

**CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 14, 2023**

The June monthly meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at **6:30 PM** at the Whitaker Meeting House in North Conway, NH.

Present: Chairman, Nat Lucy; Vice Chairman, Dan Lucy; Treasurer, Linda Kearney; Rob Adair; David Weathers, Selectmen's Representative; Peter Minnich; Larry Huemmler; Corbett Tulip; and Recording Secretary, Jacqueline White.

Absent:

Also Attending: Tim Nolin, Forest Land Improvement.

1. Approval of the Minutes for May 10, 2023:

Mr. Nat Lucy asked for a motion to accept the May 10, 2023 minutes. Mr. Rob Adair noted a correction on Page 3, Section E, Paragraph 1, Line 2 should read "...Mr. Rob Adair answered not any big trees will be cut." Ms. Linda Kearney noted a correction on Page 1, Section A, Paragraph 1, Line 2 should read "...Mr. David Weathers said there was a group of people..." Ms. Linda Kearney noted a correction on Page 1, Section B, Paragraph 1, Line 3 should read "...Mr. Corbett Tulip said Ride NoCo is applying..." Ms. Linda Kearney made a motion to accept the May 10, 2023 minutes as corrected; seconded by Mr. David Weathers. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Reports & Other Business:

A. Nomination of Alternates:

Mr. Nat Lucy said he circulated a letter from Paul Getchell via email to the Commission.

Mr. Nat Lucy made a motion to nominate Mr. Paul Getchell as an Alternate; seconded by Mr. Rob Adair. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

B. Selectmen's Report:

Mr. David Weathers said he went before the Board of Selectmen and they voted to go ahead with the parking expansions at Marshall and Pudding Pond and it is recorded in the minutes as such. Mr. Weathers suggested if the Town does not have enough subgrade material on either one of the sites we should expend the money we have appropriated for the 1 ½" crushed stone and stock pile it on one of the sites for when we finish up the project next year.

Mr. Nat Lucy asked if we have a time frame on the cutting or the work on the parking lot at Marshall. Mr. Tim Nolin said the cutting will happen sooner than the work, it would be after Labor Day since the Town is reconstructing Modock Hill Road and the material for the parking lot expansions are coming from that project. Mr. Nolin said there is five hardwood trees that need to be taken down with a bucket truck at Pudding Pond and there is a large ash tree and one more red maple and two dead ferns that should come down. Mr. Nolin said he is getting prices to take the trees down at Pudding Pond. Mr. Nolin said he will do the cutting himself at Marshall.

Mr. David Weathers asked what we have appropriated in the budget for these parking lot expansions. Mr. Tim Nolin said there is \$7,000 in that line item in the budget, but some was used for the new trail signage on the kiosks at Whitaker Woods. Mr. Nat Lucy said the Commission's Treasurer is going to reach out to the Town's Finance Director.

Mr. David Weathers said we need to have all our bills in for the year by the end of December.

C. Treasurer's Report:

Ms. Linda Kearney said she is going to provide round numbers; L Chip is \$21,500; the Hubbard Davis is just under \$22,000; the Current Use fund is \$471,600; and the Land Acquisition is \$251,000. Ms. Kearney stated the Current Use is up about \$15,000 from December.

Mr. David Weathers asked why we have so much money in the Current Use and Land Acquisition accounts. Mr. Rob Adair stated we almost depleted these accounts when we purchased the Marshall Conservation Land. Mr. Adair said the NHDOT Mitigation land that totals approximately 460 acres was going to become Town property if and when they put the Bypass through Whitaker Woods. Mr. Adair stated at some point DOT is going to give the Town first refusal on this property and if the Town does not have the money or is not interested then DOT would auction off the land. Mr. Larry Huemmler said if we have an opportunity to get the mitigation land we should.

D. Town Forester's Report

Mr. Tim Nolin handed out a Condition Report on the Green Hills Common Lands (PID: 225-34) owned by the Town. Mr. Nolin said he went out there with the intent of trying to find the boundary lines where he could and painted all the evidence he could find of the lines. Mr. Nolin stated that a surveyed plan would be costly and suggested heavily flagging the approximate location of the boundary lines every five years. Ms. Linda Kearney asked if there is road access to this property. Mr. Nolin answered there is no road frontage and there is also no deeded access to this property.

Mr. Tim Nolin said he met with Mr. Bill Davidson, the Forest Health Specialist from the New Hampshire Division of Forest and Lands to look at the oak trees that were left over from the Gypsy Moth infestation. Mr. Nolin said they looked at several different places, one being the NHDOT Mitigation land and there is a tremendous amount of mortality starting to show and the worst area is out by the back landing where there is a ten-to-twelve-acre section where about 75% of the oak trees are left standing dead. Mr. Nolin asked if the Commission would like to think about doing a salvage harvest on this dead timber. Mr. Nat Lucy said we should probably consider it and asked if the market is saturated with oak at this time. Mr. Nolin said the market is not saturated with oak yet and this is decent oak saw timber. Mr. Nolin stated we have not had an oak seed season in the last two years, because of the moths. Mr. Nolin said that Mr.

Davidson didn't think this year was going to be as bad as the last few years based on last winter's moth egg nest inventory and current activity. Mr. Lucy asked if all the rain is good for the moths. Mr. Nolin said the bacteria that builds up in their stomachs does better in rainy spells, and that has been the problem the last few years. Mr. Nolin stated these oak trees haven't just been defoliated for two years, but we have had three bad drought summers in a row.

Mr. Nat Lucy asked Mr. Tim Nolin what his recommendation is. Mr. Nolin stated he thinks the Commission should do some salvage harvesting. Mr. Nolin said there is scattered dead trees all over the place, that mortality should be left, because standing dead trees are good from a wildlife perspective. Mr. Nolin stated the area where there is ten-to-twelve acres of standing dead oak, he suggests taking it all down. Mr. Nolin said since the last harvest two years ago there has been a lot of new sprouting.

There was a brief discussion on the bike trail that runs through this area of dead trees and if some of the dead trees should be left along the trail or take all the dead trees down.

Mr. Corbett Tulip asked if there was any chance these trees could come back next year. Mr. Tim Nolin said even if they could put a few sprouts out, it wouldn't be enough to sustain the tree.

Mr. Nat Lucy suggested we pursue the salvage harvesting. Mr. Tim Nolin said the wood needs to dry out, so it probably wouldn't be until later in the summer.

Mr. Tim Nolin said Mr. Bill Davidson mentioned that the State has just ordered a new drone that uses infra-red to tell the tree species apart and can measure the health of the trees. Mr. Nolin said after Mr. Davidson's visit up here, he went back to his office and his department decided to do the drone trial project up here. Mr. Nolin stated this trial project will not start until July.

Mr. Tim Nolin said he is going to bring a map and proposal for the salvage harvest to the Commission's next meeting. Mr. Corbett Tulip asked if this is one of the worst areas state wide. Mr. Nolin answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Tim Nolin said he has been plugging away on TSI at the Marshall Conservation area.

E. Whitaker Woods Trail Modifications:

Mr. Nat Lucy said he met last week with Mr. Cort Hanson and Mr. Peter Donohoe from the Ski Touring Association and Ms. Debbie Tario, Ms. Caitlin Murphy, and Ms. Brydie Farnum from the Walkers Group that spoke at a previous meeting over their concerns with the winter trail system in Whitaker Woods. Mr. Lucy said he felt the meeting was very productive. Mr. Lucy stated the major concern seemed to be needing more walking access in the winter to places within Whitaker Woods, therefore the plan going forward is additional non-ski trails for winter. Mr. Lucy said they walked the proposed additional non-ski trails. Mr. Peter Minnich asked if they will have to create new trails. Mr. Lucy said it should take very little cutting and maybe some ground work. Mr. Lucy stated there will only be one short section of trail that will be shared between the walkers and skiers.

Mr. Nat Lucy said the only unresolved piece is getting the walking trail from the power lines to the top of the Vista Trail and we need to come up one side of that trail or the other to make this happen. Mr. Lucy said if the Conservation Commission gives the go ahead, the plan is to walk that section of trail with members of the Ski Touring Association and members from the Walkers Group to pick which side of the trail to come up.

Mr. Rob Adair said it sounds like part of the problem this past winter were the Ambassadors from the Ski Touring Association. Mr. Adair said that is not under our purview. Mr. Lucy agreed. Mr. David Weathers asked if the Ski Touring Association is aware of that problem. Mr. Lucy answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Lucy made a motion to proceed with a small amount of trail work for the winter trail system in Whitaker Woods, seconded by Mr. Rob Adair. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Larry Huemmler asked what kind of an agreement does the Town have with the Ski Touring Association. Mr. Rob Adair said Mr. Paul DegliAngeli is the Town's Representative on the Ski Touring Association so we would need to check with him.

Mr. Nat Lucy said the other information about Whitaker is Phase 2 of the Rec Path. Mr. Lucy said they walked the proposed path, which will probably be paved. Mr. Rob Adair said the proposed path is marked if anyone wants to go walk it. Mr. Tim Nolin asked where the path will cross Kearsarge Road and enter Whitaker Woods. Mr. Lucy answered at or near the parking lot.

Mr. Nat Lucy said the Nature Conservancy contacted him with their concerns over the Black Cap Trail and the over use issue. Mr. Lucy said the hope is that all users can come together to clean up the trail from Hurricane Mountain Road to the Kiosk.

F. Member Roundtable: None.

Next Meeting: The next CCC meeting will be on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whitaker Meeting House in North Conway, NH.

Adjourn: Ms. Linda Kearney made a motion to adjourn at 7:32 P.M.; seconded by Mr. David Weathers. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Jacqueline White
Recording Secretary