

# **Tamworth Conservation Commission**

Draft Minutes – September 10, 2012

## ***Draft minutes to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting***

**Call to Order** – Nelson called meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Commissioners present were Nelson O'Bryan (Vice-chair), Rich Gerard, Chele Miller, Bob Seston, William Batchelder and Margaret Rieser. Ned Beecher was absent. Nelson designated Alternate Charlie Townsend to sit in for Ned.

Also present: Bob Abraham, Selectman; Skip Nason, Planning Board; Wendy Scribner, UNH-CE County Forester; Bob Hardy, NH-DRED Division of Forests and Lands; Dan DeHart, NH-DRED Division of Forests and Lands; Betsy Loughran; Leslie Johnson.

**Approval of Minutes for 08/15/12 and 08/29/12 (public hearing)** – Margaret moved to accept the minutes of the 08/15/12 meeting; Chele seconded; motion carried. Margaret moved to accept the minutes of the 08/29/12 public hearing; Batch seconded; motion carried.

### **Public Comment on Timber Harvest , Hemenway State Forest**

Nelson explained that this agenda item was arranged by Ned in response to concerns of Tamworth residents over the recent timber harvest in Hemenway State Forest (HSF). The TCC has no jurisdiction in this matter but is acting as a facilitator for communication between the town residents and the NH Division of Forests and Lands (NH-DFL). Nelson advised that the State and County foresters would give a presentation; after which, the meeting would be open to public comment and discussion.

Dan DeHart gave an overview of the history and mission of NH-DFL. Along with protection of natural resources and public use, the benefits of management include timber products and economic concerns. Timber harvesting accounts for about two thirds of the tree growth in State Forests, which means that the forests are growing (older, bigger trees) over time. The overall management plan is to maintain diverse forest structure (all age classes represented) with a rotation time of about 105 years, which in HSF is equivalent to approximately 20 acres cleared per year. HSF is a State Forest and therefore NH-DFL is accountable to the public.

Bob Hardy described the planning and implementation process for the recent timber harvest. HSF currently has the older age classes over-represented. The plan is for 10% of the forest to consist of wildlife openings (about 200 acres). Including wetlands, there were 83 acres of wildlife openings before the harvest. In this harvest operation, hardwood stands were clear-cut to control beech and encourage hardwood regeneration, as well as create wildlife openings and Class I (seedling/sapling) areas; softwood stands received a shelterwood treatment to encourage growth of understory pines. Buffers of 100-150 feet were left along the road, as well as 25 foot buffers along streams. In one area where wildlife activity was heavy, the hemlocks and 50% of the beech and maple were left standing. There are two more cuts planned for the next ten years: one between Hemenway Road and the Swift River, and one southeast of Fowlers Mill Road. The total value of the timber products harvested is around \$80,000. The cutting is done; close-out work planned to be done includes regrading and seeding the North Road, and regrading, liming, fertilizing, seeding and mulching of the landing.

There were various public comments thanking NH-DFL for the buffer along the road and commending the logging operators for their overall conduct. Betsy Loughran asked about pushing the slash back about 25 feet along North Road. Leslie Johnson asked if a path could be cut through the slash for access to a large boulder that offered good views. Bob Hardy said he would look into it and see what could be done. He noted that the slash is distributed throughout the cut area to return nutrients to the soil. Betsy Loughran asked what the management status was for the cut areas, vies-a-vie a park (recreation) vs timber harvesting. Bob H replied that the area is zoned for timber management. Areas managed for recreation include the Big Pines trail system, the fire tower and area around the summit, and the snowmobile trails. Betsy L asked if TCC could post notices in the Tamworth Exchange and the Civic News when TCC receives a notice for a planned cut in HSF. Nelson replied that it could be done. Bob H said that the State can accommodate any public meetings and incorporate them into the planning process as long as NH-DFL is notified within three weeks following the notification sent out by NH-DFL. The public meeting doesn't have to occur within the three week period but NH-DFL has to be notified that a

meeting is requested. Leslie J asked who determines the cut/no-cut zones and, ultimately, what will be left uncut. Bob replied that the recreation zones are a result of formal agreements with TCC (Big Pines/Fire Tower) and Ossipee Valley Snowmobile Club (snowmobile trails). The Big Pines trails have a no-cut buffer around them but the snowmobile trails could be cut up to the trail to improve views. Other areas that won't be cut are stream buffers and a certain percentage of the older age classes. Charlie asked if there was a formal process for making more no-cut recreation zones. Bob H said that TCC could contact the State about adopting a road or trail. The proposal would have to be reviewed by the state team (comprised of DRED, F&G, NHNHI, NH State Archeologist, etc.). Rich asked if an interpretive sign could be placed near the clear-cuts. Bob H said that there's a good possibility of that. Discussion followed concerning placement and content of the signs. Suggestions included putting a sign along North Road and having a sign near a recent (10 – 15 years) clear-cut to demonstrate the regenerative capability of the forest.

There being no other comments or questions, Nelson closed the public comment session.

### **Administrative**

**Treasurer's Report** – Margaret reported that the balance remaining in the annual budget is \$3735, 60% of budget. Invoice received from T. Swanick for work on Eastern Field Conservation Easement for \$820.50. It was previously agreed to pay this out of the annual budget as much as possible; otherwise, cover the balance from the Conservation Fund. There is \$430 remaining in the professional fees line. Funds remaining in tower expenses, signs and boxes and dues, subscriptions and meetings are not expected to be depleted; they should be more than enough to cover the balance. Margaret moved to pay the invoice out of the operating budget. Charlie seconded. Motion carried.

**2013 Annual Budget** – Nelson announced that the Selectmen are asking that proposed annual budgets for 2013 be submitted by October 19. Bob A. said that the sooner the budgets are received, the better. Commissioners should review the budget and be ready to work out a proposed budget at the October 8 meeting.

**Announcements** – Received copy and plans for the revised conservation easement to be held by LRCT on land of Chocorua Valley Lumber.

**TCC Organization** – Discussed the memo of Ned Beecher that he would not be able to serve as TCC Chair after March, 2013. The unanimous sentiment of the Commission is that he should complete his term on the Commission (expires 2014). His background and knowledge would be needed for a smooth transition in administration.

### **Committee/Coordinator Reports**

**Selectmen** – Bob A. reiterated: Get the proposed budget in to the Selectmen; the sooner the better.

**Planning Board** – Skip: nothing new to report.

**Conservation Lands Review Committee** – “Eastern Field” (tax map lot 420/14) – The conservation easement is completed. The deed was signed. Ned recently got a call from Bob Floyd asking if the TCC is interested in purchasing an easement on his other two lots (south side of Route 25, Tax Map 420/7 & 9). Ned thinks that if they are done, they should be done together.

**Public Education and Outreach** –

Chele stated that there will shortly be another 15 Hikin' Heron patches being awarded. She suggested ordering another 100 patches, which should cost about \$200. Bob moved to approve purchasing an additional 100 Hikin' Heron patches. Margaret seconded. Motion carried. Chele asked if the Hikin' Heron application forms should be returned to the applicant along with the patch or discarded. They are no longer needed because all the information is recorded in a spreadsheet. The consensus was to recycle the forms.

Ned presented a slide talk at CLA/CLCF annual meeting on Aug. 25. They have an interest in

keeping up communications; they do the conservation/land protection in northeastern Tamworth, which makes Lake Chocorua basin the beautiful place it is. They are developing land trust standards and a new monitoring program for deed covenants.

**Easement Monitoring –**

Rich reminded all that it is time to monitor easements. He confirmed with Nelson that Nelson would take on the Beaver Brook lot. Monitoring on the Eastern and western fields was discussed; for this year, putting together the baseline documentation will serve for monitoring the easements.

Baseline documentation needed for Bearcamp Valley Farm easements – The Administrative Assistant can put these together this fall for review by the Commission.

GRANIT Database – The Administrative Assistant is working on submitting to GRANIT eight conservation easements with TCC legal interest that are not in the database. Three are done; they should all be completed by the next TCC meeting.

**Managed Lands and Trails –**

Fall Trail Work Day – Nelson announced that there will be a fall work day on the Bearcamp River Trail, Hackett Hill Wildlife Management Area. A section of the trail needs to be relocated. It will be a big job; plenty of work for everyone. Date to be announced.

Big Pines Sign – Chele reported that the sign repair work is almost complete. It should be ready in 2 or 3 weeks. The State will deliver it to Tamworth.

**Adjourn** – There being no other business brought before the Commission, Batch moved, Margaret seconded, motion carried 9:10 pm.

*Submitted by Chris Conrod, TCC Administrative Assistant.*