduled meeting is October 17th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz, Secretary