

Francestown Conservation Commission

Francestown, NH

Approved Minutes

October 2, 2017

Members present: Shuffleton, Heath, Holmes, Hardwick, StJean, Haubrich, Marshall, Crooker

Others in attendance: Ron Klemarczyk

Meeting came to order 7:33PM

New Business-

Forester Ron Klemarczyk re: hemlocks/ other management activities- Our CM Town Forest and Shattuck Forest areas are listed together as a combined 28 acres and new regulations state you can't combine multiple areas together, they need to be listed as 2 tree farms. These areas are due for re-inspection and Ron will do that for us. Ron stated that Tree Farms have become much more complicated to establish and maintain, there is a lot more documentation required and more detailed management plan and as a result people are dropping out of the program.

Emerald Ash Borer- The white and black Ash are being wiped out

Hemlock Wooly Adelgid- Hemlock as a timber species is not as valuable as others, it tends to grow in wet areas which tend to be left as buffer zones, but it is very important as habitat for many wildlife species such as deer/turkey/grouse. Winter cover is very critical for wildlife, it keeps snow levels down, shades water and keeps it cooler. We have a lot of Hemlock in Shattuck Pond area and some in CM Forest. Options for control of this pest- there is a herbicide that can be painted on the bark, and a new pesticide that can be sprinkled on the ground.

Warmer winters are a main cause of getting these invasive bugs. Two very frigid winters would kill back the bugs. When do we harvest? In Shattuck there are some very large Hemlocks so if we see infestation, we might want to harvest. We need to take an inventory to watch for infestation. Wooly Adelgid and Red Pine Scale are spread by birds. Our Hemlocks in town are fairly spread out so if we find it in town, it should be isolated cases.

Hardwick asked for recommendations from Ron as to how to monitor for pests. Ron recommended walking through the areas using a grid type pattern and check the trees, not only on lower branches, but also up high. Sometimes the porcupines will chew off the top branches and you will see them on the ground in late spring and also mid fall. Marshall suggested a workshop to learn to identify Wooly Adelgid infestation-maybe property owners would be interested in learning about this also. Hardwick suggested a program for next spring and Ron will go into Shattuck in the next couple weeks and take a look for any infestation. Heath asked

when we should consider another harvest and Ron will check our plan to verify the timing of this.

Wetland Permit Application; Tom Hoey Map9/Lot 17.2- Tom Hoey has requested a special exception for his property on Poor Farm Rd. It has steep slopes and a wetland at the bottom. In the past, a variance for a septic system leach field and tank was approved with a condition that as much vegetation as possible shall be maintained. There has now been clear cutting so this condition has been violated. The current request is to move the driveway for better sight line but this moves it into the wetland. Crossing a wetland with a driveway requires a special exception and he has not applied for this yet. The board feels that before signing off on the expedited wetland permit application Mr. Hoey needs to apply for a special exception and as there has been clear cutting, there is a violation and this issue needs to be resolved.

Hardwick recommends #1- sending a letter to Tom Hoey explaining that we will not consider signing because there is currently no request for a special exception and he needs a special exception to construct a driveway over wetlands. #2 drafting a letter to the selectmen explaining our concerns and recommendations that he needs a special exception and he is in violation due to the clear cut. Our recommendations are that he replant native vegetation 50 feet around the wetland buffer area. Hardwick also suggests we recommend to the planning board that an erosion control specialist oversee the implementation of the erosion control plan.

Kiosk repair- Hardwick spoke with Paul StCyr and he can rebuild the kiosk. Hardwick made a motion that we approve expending money from the conservation fund for the repair and modification of the Farrington Rd trail head kiosk as we discussed at the July 16, 2017 work meeting. Heath 2nd. All in Favor. Motion approved.

Old Business

Property issues; Crotched Mt easement; building removal- Gary does not want to do the building removal. Brad went up to look at it and Jamie from the Selectmen's office is trying to contact Don Crooker, who may know someone who can remove it for us. We will give a deadline of Veterans Day weekend to take it down so we will have time to remove the debris.

Dinsmore Brook Area and vehicles/gates/signage- Hardwick was informed that someone saw a Jeep out there @ Labor Day weekend. Hardwick will follow up with Jamie about a gate for this area. Heath went to the Bureau of Trails and they were out of signs so he will go back in a couple weeks to pick up signs.

Joan Hanchett Nature Series Program update- There will be a program on Loons on October 27th at 6:30 PM at the Frankestown Elementary School. Marshall is meeting with Martine and they are going to recommend a better sound system if we continue to pay for programs to be held at the school. Haubrich will make up posters and post in the library and P.O. and also

notify Bennington and Greenfield ConComs. StJean will submit the information about this event to the Monadnock Ledger calendar. We will also post this event on the town website.

Wharton Town Forest; schedule walk-We will schedule this at a later date

Outreach and Educational programs; interpretive Fall walk/promoting an easier trail- 15 people (all age adults and children)attended the High Five walk led by Ben Haubrich. We will think of another similar walk to schedule for the spring. Robin Haubrich suggested a winter hike on Bullard Hill Rd.

Invasive Plant Mapping/management strategy/ workshop with Doug Cygan- About 28 people (including 4 from Greenfield), attended the workshop with Doug Cygan and it was very informative.

Trail Google Group- This was very active for the first 2 weeks. Because we are a public organization we are required to open it up to the public. If we put a link on the town website we would need to be clear about the limitations of what could/should be done as far as trail maintenance. We discussed pros and cons of this opening up the trails to more users and would need to encourage responsible trail users and discourage misuse. StJean will reconfigure the google group to be open to the public, to anyone interested in trails and this would not be a ConCom group.

Minutes-

Marshall moved to accept minutes from the work meeting on July 16, 2017 and minutes from our meeting on Aug 7, 2017 as written. Heath 2nd. All approved. Minutes accepted as written.

Announcements-

Marshall said Paul Marshall would be happy to mow the field. We need to tag trees before he does this.

Holmes reported seeing several bats this year after several years of no bat sightings. Marshall did the bat count at a barn at Willard Pond and counted @ 100 bats.

Jim Howe of Red House Rd contacted Hardwick saying he was concerned that he had not seen as many fireflies, lightning bugs or moths this year.

Crooker motion to adjourn. Shuffleton 2nd. Meeting adjourned 9:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Holmes, Clerk