

**DRAFT MINUTES
TCC Conservation Lands Review Committee
October 7, 2011**

Draft minutes to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting.

Present: Ned Beecher, John Mersfelder, Chele Miller, Bob Seston, Kate Thompson

Meeting called to order at 9:15 am.

Reich property – potential conservation easement

The Society for Protection of NH Forests has negotiated to have a donation from the Reich brothers of a conservation easement on this 103 acre parcel south of Gilman Forest, south of Hackett Hill Road. They wish to move ahead with this soon, perhaps by the end of the year. The only costs incurred will be all legal costs, stewardship, and a survey. Tom Howe and Ned have discussed sharing some of the costs between the TCC and the Forest Society by having the TCC raise funds and/or pay for the survey only.

This Committee discussed the project overall, noting:

- Wildlife value: Fisher evident on Bearcamp Trackers outing last winter. This is a forested lot with a variety of tree types; good for some wildlife.
- With the Thompson Trust tract to the south and west, this lot provides connectivity from Gilman / Mill Brook / Cleveland Hill Road all the way to the Bearcamp River and So. Tamworth.
- This lot could provide a potential trail for public use in the future.

The Committee then discussed the pros and cons of TCC involvement in the project in support of the Forest Society. It was noted that, even without TCC involvement, the Forest Society might likely go ahead anyway with this project. What are the benefits of us helping? They are:

- Executory interest held by the Town
- Guaranteed public access – Forest Society is willing to include this in the Cons. Easement
- Possibility of a deeded right of way for trail mentioned above (maybe using the existing right of way to the Thompson Trust land), its future location ; Ned will bring this idea to Tom Howe to see if the Forest Society would accept this
- Protection of the property, without removing the property from tax roles
- Continued cooperation with Forest Society, which has parallel interests for conservation

There was brief consideration of working in cooperation in fundraising effort with SPNHF, rather than just splitting costs and/or digging into the Conservation Fund. But it was agreed that there is not a lot of time, and we have other things to work on, so keeping this simple, without a lot of fundraising effort, would be best.

Recommendation to the Commission:

Kate moved, John second: Motion to recommend the TCC proceed with supporting this project, as proposed. TCC will get survey bids as soon as possible. The TCC should then define the level of funding from the Conservation Fund after learning the actual survey cost.... Vote: all present were in favor of this recommendation.

It was agreed that we will want to see a draft of the conservation easement soon and some assurance of a right to create the trail mentioned above. Ned will bring the recommendation to the full TCC next Monday evening at its regular meeting.

Bearcamp Valley Farm and adjoining lands – further conservation efforts

- Estate planning would be good information for these landowners to be given to consider, especially to address concern about leaving land to children and possibly steep estate taxes.
- The for further action on this ongoing conservation effort is to follow up on action steps defined in minutes of recent past CLRC meetings – Ned & David White will get things going in next couple of weeks.

Adjournment. Ned moved, Kate seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.