**Orford Conservation Commission**

**Meeting Minutes: November 15, 2018**

Present: Board members: Ted Cooley (Chair), Craig Putnam, John Miller, Tom Bubolz, Carl Schmidt, Emily Bryant(alternate), Harry Pease.

Public: Deenie Bugge

Meeting was called to order at 7:02

Emily was seated as a member.

1. **Minutes of 10/18/18**. Revisions: Item 5: clarify dates, Items 10, 19: corrections on names. Ted made a motionto accept minutes as revised. Tom seconded. Motion passed.
2. **Reports, surveys, updates:** None at this time.
3. **Business:**
   1. Culverts: Meghan Butts of Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) was due to come to discuss culvert inventory but this was postponed till December due to predicted bad weather. There was discussion of what a culvert inventory includes. People thought a culvert inventory was a good idea – it would show the CC actively engaged in conservation projects. The question remains whether money from the Conservation Fund can be used towards a culvert inventory. *Ted will call the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) and ask about this and about whether a public hearing would be required*. See Appendix 1 for more culvert information from Meghan.
   2. Jacobs Brook: Updates on the Subcommittee, and on Restoring Life efforts. Craig felt that not a lot would happen through the connection with Shane Csiki of NH DES on the Silver Jackets (SJ) program. Ted has not heard back from Ron Rhodes about any efforts re: Jacobs Brk. The state of the biology of the stream isn’t bad, but the morphology (shape) of the stream channel is of concern. Work on culverts might help. John has seen information about engineered woody additions to streams to slow the flow. John felt that we need to be competitive and show action on the part of the community to get in to the SJ program. We need more info on SJ and what/who it involves, and whether it is a source of expertise, funds, or both. There is a connection between SJ and the town Hazard Mitigation Plan. *Ted will get in touch with Mike Gilbert (Emergency Management) about whether the CC should have input to the Hazard Mitigation Plan*. John wondered whether the OCC could initiate action on wetlands projects (e.g. bog on Orfordville Rd) by submitting our own application for wetlands permits to DES. There was discussion on applying for a permit vs. getting funding for a project. Carl noted that as far as he knows, Jim Kennedy is still pursuing a grant to the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund (MEF) for work on Jacobs Brook. *Carl will call Jim and Ted will call Ron Rhodes to see what is going on re: application to MEF.*
   3. Sawyer Brook: Ted has no further info from DES on the work that was done on Sawyer Brook. We should receive notification from DES when/if action is taken.
   4. Beaver issues (Orfordville Rd and other places): John reported that the watershed of the Orfordville Road beaver bog is stabilized now, but it is still an open issue. The Select Board is looking into the beaver situation near the intersection of Archertown and Indian Pond Roads. Trapping the beaver has been suggested. John mentioned that the town of Andover had saved money by working with the beavers’ dam engineering skills instead of trapping them (See Appendix 2). But the public’s opinion of having beaver around needs to be addressed as well.
   5. Invoices: There were none this month. Ted reported that Esther (Town Administrative Assistant) asked him whether CC wants to join the NHACC, and he said yes. Cost is approximately $145 per year.
   6. Appointments to the Conservation Commission: John Miller has been sworn in as a regular member of the OCC; his term lasts until 2020.
   7. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI): Ted asked what the members wanted to do about the NRI. We have been working on the revision for about 2 years, but it has been stalled for quite a while. The sense of the meeting was that we did want to move ahead and finish the NRI, perhaps with new material on flooding that we have gained since the work began*. Ted will send out a list of who is working on which chapter, and instructions on how to get access to the chapters online.* Harry suggested that extra meetings devoted to the NRI might help. Steve Schneider of UVLSRPC has offered to help. Amber Boland, who was helping before, is no longer at UVLSRPC. We will aim for a publication date of June 1, 2019.
4. **Updates: Other Easements**
   1. The Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) says they may have alternative options for other easements.
   2. Harry reported on Brackett Brook Farm: The Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) was due to meet today to decide whether they will support the proposed Bracket Brook Farm easement.
5. **Non-Public Closed Session:** None
6. **Next meetings of OCC: Dec. 20,2018; Jan. 19, 2019**
7. **Miscellaneous:**
   1. Jeff MacQueen knows the chair of the Lyme Conservation commission – perhaps he could talk with him about the culvert inventory they did.
   2. There were a couple of comments from attendees to the 10/30 Upper Valley Adaptation workgroup’s forum “Droughts and Downpours – Managing for Extremes”, including that water conservation is an issue even here in NH, and that having a local policy on culvert standards may help with FEMA funding for upgraded culverts.
   3. Carl noted that The Valley News mentioned that Orford’s Mark Blanchard found several American chestnut trees on UVLT’s Smith Pond – Mark is a chestnut tree expert.
   4. Carl also noted that John Roe of UVLT is an invasive species expert.
   5. Carl noted that one indication of increased concern in town about flooding is how a house on Rte 25A keeps a truck on the road side of the bridge to their house, presumably in case the bridge gets washed out.

Tom made a motion to adjourn, Ted seconded. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Emily Bryant

**Appendix 1 – culvert information from Meghan Butts**

She sent an email with an attachment (NH Stream crossing Initiative Field manual, version 7.0), available at this link:

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/documents/culvert-assessment-protocol.pdf>

Text of the email:

Hi Emily,

I have put the date in my calendar and will await confirmation. In the meantime I have done my best to answer the questions below:

* What options are there for kinds of information to be included? Do you have a sample of data collected for a culvert or a link to such online?

First I will provide some background. The assessment method the RPC uses is through the Statewide Asset Data Exchange System (SADES). This is an effort from UNH Technology Transfer Center, NH DOT, NH DES, NH HSEM, NH Fish and Wildlife, and the Regional Planning Commissions. There are a number of assets collected this way across the State such as Road Surface Management, Pedestrian Facilities, Guardrails, and Culverts. The goal of the SADES is to unify asset data collection across the State to make sure assessments are complete and the necessary information is collected. UVLSRPC Staff is trained in field data collection using iPads and GIS software. For the culvert assessment, I have attacked the Protocol that describes each of the attributes assessed at each culvert. You will notice that the number of attributes assessed depends on the type of crossing (drainage, wetland, stream). This is helpful for cost estimates as well because streams and wetlands take longer to assess than drainage culverts.

Added benefits to doing the SADES assessment are that all of the data necessary for grant applications through the State is collected. i.e. culvert blows in a storm, you have photos and historical assessment data that could help in grant applications. NH DES will assess all stream crossings from our data for AOP ratings, geomorphic compatibility, and hydraulic capacity free of charge (although it may take them some time to do their analysis). Also if you have any questions you could ask the Lyme Selectboard why they approached this effort.

* Could you give a split on the cost for the different options (ball-park)?

I will do my best to estimate the various ways to break this up. For example: Grantham and Lyme chose to do all culverts on Town Roads both drainage and stream. Lebanon chose to do all stream crossings in the City both State and City-owned roads.

Deliverables for all projects include: 2 large poster maps, a map book, optional condition reporting, excel data files, GIS data, and photos.

For Orford we know that there are approximately 280 culverts on Town Roads. Lyme had about 16.5% of their culverts as stream or wetland. For estimation we will say that Orford’s may be similar. So 16.5% of 280 is 46. So I will estimate the costs using these numbers.

Stream/Wetland Crossings Only: ESTIMATE for Orford Cost $5,000-$7,000\* including all deliverables, staff time, and mileage.

Both Stream/Wetland Crossings and Drainage: ESTIMATE for Orford Cost between $10,000 -$12,000\* including all deliverables, staff time, and mileage.

\***total project cost is double what is shown above. Numbers assume RPC covers half of the project cost through NH DOT funds.**\*

I drew this up quickly. Before moving forward there would be a much more detailed scope of work.

* Would cost-sharing would be possible for Orford?

Orford is a dues paying member to the RPC so yes, Orford is eligible for a cost-share. The RPC receives transportation planning funds from NHDOT that the RPC is able to assist communities with projects like this through a cost share. Cost-sharing for these projects are typically a 50/50 cost share.

We have in our contract with NHDOT to assist one municipality annually with a culvert assessment so the funds are available. However, this funding comes as a first come, first serve basis.

* We are going to check with experts, but do you have an idea whether Conservation Fund moneys can be used to pay for this kind of thing?

My thoughts are yes. The cost-share would not act as a grant to be matched so there are no specifications of where the funding must come from in the Town. This is a better question for your experts to answer.

* When might you be available to do an inventory?

This field season is at its end and we typically try to start field work in May. The timeframe is usually May-October field season with reporting and analysis wrap up November and December just in time for Town Meeting in January-March.

* Would this include State as well as Town culverts?

That is entirely up to you. The cost estimates I have provided are based on Town –owned. The cost would increase to include the State but has been done before. If you want cost-estimates for that as well let me know. Anything you can provide to help me with the bigger picture will help.

I know that is a lot to digest and I hope I hit all of the points to answer your questions. I would be happy to chat more about this via phone or at the OCC meeting just to clear up anything.

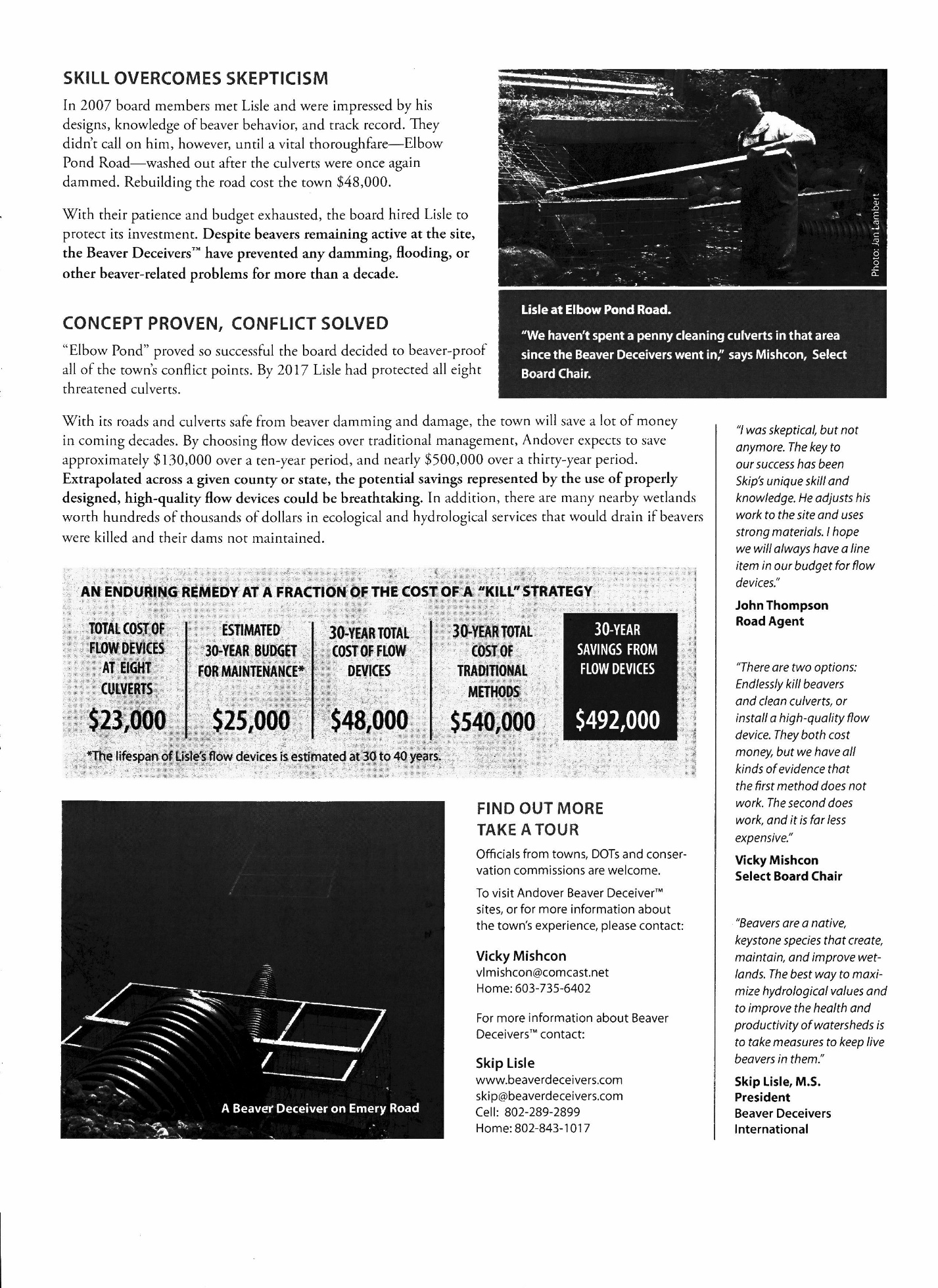
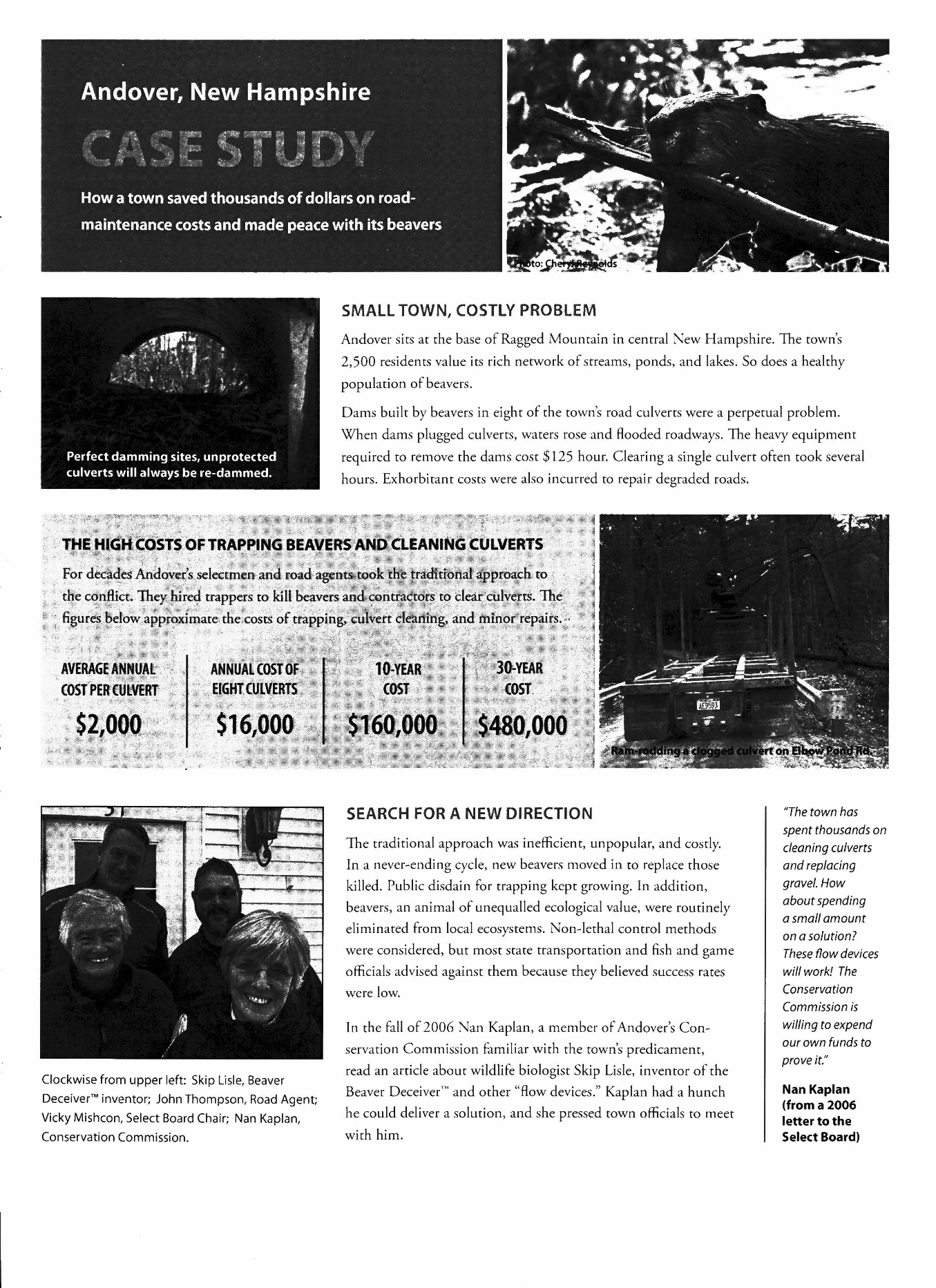
Best,

Meghan

**Appendix 2: Information on Beaver**

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/what-do-about-beavers>

The roads/beaver case study from Andover, NH: follows:

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