

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)

Meeting Minutes: May 16, 2019

Present: Board members: Ted Cooley (Chair), John Miller, Tom Bubolz, Emily Bryant (alternate).

Public: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM

Emily was seated as a Commissioner. Quorum achieved.

John M agreed to serve as Secretary for this meeting.

1) Approve Minutes

21st March 2019. John M moved to approve, Tom B 2nd Approved.

18th April 2019. John M moved to approve, Tom B 2nd Approved.

Copies of Approved minutes from Jan, Mar, Apr to be sent to Esther c/o Ted C

2) Reports, Surveys and Updates

Water testing updates provided by Tom B. Tom noted that Jeff McQueen needs to confirm his assignment, including contact of New England Testing to arrange for sample pickup at his residence. Tom reminded the group that samples need to be ready for pickup by 10:00 AM and that samples in containers must not be greater than 8 hours old. Tom will continue to confirm with Jeff. Sampling begins 1st Tuesday in June (6/4/2019).

Ted C informed the group that Saturday, June 1 is National Trails Day. He will be participating in trail maintenance and encourages the members to encourage others to join in. Information (likely) available via Upper Valley Trails Alliance and Rivendell Trails Association. Please spread the word and feel free to post to Orford listserv if info not available otherwise.

Tom B told of conversation at Orford Social Library regarding an Orford Astronomy Night / event. There had been a similar event last Fall at Mountain View Farm in concert with an “Eye on the Night Sky” event hosted by the Fairbanks Museum and featuring Mark Breen broadcast live (VPR radio) to the participants. A motion was made by Ted C and 2nd by Emily B to encourage Tom to inquire with Upper Valley Land Trust regarding formation of a 2nd and similar event, possibly with access to the cabin facility there.

3) Business

Bracket Brook Farm

Ted C reported that local Orford funding is complete and closing expected late September of this year.

Indian Pond project – culvert replacement at access road to beach / boat launch.

Question had carried over from previous meeting regarding ownership. Esther D-M reported that the State owns the road, but Orford is responsible for maintenance. Esther also reported that Paul Goundrey has volunteered to prepare the NHDES application and is currently working on this.

Ted reminded Esther that OCC review of the application when ready would expedite the process.

Wetlands Project

Ted C received copy of Schwaegler application but hadn't received that of Barbara Fowler for Bean Brook project. Ted in receipt of explanation via email message, (see copy below).

Jacobs Brook Project

Ted C reports that Ron Rhodes had submitted NH DES application. Approvals expected mid-summer per Ted.

Orfordville Road / Archertown Road Projects

Esther D-M reports that beavers had been removed at Archertown Road, but the road crew had not been directed to remove the dam. Discussion whether NH DES permit required for dam removal when adjacent to wetland area. Esther believes that the RSA exempts the municipality when dam threatens roadway and will forward a copy to Ted C. Ted C found NH DES information indicating permitting is required. Next steps will be determined following further inquiry.

Culvert Inventory Project

John M inquired regarding status and allocation of UVLSRPC time in coming months via Meghan Butts via email. Ted C continues to inquire of NH Municipal Association legal in order to gain explicit ruling on use of Conservation funds for this type of inventory / survey, as it involves infrastructure as well as watershed / stream crossings / wetlands protection issues.

Invoices

None so far.

Appointments / Recruiting

Ted C reminded the group of need to recruit community members who have a vital interest in conservation and who also may bring specific related skills to the group.

Updates

Other Projects

John M advised the group of his proposal that they consider expanding the present Natural Resources Inventory in the area of Wetlands to incorporate NH Mapper survey methods and templates to expand its value. Discussion followed, noting possible land-owner objects but also noting several land holders that would likely be favorable toward such a project. John was encouraged to gather more information and summarize for future consideration.

Conservation Property

Ted C informed the group that Ann Duncan-Cooley had noted an Orford property for sale on the Connecticut River along NH Route 10 that might be of interest for its unique conservation value. There might be interest from the UVLT as well. Ted will forward listing information.

Adjourn 8:10 PM

Tom B moved Ted C 2nd Approved

John Miller

Acting Secretary

From: **Barbara Fowler** <beanbrook101@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, May 15, 2019 at 1:52 PM

Subject: Re: Bean Brook Project

To: Orford Conservation Commission <conservation@orfordnh.us>

Dear Ted-

There was one practice - out of five Stream Habitat Improvement practices - which I removed from Bean Book Farm's NRCS conservation-incentive forestry practices. This is Practice 14, which covered a stretch of Bean Brook from the "Sugar House Bridge" in Piermont to the so-called "Crooked Brldge" [sic] in Orford. Most of this practice's section of brook is in Orford, the section that runs alongside, next to, of Orford's Bean Brook Road.

Still included in my forestry stream loading practices in Orford is the stretch of brook below Crooked Bridge - my NRCS Forestry Practice 15. In this practice the Orford roadbed is positioned some 50 feet above the brook, with a healthy margin of forested banks as a wide buffer. I believe that this stretch of Orford roadbed is safe from any possible damage from the practice.

My reasoning behind my removal of the forestry Practice 14 for Bean Brook Farm is: 1) this is a relatively new practice for NRCS, only 10 years old as initiated by Trout Unlimited: consequently its effects on water flow over different topographies, steep drops in elevation, and changing water volumes are a bit of an unknown; 2) my foresters are new to this stream-loading practice, so it will be a learning experience for them; and 3) I had concerns about my liability exposure as abutting landowner for any damage to Orford's adjacent properties of roadbed and bridge. (Plus I very much need that road and bridge to get to my house.)

Many thanks to the Orford Conservation Commission for their approval on April 18th on the application for a Wetlands Permit for this project. I have received acknowledgement of the application from the NH Department of Environmental Services; they now will review it for possible approval. As you requested at your meeting, I will (try to remember to) let you know when the foresters begin the practice. Trout Unlimited is giving the Redstart foresters a two-day class in stream loading at the end of this month.

Sincerely,

Barbara Veghte Fowler