



Canterbury Conservation Commission Canterbury, NH

Minutes for July 13, 2023

Present: Lance Messinger, Steve Seron, Audra Klumb, Kelly Short

Absent: Ken Stern, Bob Steenson, Teresa Wyman

Kelly chaired the meeting. With a quorum of 4 members present, the meeting began at 7 pm.

Minutes of June 8, 2023 meeting.

Steve Seron moved to accept the minutes. Lance Messinger seconded. Two spelling errors were corrected. All voted in favor of the corrected minutes.

Potential Project: Kelly explained that the CCC may have an opportunity for assistance from the NH Municipal Association to pursue federal funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to support a major conservation project in town. The project is one that Fiver Rivers Conservation Trust discussed with the CCC last year, but which we could not commit to because of another project that was underway.

She reminded members about the conservation values on the property and asked if the commission should pursue the project. Values include more than 500 acres that abuts – and currently divides – 1965 acres of surrounding conserved land. The land includes a 14-acres pond, an extensive stream network, and portions of the property are highest rated habitat in state (by NHF&G) and portions are highest rated habitat in region. Portions of the property are rated in the CCC's highest scoring conservation values and about half of the property is rated in the CCC's second highest scoring conservation values. The property also falls within the priority area of the Merrimack Watershed Partnership Program.

Consensus was that it would be a key property to conserve with a conservation easement. Questions to look into are whether federal funding would require the town to hold the conservation easement; whether landowners would request data from NH Heritage Bureau regarding threatened or endangered species; whether we'd want to do a full Natural Resources Inventory; what the fate of the land might be if we cannot conserve it;

Steve moved that CCC inform Fiver Rivers and property owner that we are interested in re-engaging on this project. Audra seconded. All voted in favor.

Master Plan update: The Regional Planning Commission still has the most recent draft of the natural resources chapter that we submitted. Staff will be contributing some changes. Kelly will meet with Mark Stevens to get the Agriculture Commission's input on the chapter and will forward to Planning Board and Regional Planning Commission.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Managing Invasives: Kelly asked if the CCC should be mowing more frequently on some of its properties to keep up with the growth of invasive plants. Invasives in some places seem to be growing faster.

- At the Riverland, we'll need to mow regularly the area we recently cleared of invasives along the fence line in the parking lot.
- At the Robert S. Fife Conservation Area, which we mow half of each year to provide some habitat with second year growth, Kelly suggested we might expand the mowing to include the perimeter of the whole field each year. That would improve access for walking and prevent the large invasives (rose, buckthorn) from growing tall. Steve suggested we consult again with Matthew Tarr at UNH for his advice about encouraging early successional habitat while trying to reduce growth of the invasives. Audra pointed out that plants that produce fruit on 1 year's growth pose a bigger problem than plants that need multiple years to fruit (mowing eliminates the seed source). Another possibility is to mow more frequently for a time, then return to less frequent mowing. A period of aggressive mowing may weaken the invasives.

Kelly made a motion to get a price for adding perimeter mowing to our annual mowing and if within our budget we add perimeter mowing this year. Steve seconded. All voted in favor.

Kelly or Ken will ask Matthew Tarr for advice.

Robert S. Fife Conservation Area (RSFCA)

The Martins are waiting for a date from Magoon Tree Service for removing the large pine trees on the border with RSFCA.

Kelly suggested a work session to prune along the road and cut growth on the 2 rock piles near field entrance and to discuss whether to cut more trees. Kelly will send a scheduling poll.

Riverland Conservation Area

Kelly updated members that Road Agent John O'Brien and crew completed removing the invasives along the fence line in the parking lot. Doug Cygan will do a targeted herbicide treatment in the fall. We may need to trim new growth before Doug can do his work. Chris Aiken will mow the Right of Way and on both sides, as well as the east side of the parking lot. Member need to inspect a large tree that abutter Lucy Nichols has asked that the town remove.

DES Permits: We received a copy from DES of a June 21 notice of alleged violation (dredge and fill without permit) at 128 Pickard Rd., Tax Map 258/Lot 25. (DES file #2023-01666). The landowner was instructed to cease and DES will investigate.

Updates / FYIs / Announcements

- June 19, the Board of Selectmen honored Bob Fife with a certificate of appreciation for his 50+ years of service to CCC and the town.
- Ken Fulsom said the town is interested in accepting the donation of 30 acres of land on 106 adjacent to Speedway (Sandra Bowden contact). He will contact the owner.
- The town has made a payment made escrow for our contribution to Five Rivers Conservation Trust for stewardship and project costs related to conserving Deepwood Forest, which is expected to close in Sept.
- Ken Stern will attend the Aug. 7 Board of Selectmen's meeting at which all board and committee chairs will share updates.

- Harvey Pine at DES TMDL (Total Daily Maximum Load) program is interested in testing water quality at New Pond.

Ongoing work with no action or discussion tonight:

Conservation priorities process. Solicitation of input from natural resource professionals is on hold while we deal with Master Plan, land management, and the potential conservation project.

Other Business

Recruiting: Steve asked talked to two people about joining the commission, and Kelly spoke with three people.

Pond monitoring. Steve asked about the status of Milfoil treatment at Rocky Pond. He had recently been to Clough Pond in Loudon (part of the pond is in Canterbury) where he was greeted by a Lake Host who said Clough Pond is still invasive free. Steve may attend one of their meetings. Steve has seen loon, great blue herons, and an eagle at Clough Pond.

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Minutes submitted by Kelly Short