

New Hampton Conservation Commission

Retreat 9:00a.m. Saturday January 16, 2016
Upstairs Meeting Room, Town Offices
6 Pinnacle Hill Rd. New Hampton, NH 03256

Present: Daniel Moore (Chair), Gordon DuBois, Richard Leroux, Bob Pollack, Barry Rolfe

Excused: Pat Schlesinger

Review Commission's 2015 Activities:

- Completed a thorough review of selective town owned properties (Bald Ledge, Glines Memorial Forest (Glines), Jackson Pond, Jenness Spring Conservation Area (JSCA), Kelley-Drake Conservation Area (KDCA), & the Snake River Conservation Area (SRCA), for which there are significant resource, environmental and recreational interests, by means of researching their deeds, grants & maps, and further by conducting on-site visitations.
- Participated in community information sessions, one held by Eversource & Hydro Quebec (prior to their application to New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee for their Northern Pass project) and the other held by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (as it began its work on designing approaches for addressing safety concerns surrounding the Mosquito Bridge on Waukegan Road).
- Continued work on the KDCA's current Steward Management Plan by seeking and receiving a grant for field mowing, by contracting work to free apple trees, and by authorizing some cutting of timber to open the forest areas with the goal to increase wildlife habitat on the property.
- Organized a volunteer effort that cleared brush and improved the trail access to and view from Bald Ledge, with a special thanks to Jim Viar, from Allenstown, NH, for his time and effort on this project.

Plans for Administrating Town Conservation Properties:

- Surveying and marking boundaries- As we reviewed deeds and walked properties last year, it became clear that a number of the properties have not been adequately surveyed (KDCA, GMF, Bald Ledge, and Jackson Pond) and all properties were in need of having their boundaries marked. Therefore, surveying and marking properties must be a priority. First on the list for surveying will be KDCA, as there is currently ongoing forestry work on this property and it has a stewardship plan in place guiding its development. Due to Glines' land locked nature, surveying is not immediately essential and can wait until the commission undertakes developing a stewardship plan for the property. Because the level of town managed recreation and conservation depends upon conversations with and action by the select board, any surveying of Bald Ledge and Jackson Pond will be arranged after meeting with selectmen.

- Marking is absolutely necessary and immediate on the JSCA, KDAC, and SRCA, as they are either under active stewardship development (KDAC, SRCA), required by the holders of the easement (SRAC), or obliged in order to carry out the property's covenant (JSCA). The remaining properties can be marked as they are surveyed.
- **Building and maintaining Trails-** Lands managed by conservation commissions here in New Hampshire are used for a variety of purposes from protecting and managing forests, creating and maintaining agricultural open spaces, designing and establishing water access and water shed protection, to providing its citizens with a range of recreational and educational activities, which may include: hiking, fishing, hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and nature & heritage education. Here in New Hampton our stewardships plans for managing KDCA and SRCA, deeded responsibility of JSCA for managing spring water access, and our ongoing arrangement with the select board for maintaining Bald Ledge access all require the commission to take an active role in designing, building, and maintaining trails that provide persons access to and utilization of these town properties. So we'll be engaging in the following trail related activities on these properties this coming year:
 - a) **Bald Ledge-** renew our memo of understanding with Department of Resources and Economic Development's Division of Forest and Lands to maintain the segment of the trail that crosses Sky Pond Forest. Create a Trail Meister type program that organizes local volunteers to assist with our responsibilities for marking and maintaining the trail. Design, print, and post (on location & online) a trail map.
 - b) **SRCA-** clean and clear the parking area at the spring of Knott Weed and then to mark and maintain the trail from the parking area to the spring. Design, print, and post (on location & online) a trail map.
 - c) **KDCA-** reviving the following trails on the property are a priority: (1) the snowmobile trail along the southern shore of Merrill Brook, (2) the Boardwalk hiking trail from the Drake Farm Site to the beach road, (3) the hiking trail through the 'Enchanted Forest' a wooded segment along the southern edge of the property. Additional trails should be consider in order to complete a network of trails that would connect the Drake Farm Site, a fairly central and historically important location on the property, with these outlying areas of the property. Designing and building a landing area for canoes and kayaks and a network of hiking trails on the KDCA's Kelley Island would enhance access and recreational use of persons using the Fish & Game boat launch located on Pemigewasset Lake off of SR #104. Again creating a Trail Meister type program to assist with marking and maintaining trails will increase community input and ownership of this valuable resource. Lastly, we'll need to design, print, and post (on location & online) trail maps for KDCA.
 - **Historical and Educational Partnerships-** to create, maintain, and develop wider interest in and use of town owned properties we seek to elaborate the cultural heritage and historical significance of these sites. This will require partnering with New Hampton Historical Society, New Hampton Heritage Commission, and New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources to investigate, preserve and promote sites, such as, KDCA's Drake Farm and cemetery, or the cellar hole along the Bald

Ledge trail. Also, to further a scientific understanding of and an appreciation for a host factors related to the sustainability and resiliency of GMF, KDCA, JSCA, and SRCA biospheres, seeking partnerships with New Hampton Community School, Newfound Regional Middle and High Schools, the New Hampton School, and Plymouth State University to use these areas as living laboratories is desirable. As well as, having students scientifically investigate, catalog, and archive these sites, we'll encourage and assist schools that want to design and execute student service learning projects, that may include aiding in design, creating, maintaining, and mapping trails, or any other service base learning activities.

Plans for Conducting Conservation Easement Monitoring:

- The commission holds easements on several properties here in New Hampton and, therefore, has an obligation to monitor these following properties:
 - a) Dixon Hill Easement (Tax Map Location: R-19-3)
 - b) Riverwood Easement (Tax Map Location: U-17-38)
 - c) Merrill Easement (Tax Map Location: R-13-5A)
 - d) Swain Easement (Tax Map Location: R-13-5)
 - e) Vezina Easement (Tax Map Location: R-7-13)
- This year we will create a database for each easement that documents the wishes of the landowners and list all prohibited activities under the easement, includes notes and photos from walking the properties, and all communications with the landowners.

Plans for Projects over the next year:

- Work with select board on the Northern Pass application to make sure that the final project authorized is sensitive to in accordance with the local conservation standards.
- To continue to advise the New Hampshire Department of Transportation during their design for and work on Waukewan Road's Mosquito Bridge that spans the Snake River in order to assure that the scale of that project respects environmental integrity of the SRCA.
- Work with concerned public and private groups to preserve properties with significant conversation value to the town.
- Seek ways to protect the town's prime agricultural lands and keep them in cultivation and open space.
- Work with the Master Plan Update Committee to refine and detail a Conservation and Open Space Plan for inclusion in the New Hampton Master Plan.

Notes submitted by Daniel Moore, Scribe

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