

Present: Scott Travers, Mark Girard, Gregg Thibodeau, Janet Slocum, Jennifer Bland, Ryanne (Select Board Representative)

Absent: Robin Ungeheuer

Public: Steve Murray, Katie Haas (Ball Rd), Lisa Hyatt

Meeting called to order at 7pm

Public

- Steve Murry (SM) provided some preliminary feedback from the recently conducted Master Plan survey. SM stated that land conservation and water quality were two of the most frequently selected priorities from the over 160 responses.
- Mark Girard (GM) recommended that SM should talk about how he is faring with solar power and write a blurb about his experience with it.
- Katy Hass (KH) was here with questions about the drift track that is coming into Lempster and the potential for development of regional impact (DRI). Gregg Thibodeau (GT) advised that he completed a conservation assessment of this projects impact on Acworth conservation. Vehicles must fuel up before they arrive, and no hazardous materials are going to be stored on the property. GT reviewed the impact to wildlife, wildlife habitats and water quality. GT stated that the impacts to Acworth conservation are minimal. KH asked about noise, MG advised that a study was done, and the vehicles must be street legal with no alterations to mufflers or exhaust. MG also stated that the project must adhere to all state and federal conservation requirements. Katy stated she is concerned about the increase in the traffic n rt 10 – MG stated that the increase in traffic was included in the documents for EIS/EIR/BO. GT, MG, advised she can obtain that information. GT is going to send KH contact information where KH can locate this document.

Organizational Changes

- Welcome Ryanne our new BOS member who will be the liaison for Concom.
- Lisa Hyatt (LH) is interested in being an alternate and the recommendation will go to the BOS. LH has a background in agriculture and conservation. She works for a large soil company. LH has contributed to our conservation efforts. GT made a motion for LH to be an alternate, Janet Slocum (JS) seconded the motion, it was approved unanimously. GT will make the recommendation to the BOS for the Monday meeting,
- Scott Travers (ST) & Robin Ungeheuer (RU) have agreed to stay on for another 3-year term.

Budget

- Turbidity meter – Concom has proposed to obtain a turbidity meter. By owning our own meter, we will be able to better engage the Department of Environmental

Services (DES) if there is a problem. MG and RU have used this meter previously and they have made recommendations on which one Concom should purchase. GT made a motion to purchase the Hach 2100Q, MG seconded it. This was approved unanimously.

The meter measures the clarity of the water and how clean and safe it is. (Cold River is running 80/100 for clarity.) MG explained how this meter is used and the benefits of it for the town.

RT had a question about maintenance and repair for this meter and MG advised unless it was dropped and broken there is no maintenance and it is wiped down with a cloth, RT asked where it was made, and MG advised that he has no idea where it is made.

- **Donation Request Orchard Hill** - Concom previously has donated \$500 to Orchard Hill – MG asked how many kids attend this summer camp/program/ GT will reach out and ask about Acworth participation and this will be tabled till the next meeting.

Conservation Plan – ConCom has started a conservation plan, and it is 2/3 complete, goal is to complete the conservation plan by town meeting 2025. The plan describes our goals. JS has created maps for the Conservation plan, the map shows different values of things we thought are important concern, water and wetlands, endangered plants, land conservation, we circled areas and created the co-occurrences map. From those grouped areas we picked 5 areas that we feel are the most important natural resources, and we created actions that we are taking and or plan to take. The goal is to have a set of maps that will assist us in our conservation planning. Ideally, we'd like to have a couple of base maps with several acetate overlays. GT asked Doolittle's if they do overlays, and they don't. MG and GT will continue to see if engineering or architectural firms are still leveraging clear overlays and where we could obtain them. JS did a great job with the creation of the maps.

Keyes Hollow wetlands and Crescent Lake are 2 very important "high value area" for us to focus on. Crescent Lake has a significant amount of attention being paid to it, Lake Hosts, Crescent Lake Monitoring (Crescent Lake monitoring team and DES), Crescent Lake Association sponsored Water Quality Team, land conservation are just some of the actions being taken. Therefore, ConCom has initiated actions for Keyes Hollow wetland.

Forest and Land Management

- **Hazardous Material** – Charlie Bradt (CB) loved it, LH created it, and she advised that there is room to add more information if needed. LH stated we don't have put everything on the flyer there are other avenues to obtain that information. Recommendation made to post the days/dates that the Keene Hazardous Material handling is open to Acworth residents at no charge, and we should post those days in Acworth newsletter and Facebook page.

- Two intents to cuts for Bascom were reviewed. These are annual cuts and there were no issues with either cut.
- Complaints & Permits
 - Kelin – DES sent letter to these people notifying the landowner about the pending investigation.
 - Sanville – hired an engineer to put a bridge over the Copeland Brook. ConCom met with engineer and approved the plans. Subsequently, RT observed the farm parcel and there is a concern that the parcel may be over farmed with animal waste flowing into the brook without any forested buffer area and this eventually could impact Crescent Lake. DES sent a letter confirming that the engineer submission was administratively complete and that a technical review is pending.
- South Acworth Forest – Forest Management
 - 81 acres, total area to be harvested is to be determined.
 - RT, GT and MG met with Forester and determined that our primary goals are forest health, forest resiliency for wildlife habitats with some concern for carbon sequestration and lastly harvesting value. There are a lot of low value hemlocks. There are tall hardwood trees which shuts out the light causing the hemlocks to grow fungus.
 - The forester will start drafting the forest plan for the end of the May. Concom will be able to review.
 - RT & MG met with the forester on site and determined the area where the landing will be, it is 0.22 miles from the Hillard/Grout bend from N to South. From the landing back to 123A Bridge rated for trucks, 1.7 miles. The Class VI Road will need to be improved, with fill and gravel. Will also need some gravel at the entrance. Action needs to be taken to confirm with the Select Board our ability to improve a Class VI Road for a town harvest, given that the town owns the land being harvested. Recommendation was made that we get guidance from the state to repair the road for logging; possibly involving a change to the classification. One option to limit the transportation of material would be to identify a borrow site in the forest. If the road is improved 0.22 miles of the road will be more passable.
 - NO ETA on when this is to start harvesting. (forester asked if this could be done before NOV) Any surplus should go back to the forest fund for land and forest management.
- Crescent Lake - two properties that we would conserve and keep them for the waterfowl, nesting loons.
 - Surveyor has been on this for 8 months, there are several disputed areas.
 - Having issues with the surveyor finishing his work. GT to draft a letter to get the survey to finish or turn over all existing documentation for ConCom to pursue another surveyor. Some examples of issues: a private garage on the town land, filled in wetlands and a question about the Unity border.

- Pan North (previously known as Fred Ernst property) – Jen Bland (JB) and GT to meet with the new owner Nicholas Osgood to talk about the property, his goals and our ConCom role. JB to send an email to him requesting this.
- Honey Brook – there is a piece of land we are going to transfer over to the state forest and has conservation value, Lawyers have agreed to the language, and we are waiting for the state so we can sign papers,
- Request from UNH to update conserved land data –JS will complete this update for them, and ConCom.
- Keyes Hollow Wetland Project
 - Agencies that can assist with funding include: Trout Unlimited and Ducks Unlimited. Both organizations will work with us to help conserve this area. GT to explore what DES Wetland Mitigation will do for additional funding. GT will also engage Taking Action For Wildlife team for guidance on project.
- One of the first areas we focus on at Keyes Hollow is the class VI road which now has a stream running down it. Mother nature is creating a bypass channel drying up the wetland. Wetlands can store millions of gallons of water in a rain flood event, but the wetland needs to be healthy.

Training, Education and Communications

- UNH COVERT training – RT is going to attend this wildlife habitat training and learn how to create and preserve habitats. The fee is \$50. GT made a motion to approve and ST 2nd this. Motion was approved unanimously.
 - Newsletter
 - Our first newsletter will be published in May to Facebook and Acworth Newsletter.
 - Contents would include an introduction to conservation, who is on the conservation, what we are doing to conserve land, with a description of areas of land conserved on Crescent Lake with the nesting loon, water quality, wildlife habitat, and here are some additional topics. The newsletter would be published quarterly, distributed in the town newsletter and on Facebook. 1st one would go out in May. Suggested topics include: commission goals, land conservation and pollinators. GT will do the outline for the first one,
 - Town Hall Review for the Conservation Plan would like to have 20/30 ppl review it,
 - GT completed the climate change impacts course – GT can identify the risks, actions to be taken and it was a great 8-week course. 33 people started and 4 people finished.
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- **Next Meeting** – 8 May 2024 at 7pm in the Town Hall.
 - **Meeting Adjourned** – 8:26pm.

Conservation Commission Members:

- Jennifer Bland (co-chair)
- Gregg Thibodeau (co-chair)
- Rynne Schoonover, (Select Board rep.)
- Mark Girard
- Scott Travers
- Janet Slocum
- Rob Traver
- Robin Ungeheuer (alt)
- Lisa Hyatt (alt)

Contact information:

- Webpage <https://www.acworthnh.net/conservation-commission>
- E-mail acworthconservation@gmail.com
- Meeting 7:00 p.m. every 2nd Wednesday of month at the Town Hall
- Mail 13 Town Hall Rd., P.O. Box 37, Acworth, NH 03601, Attention: Conservation Commission
- Phone 603-835-6879 (town office)