



## *Town of Weare*

### *Conservation Commission*

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### Conservation Commission

Andrew Fulton, Chairman  
Stephen Najjar, Vice Chair  
Wendy Stevens, Secretary  
George Malette  
Jeff Jackson  
Lisa Grolljahn  
Christine Tuck

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION – APRIL 9, 2014 MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 7:08 PM by Chairman Fulton.

Members present: Andy Fulton, Steve Najjar, George Malette, Lisa Grolljahn, and Christine Tuck

Guests: Jeremy Turner (MTL), Owen Payeur (Eagle Scout candidate), Marc Payeur, George Hamilton (Cooperative Extension), CO Delayne Brown (NHF&G)

1. New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Conservation Officer Delayne Brown introduced himself and the department and discussed conservation land policing issues and other topics of interest. He is a 12-year veteran of the force and his patrol area extends from Warner to New Boston. He is familiar with some problem areas in Weare and spends a fair bit of time at Clough State Park and in the area surrounding Ferrin Pond. Off highway vehicle (OHV) infractions are common, are dealt with when encountered, and signage in key areas doesn't hurt. In a situation that arose with illicit riders emanating from All Seasons campground, an education program was implemented with park owner cooperation and found to adequately address the issue. Regarding game levels, he opined that annual deer, turkey, and bear harvests are at the department's goal. Some poaching occurs but is not a major problem. If instances of such are encountered, they should be reported directly to him.

Officer Brown indicated that Ferrin Pond is allotted a bit less than 400 brown trout for annual stocking. Last year he was unable to complete the stocking due to access limitations. He said that a gate on the path to the pond with removal of the berm and boulders would be helpful, for both stocking and emergency response. Without improvements to what is classified a "road to public waters" first responders would be unable to get to the pond in a timely fashion. Steve stated that he has started a dialogue with Betsy at the department but that there remain many unanswered questions regarding approval of the proposed pathway maintenance plan. Officer Brown is not the one charged with land stewardship decisions, and suggested that we will have to work it through with Betsy.

Chairman Fulton asked if there is anything that the town can do make his work more effective and Officer Brown replied that timely reporting of conservation infractions would be helpful. Fish and Game dispatch is 271-3361 and his cell is 419-0417.

2. Town Forrester Jeremy Turner of Meadowsend Timberlands Limited provided a quarterly report. He said that the Bartlett Brook town forest harvest has been completed with approximately \$25K in income and was a good cooperative effort with the Weare Winter Wanderers, state, and town management of road entrance signage. Ms. Grolljahn commented that a jeep club has used a trail in the area. In addition the access agreement allowing removal of Meadowsend timber across the town property worked out well and the work is complete.

The blazing of property boundaries along Brookshire west has been completed and Mr. Turner's crew will be moving over to the east side of the subdivision open space. Some surveying of the west side boundary will be needed but will be conducted with anticipated east side work.

Mr. Turner has completed about half of the timber cruising on the Wood Family Forest town forest. Some substantial areas of the invasive burning bush plant have been encountered. There are some boundary issues likely. Mr. Najjar requested that Mr. Turner check with Chris Bolton of Mt. William Inc. regarding whether he has a right of way across the property and if so to give him the combination to the lock at a gate that Mr. Turner will be installing. The boundary gate location is to be determined but the most likely location will be at that of the former gate. Mr. Turner confirmed that there will also be 2 gates installed at the log landing for the Eastman Conservation Area Town Forest and that the gates will be installed by the end of May.

Mr. Turner related that in general at this time logs are moving well and that he will manage harvests accordingly. He will prepare field service agreements for harvests at the Jewett lots by Ferrin Pond, Chevy Hill town forest, and possibly the Poor Farm town forest (depending on the pine market). Ms. Tuck asked whether replanting should be undertaken. Mr. Turner replied that this is not necessary in our area as natural reseeding is very successful in regenerating the northeastern forest.

Mr. Turner discussed the challenges posed by emerald ash borer and hemlock woolly adelgid, both of which have the potential to dramatically reduce stands of their respective host tree. Our forests may look dramatically different in 10 to 15 years. Mr. Turner was asked to look into management options for maintenance of ecologically vital hemlock stands.

Mr. Turner mentioned that he has a couple options for completion of the field reclamation project at the Eastman town forest. With completion of the work, he anticipates that the entire field area will be reset this year. The work is to be completed without fee.

Mr. Turner recommended that the town, in light of the amount of forest management undertaken, join the NH Timberlands Owners Association. The commission agreed that this would be a good idea and authorized expenditure from the commission operating budget to this end. Mr. Najjar motioned and Mr. Malette seconded that the commission join NHTLOA for \$30/year. All voted in favor.

3. Cooperative Extension specialist George Hamilton discussed conservation land agricultural use issues with the commission. Mr. Hamilton currently works on fruits and vegetable management but previously specialized in forage management and pest control. He suggested that the commission speak with Jack Gleason of Amherst who has a lot of experience from the municipal perspective. Mr. Hamilton has worked with Mark Anderson on optimizing the fields at the Banks parcel for hay yield. Weed control has been a concern and the relatively dry character of the location limits yields. The field has produced a first and second cut reliably and occasionally a third cut. Poultry manure has been added to maintain soil fertility. Agriculture easements on conservation lands run the gamut. Mr. Hamilton has come across agreements such as 15\$/acre leased, no charge, or even payment for field mowing or soil amendments utilized. Lime may run \$60/ton and a hay field may require on the order of 3 tons/acre. There is some concern of whether the governing RSAs allow more than a one-year lease, and some have written agreements that attempt to encompass a series of renewable one-year periods. Mr. Hamilton commented that good fertility management is the best way to help grass compete against weeds. Mr. Najjar expressed concern for field bird ecology accommodation and Ms. Grolljahn mentioned that nests may be avoidable at harvest. Mr. Hamilton suggested that accommodating ground-nesting birds while maximizing forage yields is a significant challenge.
4. Life Scout BSA Owen Payeur appeared before the commission to discuss his interest in taking on a conservation-minded Eagle Scout project. He is interested in the Poor Farm town forest that is close to his home. Mr. Payeur shared that the parcel has a 13-year old kiosk that is a bit worn, there isn't anything that well identifies the forest entrance, and that the road is a mess. Mr. Payeur suggested that he could spruce up the kiosk, update the information on the kiosk, improve trail markers, and somehow better identify the entrance. Mr. Malette mentioned that there is an Indian mound on the property and that there may be Heritage and/or Historical Commission interest in meeting with or otherwise assisting Mr. Payeur with

information on the town forest. Mr. Fulton commented that the commission has benefited greatly from recent prior projects completed by BSA Troop 24 scouts David Petriel (Wood Family Forest kiosk) and Owen's brother Noah Payeur (Ferrin Pond forest trail guide update). Mr. Fulton commented that the commissioners had been invited to Noah Payeur's Eagle Scout Court of Honor on May 10<sup>th</sup> and said that he was hoping to attend.

5. Planning Board Existing Conditions Plan – 10 North Riverdale Road, 412/200 was reviewed. Conservation Commission comments to Planning Board are to ask of the intention of the plan, to inquire whether the existing conditions regarding wetlands setbacks and buffers are grandfathered, and to note that there is no wetlands stamp on the plan and that any future work in the vicinity of the wetlands may require a re-delineation.
6. The Banks/Shmid project is ready to go to closing. Mr. Najjar motioned and Mr. Malette seconded approval for Chairman Fulton to sign the closing documents on behalf of the commission. All voted in favor of the motion.
7. Receipt of corrected Breed Brook current conditions report pages was noted. This is for a Piscataquog Land Conservancy after the fact report.
8. Mr. Fulton noted that Nick Coates of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions has offered to attend a meeting to discuss the roll of the NHACC and how it can aid the work of the commission. The commission agreed that it would be a good idea and that Mr. Fulton should reply as such to the offer.
9. The New Hampshire Association of Natural Resource Scientists (NHANRS) newsletter, "Resource" was passed along to Ms. Tuck.
10. Mr. Fulton noted that the Mr. Najjar has reset the conservation computer with ESRI GIS software and town metadata thus again allowing rapid assessment of natural resource features relative to property boundaries.
11. Mr. Najjar motioned and Ms. Tuck seconded acceptance of the gift of land on Mt. Dearborn Road from the Colburn Trust. All voted in favor (Ms. Grolljahn excused herself from the meeting shortly before the vote was taken.) The commission discussed that the Board of Selectmen must post and hold a public hearing prior to closing.
12. Mr. Fulton noted that a cluster subdivision discussion with the Planning Board has not been arranged and would perhaps be appropriate following a joint site walk at the subdivision proposed between Colby Street and South Stark Highway. Mr. Najjar noted that Mr. Francisco, chairman of the Planning Board, had forwarded some comments that merited attention. The subdivision site walk is scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM. Mr. Najjar noted that the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) have produced guidance for habitat management setbacks. We may want to assess the Northeast Habitat Management Guidelines if we are ever to reconsider the status of the town's wetland buffer ordinance.
13. A request for trapping on town land permission was received. Mr. Najjar replied to the email that the inquirer should attend a commission meeting to discuss the request. No further interaction has occurred.
14. The commission discussed the status of the Hoit Mill subdivision open space. Mr. Fulton is to contact Town Administrator Bolton Board of Selectmen Chairman Clow regarding resolving the ownership question relative to the way the property is assessed for tax purposes.
15. Mr. Najjar re-opened discussion of the Ferrin Pond road to public waters item. Apparently the intent of a Governor and Council declaration was that the state road to the pond would be for walking use only. If this

is the case, how could it be a Class VI road as indicated by the real estate manager at NH Fish and Game, subject solely to management by the Board of Selectmen? Mr. Najjar suggested that we should get rid of the rock pile at the trail head, install a gate, and fix the erosion that has degraded the trail. Furthermore, he opined that we should ask for a legal opinion from town attorney regarding who owns the road and whether state permission is required for our maintenance work. He suggested that we could start by forwarding the email traffic with Fish and Game to Laura Spector-Morgan. Mr. Najjar motioned and Ms. Tuck seconded authorization of expenditure of up to \$1,500 from the Conservation Fund for Mitchell Municipal Group to look into the commission's standing to conduct the Ferrin trail gate and erosion remediation, if the Board of Selectmen is unable to satisfactorily address our concerns. Mr. Najjar, Mr. Fulton, and Ms. Tuck voted in favor of the motion and Mr. Malette voted against it.

**16.** Mr. Malette motioned to adjourn and Mr. Najjar seconded. All voted in favor and the meeting concluded at 9:49 PM.

A true record,

Recorded by Andrew Fulton  
Chairman, Weare Conservation Commission