

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES OF 1-15-2014

Submitted by stoddard on Fri, 01/17/2014 - 5:13pm.

Stoddard Conservation Commission Meeting, January 15, 2014

Town Hall, Stoddard, NH

Start Time: 7:41 PM

All people present: Geoff Jones, Brenda Bryer, Scott Semmens, Paul Crosby, Laura White & Merrilee Frable.

- Email must be sent to board of selectmen about Merrilee and Brenda joining the conservation commission
- Meeting opens up with introductions
- **Topic #1:** Geoff and Laura discuss “curricula” regarding involving Faulkner school children with outdoor programs
 - o Laura expresses concern that even though Stoddard is one of the most conserved towns in the state, the children spend a woefully small amount of time outdoors. This curricula program’s goal is to engage the town at every level but especially to get children outside
 - o Brenda proposes getting together with Laura to get together at the end of the school year to ... discussing program at Brattleboro school that Laura had been involved with that Brenda had been involved with.... Have a hike at the end of the school year for children to get involved with.
 - o Laura: “Mountain Day” where children hike up to Pitcher

Mountain and hike up trails depending on their age/ability...
potential to integrate that with aforementioned idea

- o Marlborough, Vermont: School curricula revolved around a property they have. It involves transportation and that's a budgetary concern, but it might be possible for an end of the year field trip. Would it be possible for a bus to drive up to the end of the road to shorten the hike so that there is time for an activity by the time the children can hike up to the pond? Geoff: there may potentially be access if it doesn't happen during mud season

- o Laura: Vernal pool aquatic adaptations unit ... would need to organize for transportation. Discussing potential vernal pool options near the school for a unit. Geoff: Proposed Dodge Farm as a possibility Paul: potential one off of King's street, but would require a bus. Scott: Proposed leading a night program with flashlights. Also proposed leading a tracking program.

- o Paul: clarification. Vernal pool would be for second and third grade. Laura teaches fourth and fifth grade.

- o Geoff: Pioneer Lake, with 2 miles of undeveloped shoreline and loon nesting sites, would be ideal for children...

- o Laura: would there be options for a service project component?

- o Geoff: Don Healy is a signmaker contact that may be a potential go-to for a service project. Discussion on color-coding of trails

- o Brenda: what about interpretive signage on the edges of trails? Identifying trail species and putting up signs to explain to

people what the species are and their importance

- o Laura: Could these signs be for communities rather than individual trees? Have children write up signs about individual communities and work in groups. Potentially partner with the Harris Center
- o Geoff: Rick vanderPoll has resource to... identify... individual communities within the target area
- o Brenda offered use of her copier to copy and make digital PDF of the aforementioned document
- o Geoff: There used to be a 'Forest Field Day' – foresters at different stations talking about different aspects of forestry and wildlife. Potentially we could do that here.
- o Laura: Range of ages so the stations would need to be hands on
- o Discussing opportunities for children's overnight trip for 5th graders to canoe down highland lake and then bushwhack into property to see old growth yellow birch. Potential service project documenting phragmites.
- o Laura: clarification. Goal is to get town children out on the property to know that it's there to utilize. In terms of this school year would it be possible to develop a program by May or June? Could potentially be a yearly tradition. First year we would keep it simple, but important thing is to introduce children to it and "get their wheels turned"
- o Property doesn't have an official name yet. Stoddard Rocks...

Pioneer Lake...

- o Paul: in response to spillway clearing idea... though Faulkner School kids are too little to clear spillway, there are junior high and high school kids who could. Or we should have a list of things that need to get done in a year and have families or children or boyscout troops “adopt” or “sponsor” parts of a trail, mowing the dam, etc various stewardship tasks
- o Laura: some families don’t even know the property is there, so just getting families out there for a “one day” big activity to know that the property even exists
- o Paul: Proposed putting a whole treasure quest on the property with a variety of items along the trails
- o Laura: Will take the idea of a pioneer lake field day to the staff – it’s a simple and good way to start out to gain exposure.

· **Topic #2:** Cordwood for Olde Home Day

- o Paul: Cordwood isn’t ready yet as the person hasn’t come to process the wood. But there should be plenty of time and the weather has been crazy. Brenda volunteered her son Arron’s cordwood processer.

· **Topic #3:** Trailwork on Property

- o Paul: Put a sign up at the store to announce a trailwork day. Geoff has email list of people expressing interest.
- o Geoff: Road up to dam needs a lot of work, needs people who can use chainsaws to fell stuff and have people come behind with pruners and clippers. Preferably 2 or 3 days in April-May before

the black flies come out, before kids come out for their field day.

- Side-discussion on cybertracking evaluation

- o Trail identification: signage system that makes sense. What should be marked, how often should it be marked? How can we categorize it so that it makes sense?

- o Possible: Red diamond – strenuous, Blue square - moderate trails, Green circle – easy trails

- o Possible: Have shape delineate trail, have color delineate trail difficulty

- o Marking on trail map where points of interest are – big trees, scenic vistas, etc

- o Conclusion: There is still evaluation to be done, but we don't need to have every trail marked right away so long as there is a plan

- **Topic #4:** Cell Towers

- o Paul: Dale Smith is on planning board: Madden is on planning board and works with someone who works with a company that plans cell towers. They had gotten wind of a ruling (or act of legislation.. some sort of precedent) that will allow the FCC to tell towns that they can't stop cell towers from being put up. It will limit town's ability to say no. Some members of the planning board have decided that they want to be proactive about improving cell phone reception in town – they came up with on their own places that they would like to see a cell tower based on this "Madden" person's perspective. Pitcher Mountain is their

ideal location as it is the highest point in the land.

- o When the state was putting the generator up which would have been right on top of Pitcher Mountain but they got them to lower it and instead cable it up to the fire tower. The gentleman Paul talked to said they might put another tower up there to meet state's needs.

- o Jeff has already done quite a bit of research for cell tower locations for center Stoddard. Asked Paul if he would talk to the Faulkners, but Paul says that the tower can't be on Andorra land due to easements. Only a very small portion of state's five acres is actually on top of Pitcher Mountain. 5 acres is deeded to the state so long as they continue to use it for fire.

- o Potential sites in town: Richter on Route 9 - > good site that has access and power nearby, which would give good coverage along the route 9 corridor. Second site is the forest society owns a commercial broadcasting site where there are already big dishes on site. Site has been kept as a viable site with access, so a road could be constructed off the out lot which used to be the ____ residence. On the Richter and Forest Society site you would get better covered in the town than on the Melville tower site itself. Another willing landowner (Driscoll?) offered up a site which would open up most of Hidden Lake and up near Washington. Those three sites would provide adequate coverage for town of Stoddard and town of Washington and would require no new construction.

- For next meeting: consider school program involvement with Laura and potential program ideas

End Time: 9:14 pm

Next Meeting: 7:30, February 19th 2014, Town Hall, Stoddard, NH

Submitted by Merrilee Frable, Secretary