**Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)**

**Meeting Minutes: April 18, 2019**

Present: Board members: Ted Cooley (Chair), Craig Putnam, John Miller, Tom Bubolz, Jeff MacQueen Vice Chair), Paul Goundrey, Harry Pease, Emily Bryant (alternate).

Public: Ryan Harvey (forester for Schwaegler); Will Swan and Barbara Fowler; and Marcus Bradley and Dana Hazen of Redstart Forestry -- foresters for Barbara Fowler.

Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm. Agenda items were rearranged to accommodate those presenting the stream work applications.

3) **Business**

a) *Stream Work Application- Bean Brook, Redstart Forestry (on land of Barbara Fowler, in Orford and Piermont*).

Ted recused himself since Barbara has been a client of his, and Jeff took over chairing the meeting.

Barbara Fowler is planning to implement a stream improvement practice (adding large woody material to a stream) on Bean Brook. The aim is to improve aquatic habitat (more pools, cooler for trout and bass), and help with flood resiliency (dispersing water in high flow events). It requires a wetlands permit from NH DES. If the OCC approves and signs the permit application, it will be processed more quickly (expedited permit). Discussion included:

- About 2.6 miles of the stream will be treated, of which about 0.5 miles is in Orford.

- This is a new kind of practice being adopted by NRCS and others recently.

- It helps return streams to how they were in pre-European times.

- DES assessment of Bean Brook (before the practice) showed that it is high-quality.

- Harry asked whether they check the results of the practice. There wasn’t a clear answer.

- Craig observed that, from the lay-person’s point of view, putting wood in the stream is counter-intuitive -- in particular, how would this affect bridges downstream? The foresters said that the woody additions are required to be at least 500’ upstream of bridges, and that they are firmly anchored.

- Additions are put more in the flatter areas of the stream.

- This practice helps catch sediment.

- Part of this project includes 60 acres of invasives control practice, presumably in both Piermont and Orford.

- The sense of those meeting was that this was a positive practice.

- The work will be done at low water time, after August 1. Tree-cutting can’t be done before then since it might disturb nesting bats.

Jeff signed the application to NHDES for an expedited wetlands permit for the work on Bean Brook.

Ted resumed chairing the meeting.

b) *Stream Work Application- unnamed tributary of Archertown Brook, Ryan Harvey, Forester (on land of the Schwaeglers).*They are planning the same kind of practice as above: Adding woody material to a stream, in this case for 2000 ft along an unnamed tributary of Archertown Brook, which flows south from near the four corners on Indian Pond Road to a wetland area. Discussion included:

- Ideally, something will be put in the stream every 25 feet, with a “strainer” (two trees, one from each side, with their tops in the stream) every 300 feet.

- They do have a follow-up on the practice.

- They also did this practice on Indian Pond Stream.

- John asked how this works on a large watershed – how to promote the practice to landowners in a watershed. NRCS now has funding for the practice.

- Craig: how do you deal with protecting roads from flooding? Perhaps if you use the practice farther up in the watershed, it will slow the water before it gets farther down where the roads are.

- Ryan Harvey said this practice is basically meant for 1st and 2nd order streams (these are the smaller ones).

- Barbara Fowler mentioned that she heard that Eastman Brook in Piermont is the 5th most “flashy” brook in the state. People wondered where Jacobs Brook is on this list…

Ted signed the application to NHDES for an expedited wetlands permit for work on the tributary of Archertown Brook.

*Other*: Ted mentioned that he signed the application to NH DES for an expedited wetlands permit for work that DuBois and King will be doing for the Town on the Brook Road bridge abutment.

*c) Brackett Brook Farm Update.* Megan Chapman of the Upper Valley Land Trust sent an email to the OCC to let us know that the fundraising in Orford for the Brackett Brook Farm conservation project is complete – we raised $10,565 from 32 households. The closing for the project will probably be by September.

d) *Culverts project* – Meghan Butts (Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission) was not able to attend the meeting tonight. Ted reported that he is still investigating the possibility of using the Conservation Fund to fund the culvert inventory project. Steve Schnyder of UVLSRPC mentioned that there may be a culvert inventory in an adjacent town, which includes some culverts in Orford. This might reduce the cost to Orford for our culvert inventory from $10,000 to around $8,500. There is some urgency in moving on this issue since UVLSRPC may have other inventories to do this season.

e) *Indian Pond Project (fixing the culvert on the access road to State boat launch and Town beach*) No further update. There is some question about whether the State of NH or Orford owns the land that includes the access road, and what if any difference this ownership would make in getting a wetlands permit to fix the culvert.

f) *Jacobs Brook Subcommittee Update.* Ted reported that Ron Rhodes will come after May 1 to see the area where work is planned along Jacobs Brook near the Brook Road bridge. This includes planting vegetation along the brook, and placing rocks strategically, and is different from the work on the bridge abutment. Ron has submitted the grant application for this to the Upper Connecticut Mitigation and Enhancement Fund. Harry saw Jim Kennedy who is planning for a truck and excavator to move the rocks for this project from Harry’s land to a staging area near Jacobs Brook.

g) *Orfordville Road and Archertown Road: Beaver issues.* John said he was not sure whether the Selectboard has applied for a wetlands permit for the work on the Orfordville road culvert/beaver dam issue. There was discussion of how and whether the CC could help facilitate this. Ted suggested this would be a good topic to bring up when then CC has its meeting with the Selectboard (scheduled for July 24). Archertown Rd: Although the beaver have been removed, there may still be some issues (e.g. dams are still there).

h) *Invoices:* There were no invoices. Jeff will ask Alan Dyke to do mowing this year.

*i) Appointments/Recruiting*. Craig wondered whether we could ask David Smith if he would like to be a board member, since he had interest in the board when he was the OCC Selectboard representative. Ted said that the we already have a full complement of regular members, but he could be an alternate. Ted requested those present to think about who might be willing to be an alternate or on a committee of the OCC.

 *Officers:* No action taken.

**1. Approve minutes:** Deferred to next meeting.

**2. Reports**

a**)** *Indian Pond Beach Water monitoring.* The state will no longer be testing the water at Indian Pond Beach (reportedly the state indicated that this is because the water has tested clean in the past). Does the OCC want to take on the testing? The sense of the meeting was yes, especially since there is a swimming program held there each summer.

*Motion (Paul/John)*: The OCC should add water testing at Indian Pond to its water testing program. The motion carried.

**7. Adjourn**

*Motion (Tom/John)* to adjourn. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm

Minutes taken by Emily Bryant