

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES –
OCTOBER 15, 2022
4:30 PM OUTDOOR SITE VISIT**

The meeting was convened at 4:39 pm. Given the outside location, it was not recorded.

Attendees: Irit Levy, Chair; John Recine, ex-officio; Jennie Lucas; Rick Van de Poll, environmental consultant; Linda Coleman, member of the public.

These minutes will be more detailed than usual given the lack of a video recording.

The purpose of this meeting per the agenda was to visit the town-owned conservation parcel – lot 32c, with Rick. However, while we did walk the northern edge of the parcel, the main focus of the meeting was discussing in greater detail the Snows Brook mitigation project, and next steps pertinent to that. A survey of the lot should definitely be done because there are insufficient boundary markers visible and no clear demarcation between 32c and lot 32b and Forest Service (FS) land.

Rick has an updated information packet; he gave one copy to Irit and said he would send it to her electronically so that she can disburse it to the members of the Commission.

Since our last meeting with Rick, he met with Mark Prout from the Pemi-district FS. He put Rick in touch with Landon R., also from the Pemi-district. Landon is the point person for grants and is happy to help with this project.

Rick currently has a 3-year grant from National Fish and Wildlife (NFWF – pronounced Niff-Wiff). He is thinking our project would be the perfect use for the 3rd year portion of the grant. He needs to find out if NFWF grants can be spend on FS Land. He said this project could not possible be started before 2024, the FS approval process takes that long. He thinks this should fall under the “Small Project Days” portion of the FS process, which is a more expedited path, as opposed to the “Integrated Resource Management” process which is for more complex projects. That being said, it still takes quite a bit of time – it requires FS

engineering review; the state has to do an historical review (to make sure we are not impacting any known archeological sites); a biological assessment will need to be done at the federal level; and these are just the items Rick could name off the top of his head.

He strongly recommends that the town write a letter to the Forest Service supervisor (Derek Ibarguen) explaining the need for this project: Snows Brook is an incised stream with virtually no sediment trapping. This lowers the water quality and leads to increased sediment deposit into Corcoran Pond. Overflow areas that the stream used to be able to access have become cut off due to erosion. We should get a draft to him that he can review and revise with us.

Tin Mountain (Rick's group) would do all the stream work, but any non-stream work would be done by the FS.

We walked upstream from the bridge near the Waterville Place condominiums. Rick pointed out two potential locations for flood plain restoration; his preferred spot is the one furthest upstream which would utilize a side channel that flows to FS land for the flood plain. This area is currently dry and flat and is well over an acre, which would be plenty of room. This was clearly a flood plain in the past, but it is no longer available due to the deeply eroded stream bed. The process would basically be to add to an existing log jam (this is a literal log jam!) which is already partly in place which would allow the stream to reengage the high-water channel and flow into the flood plain where sediment can settle. He is not sure the FS will approve this location – since it is entirely on FS land and doesn't necessarily benefit the FS. If they say no, we would move to the second overflow channel which is closer to the condos, and this would utilize lot 32c as the flood plain.

Two culverts would need to be enlarged along the cross-country trail between this proposed flood plain and lot 32c. Rick prefers open bottom culverts (which enable improved wildlife passage and aquatic organism passage) but they are more expensive. The first culvert services the second (not preferred) of the potential high-water channels. The second culvert services an intermittent stream in the flood plain area, which is a positive because we don't have to worry that reengaging this flood plain would mean increasing flow into a perennial stream. The third culvert closest to the new house being built is sufficient as it is because

it is simply draining a small intermittent stream that comes from outside of the proposed flood plain area.

Some other considerations discussed – there are several grants that could be applied for – any State funds would have to be used on private (town-owned) land, not federal land; local source water protection grants might be a possibility.

Whether or not the FS approves this project could possibly hinge on two main things: does this benefit the FS, or just private entities, and is this a FS priority given everything else they have to do?

Other topics:

Rick said the biggest environmental challenge facing many communities is storm water management – essentially meaning that we need to be sure to have properly sized culverts, accessible flood plains and other storm water storage measures so that town infrastructure (roads, buildings) are not damaged and destroyed.

Rick said the construction project runoff occurring at lot 32c is an absolute DES violation and could be reported to them. We will be preparing a report for Director Noyes.

Rick took a look at the culvert that was replaced by the intersection near the golf clubhouse and said that while it is an improvement, he would have preferred to see an even larger culvert there.

The meeting ended at 6:01 pm.

“We are located on N’dakinna, which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook, and Wabanaki Peoples, past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the land and waterways and the alnobak (people) who have stewarded N’dakinna throughout the generations.”