

**Draft Minutes
Gilman Forest Committee
of the Tamworth Conservation Commission
Meeting of December 11, 2009**

Present: Ned Beecher, David Little, John Mersfelder, Chele Miller, Nelson O'Bryan, Kate Thompson

Meeting called to order at 9:30 am.

News Release: Ned wrote and others helped with a news release that went to area papers last week, with a few photos from Nelson. The Conway Daily Sun printed the story on Thursday. The CCI and Mountain Ear were planning to print it this week as well. It makes note of progress to date (getting over \$100,000 mark) and announces the challenge match.

Donations to date: Nelson reported that donations and pledges have resulted in \$97,881 in total project funds raised and in hand prior to today, including the TCC contribution and what is being held at SPNHF. An additional contribution today, of which \$2500* is allocated to the general past fundraising, results in a total raised to date of \$100,381.

In addition, \$12,000 has been pledged and/or contributed to creating a challenge matching fund; the amounts donated from four donors for that fund are \$1,000, \$3,000, \$3,000, and \$5,000. The four donors were specifically asked to contribute to creating this matching challenge fund.

An additional \$2500* was just received, which stands as the first contribution toward meeting the match challenge. This means that we still have to raise \$9500 to meet the match challenge. The deadline, published in our news release printed this week, is January 31, 2010.

*These two \$2,500 contributions are each half of a \$5,000 contribution from one person, but are being allocated as noted with the permission of the contributor.

Letter to neighbors and others

There was considerable discussion and work on developing a large (5 1/2 x 8 1/2) card to mail to neighbors around the Gilman Forest property and others. Kate is drawing a cartoon of our fundraising progress and goals, which will appear on the entire front of the card. The other side will include the address and something like the following:

The Gilman Forest...

- In your neighborhood
- Key piece of connectivity between the Ossipees and the Sandwich Range
- **Available now...** for protection.

Cost to conserve it: \$140,000.

Raised so far: \$100,381.

The final push...

- Generous donors have created a \$12,000 challenge.
- Give before January 31st, and your tax-deductible* donation will be doubled.

Why?

- View from Cleveland Hill Road across the Gilman Forest to the Ossipees
- Otters playing in Mill Brook

- Porcupine, bobcat, beech trees and black bears
- Moose
- Water quality in Mill Brook

Wouldn't it be great if everyone in the neighborhood gave at least a little?

Please help us meet this \$12,000 challenge.

Details at TamworthConservationCommission.org – see “Special Projects.”

*All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. You can choose whether to donate for tax year 2009 or 2010.

To complete the card and mailing, Kate will get the cartoon to Nelson on Sunday or Monday. David will print the 100 neighbor mailing labels we had used before (and expand the number, as he sees fit). Nelson, Kate, and Ned will get the cards copied, probably on a strong green heavy card stock. Chele will coordinate a get together to write personal notes on cards. Goal is to mail the cards by Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

Access by horses on the Gilman:

Ned reported on a conversation with Tom Howe of SPNHF regarding the issue raised by at least one neighbor to the Forest regarding the potential that the Society would not allow horses on the trails. Ned and Tom agreed that this needed discussion between the land steward decision-maker at the Society, this Committee, and the interested neighbors. Tom is having the land steward person call Ned to get the discussion and a possible meeting going.

Discussion ensued. The Committee was unanimous in strongly stating that horseback riding on the property has been a historical use and should not be curtailed. It is limited – not commercial, probably several horses per week, at the most. To have a ban or sever restriction on horses on the property will jeopardize our ability to gain support for this project – including funding – within the neighborhood. It will also jeopardize some support for future land protection efforts in the area. Ned will talk with the SPNHF land steward and Tom, expressing this sentiment, and draft a letter from the Committee/Commission to make the record clear on what our position is.

Appraisal: Ned also meant to report that, when speaking with Tom Howe, he learned that an appraisal of the property has not yet been completed by SPNHF's appraiser.

Adjournment: Ned moved, John seconded, and all approved at 12:30 pm.

Draft minutes respectfully submitted by Ned Beecher, 12/12/09.