

EATON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

July 8, 2024

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were Marnie Cobbs, Paul Nuccio, Dick Fortin, Robin Nuccio, Holly Fortin and Tom Head. Also present were Dagmar von Schwerin, Steve Kafka and Lindsay Kafka.

2. **ADMINISTRATION** – Minutes of the June 10 meeting were accepted.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Land Conservation Fund	\$ 9,448.53	
Forest Management Fund	\$18,273.44	CD \$30,998.72
Foss Mountain Fund	\$15,736.72	CD \$10,332.91
Conservation Fund	\$15,112.00	CD \$10,332.91
TOTALS	\$58,571.19	CD \$52,664.54 \$110,235.73
Donation box at trailhead	\$74.00	
Website Donation Income	\$0	

Tin Mountain requested another \$20 to make an even \$1,000 - Dick will donate \$20

Treasurer's report was accepted.

4. **SELECTMEN'S REPORT** – NHDOT has commissioned Coleman to replace the culvert on 153 between the stop sign and EVS with an open bottom culvert to expedite fish passage. Route 153 will be closed for 5 days in July. Notices will be sent out to residents.

Caretakers of a private owner's land came to Selectmen with a plan to remove wood debris from Snowbrook near 153. They understood that DES said they did not need a permit. Snowbrook is in designated wetlands, and the debris in the stream is actually desirable from an environmental standpoint in slowing down the stream's flow in heavy rains and melts. DES does not have the manpower to come out to assess the proposed work. Since this might be an urgent matter, Dick will call DES to verify that a permit is needed. ECC or Selectmen will reach out to the landowner concerned to keep communications open and helpful.

5. **PLANNING BOARD** – A joint meeting of the Select Board, Planning Board and ECC to discuss the questionnaire and input to the Town Master Plan will be held on July 22nd at 6:00.

6. **FOSS MANAGEMENT** – Ryan Bushnell signed the lease to pick blueberries offering 85 cents per pint, up from 75 cents per pint. Lower Brooks Pasture has a lot of berries. Upper Brooks had span worm last year and has no berries. Ryan is hesitating to pick in July as he feels the proportion of green to ripe berries is still not profitable, however he waited too long last year and some of the crop was over ripe. Dick will check the fields and call Ryan to come earlier this year if ripe.

Ryan and ECC are looking for people to help pick berries. Pickers will need to be good at using a rake. Paul will pick for a couple of days. Others to ask may be Timo Gould and Rick Wilcox's son who has a farm in Conway.

Dick cut hardwood sprouts and broadleaf spirea in Brooks Pasture and north of the trail again, focusing on areas where Ryan picks berries. Dick feels the frequent cutting in June and July this year is helping to gain ground in these crucial areas. He was reminded to track his time. Paul will go up with Dick to learn how and when to cut. Paul should track time too.

Horizon Forestry is due to cut the part of the ridge that did not get burned, all of Brooks Pasture and the area north of the trail. Since it is better to cut saplings in spring / summer when the trees' energy is not stored in the roots Marnie will call to see whether Horizon could come twice, perhaps cutting just the ridge in the spring and the fields in fall when they usually come, but likely they will come late fall as usual. Also, USFWS contacted Marnie about a possible burn in spring 2025 of areas needing cutting and parts that did not get burned last year.

The holes left after removal of boulders can be pretty nasty. Filling should be upgraded to sand and/or cheap gravel top-dressed with clean bark chips (no contact with knotweed) as plain bark just mulches down. This work could be done after a burn. Stubby could get the sand/gravel up the hill for us.

The photographer for a recent wedding at Foss offered to collaborate with ECC to rewrite our permit to encourage photographers to make a donation to Foss.

7. TOWN LAND MANAGEMENT – Commission members were asked to review the most recent draft of the Master Plan Recreation section and send / bring edits to Marnie.

ECC discussed the draft of proposed questionnaire, specifically #7 about Foss Mountain. Discussed costs of trails, also from the perspective of USVLT where Lindsay K was a Board member. Trails take a lot of work and money to keep up and must be carefully planned to protect habitat and wildlife. NIMBA and Backcountry Alliance are experienced in planning trails and other recreation options. If this question is included, it should use actual \$ and time donation amounts to give perspective. Instead of asking only about Foss Mountain as a recreation option, it might be better to ask what Eaton residents like to do more broadly.

Discussed the possibility of making the questionnaire much more general as some of the questions seem to be leading respondents down specific paths. Help from NHACC in drafting questions would be useful. May also be good to follow the CIP process with 2 public meetings for discussion and feedback. Timing in this divided election year might also be problematic. The Town learned during the CIP and budget vote that it's all about quality of life, including costs for many people. We need to outline what the most important points are and let people give feedback from their perspective.

8. FOREST MANAGEMENT – no issues

9. WATER MANAGEMENT – Cliff will dive Crystal this summer to check for invasives. Discussion was had regarding Eaton's part in protecting the south end of Conway Lake from aquatic invasives.

10. OTHER BUSINESS –

ECC will submit Steve Kafka's name as an Alternate for the Selectmen for review.

Tom H received the key to the EVS donation box at the store and will check monthly.

Paul and Marnie will check and clean birdhouses and the duck box by the cellar hole off Willis Bean road near Foss Mtn Road junction.

The south cove of Conway Lake along Potter Rd is very busy with commercial outfits bringing in boats from as far away as Great Glen. Altho there is a small area identified on USFWS NH Fish and Game maps showing access, increased use is causing people to make new access points, many through private land, and park in restricted areas on Potter Road. Use of this access area may be grandfathered in at this point, but maybe not for commercial use. A request to remove the site from USFWS NH F & G maps was submitted by the CLCA last time, but since the property is actually in Eaton, maybe it should come from ECC highlighting conservation concerns this time if we decide to proceed. Since access is through private property, the Selectmen have no jurisdiction. Steve K. will do research to find out whether commercial use is allowable and/or grandfathered, and what the process would be to have the site removed from USFWS NH F & G maps. Marnie and Steve will draft a letter to send to boat rental companies asking them not to use the site. More signage, additional boulders and brush dragged in at new access points may deter some commercial groups. Local individuals and families boating and fishing (culling catfish in the past!) are not meant to be discouraged, only larger commercial scale groups.

Signage at water entry points should be simplified and very visual, rather than wordy. Maria of CLCA may know where signage is most needed and help develop new signs. Paul added signs at Hatch and Long Pond and at the parking area on 153 near the Church. The 10 HP max sign at the Crystal Lake launch has grown in and needs to be cleared. Ossipee Lake has a lot of millfoil and Marnie just talked to Ossipee residents who were fishing off of the 153 parking area.

Elections for Commission members will be held in August.

Next meeting: August 12, 2024 at 6 pm

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm

Respectfully submitted by Dagmar von Schwerin, Recording Secretary