

## *DRAFT MINUTES*

### **Exeter Conservation Commission February 9, 2010**

**Introduction:** *Bobby Aldrich, Selectmen's Rep., Ginny Raub, Michelle Newman, Carlos Guindon, Kristen Murphy, Town Resource Planner and Peter Richardson, Chairman*

#### **New Business:**

1. The Chairman introduced Mr. Phil Auger, Forester with the UNH Cooperative Extension Out Reach Program. Mr. Auger was invited to talk with Commission as the ECC moves forward to revisit the Forest Management Plans for the Town Forests. Mr. Auger remarked Exeter has been managing its forest resources in one form or another since the 1940's. When forest management is talked of today, it is a broader spectrum than in years past. There can be the conscious decision to do nothing (in the forest) or pursue extremely active management perhaps mowing every year or so to keep habitat features active to everything in-between. Today along with recreation forest management can involve research, cultural protection and vernal pools. Much of the forests in this area of the country have evolved without human intervention and their structure is disturbance based. Most forests are influenced by wind and the best management practice is to mimic nature: recreating disturbance but in a controlled manner. Mr. Auger stated a wildlife biologist plays an important role in a forest management plan and though Exeter does have a professional forester he is confident he will be consulting the biologists. He further discussed and defined the various cutting regimes and suggested visiting the Extension website for more information on forest and trees. ([extension.unh.edu](http://extension.unh.edu)). It was also suggested the Commission consider sending a member to the NH Natural Resources Volunteers program held every year in September. 1

Questions for Mr. Auger concerned leaving downed trees to "rot" on the forest floor to serve as habitat for various organisms and creatures necessary for the health of the forest, when cutting, the leaving of mature trees, opened spaces and stone walls as landmarks, site accessibility as a factor in cutting and management, regeneration and the requirements for becoming and maintaining the designation of a certified Tree Farm. Exeter Town forests are certified Tree Farms and by definition be 10 acres or more and have a written plan for future management and follow the management plan. The owner must demonstrate a commitment to stewardship of their forest for multiple values.

From the public, Mr. Langdon Plumer, Exeter resident and an owner of a tree farm in another part of NH asked if there was any advantage to the Town for having a designated Tree Farm. Mr. Auger replied, "No. It is just a pat on the back, good job."

Mr. Auger was thanked for coming and his informative discussion.

2. Ms. Murphy prepared a Work Plan for the Commission and sent it electronically to the members prior to the meeting. It highlighted the basic tasks before the group but then went into specifics as to a named project, members assisting and the quarters of the year the tasks were to be undertaken and possibly completed. The proposed tasks were read and comments noted. The Chair asked if there were any part of the tasks members were willing to commit to please advise Kristen.

3. Ms. Murphy prepared a tri-folded brochure for the Little River Conservation Area located on Brentwood Road. It listed the size of area, general history, access to trail locations, length, difficulty, and compatible uses. A map of the Little River Trail Network was on the back side with legend and the four forms of Conservation Land in the area differentiated by colored markings. Reaction from members was very positive but Ms. Murphy asked for comments before the final printing. She stated this is what she ultimately wished to do for each of the areas. Discussion followed on where the pamphlets would be available and would they be as these (colored) or in black and white print. Ms. Murphy stated they could be printed on a high quality laminate paper or printed from home from Town web site but there would be an increased cost for the laminate paper. (Currently, the Planning Office sells maps of the Oaklands and Henderson Swasey but without the trail descriptions)

Mr. Aldrich, after stating he wished they could be printed on the laminate paper and made available at no charge, did present the motion to print fifty (50) copies of the brochure and make them available for purchase in the Planning Office at the Town Office for a nominal fee. Motion was seconded and carried.

#### **Old Business:**

4. The minutes of the January 5, 2010 Trail Plan work session were approved.

5. A word change was noted in the minutes of the January 12, 2010 meeting and the minutes were approved as amended.

Mr. Richardson stated if members were not present at the meeting being reviewed, they may still vote following a motion and seconded to approve if they had no comments or questions.

6. In an update, Mr. Richardson attended the site walk at 110 Linden Street with the owner of the property, two certified soil scientists and Dr. Frank Richardson of DES. The discussion again focused on the location of the proposed driveway and it was determined the wetlands that will be impacted are connected to the prime wetlands. Dr. Richardson said a decision would be issued soon. <sup>2</sup>

7. Ms. Murphy reported the Planning Board voted to place the proposed revisions to the Wetlands Zoning Ordinance portion of Article 9 Natural Resource Protection Zoning Ordinance as a warrant article on the March Town ballot. Ms. Murphy prepared a brochure entitled A Residents Guide to Exeter's Proposed 2010 Wetland Zoning Revisions to help the voters make an informed decision. The brochure outlines definitions of wetlands and buffers, the importance of and a summary of the proposed revisions.

8. Ms. Newman reported on the first Community Garden meeting where attendees were introduced to project. There is a scheduled meeting for Feb 10 to follow up on the various sites under consideration.

9. The Treasurer presented the report for the January month end. As a point of information the operating budget amounts are from the 2010 Selectmen's proposed budget amount until the General Fund budget is approved at Town meeting. The proposed ECC budget is \$1500.00 less than the 2009 budget with the reduction being in the Trails and Management fund. Motion to accept as presented was seconded and passed.

### **Natural Planner's Report:**

10. The planned Animal Tracks Walk with David O'Hern is set for February 13, 2010 meeting at the Commerce Way cul de sac at the end of Industrial Park Drive and head northeast into the Forest.

February 10 is the site walk with the Timberland grant representative on the planned project for April 22, 2010 in the Oaklands. The completed application prepared by Trail member, Bob Kelly was sent electronically to members outlining the details of the project.

The Snow Shoe race previously set for Feb 6 has been re-scheduled for Feb. 27, 2010.

An Invasive Plant Species ID training class is to be held in Northwood, NH on Feb.17, 2010.

In 2009 Ms. Murphy worked with students of the Academy on their Community Action Day. This year she has committed to working on the Oakland project that day but asked if any members had projects they would be willing to do with the students. She has the forms from the Academy requesting an outline of the proposal and they will be passed on to the members.

A member of PEA contacted Ms. Murphy about the Tree Amigos of Orcutt (CA) program, a non-profit youth tree planting organization and her desire to establish a group here in Exeter. The program provides free trees and planting to home owners, towns and public areas. Ms. Murphy will give her a species list and suggest she contact Parks and Recreation for possible planting sites and do further research if buffer plantings would be eligible.

Advised of a leaking roof at the Raynes barn prompted Ms. Murphy to seek and develop a proposal for a grant for \$10,000 that would support such repairs. Mr. Kevin Smart also spoke of the need for more sill stabilization on the silo side of the barn and will research repair costs with the anticipation of participating in the grant.

3

### **Other Business:**

11. Mr. Richardson distributed a topographic map including the Exeter portion of the Fresh River watershed. Delineations of the wetlands were drawn in by Mr. Richardson. The Lamprey Watershed group is working on a Rivers Management and Protection Program for the entire watershed and this part of the Fresh Water is included in the discussion.

12. Mr. Aldrich reminded all March 9 is voting day and this year it will be at the old High School on Linden St. with both parking and entry at the rear of building. Also on March 9 is the scheduled meeting for the ECC. After some discussion it was agreed to keep with the regularly scheduled meeting.

### **Motion to adjourn at 8:25pm**

Respectfully submitted

Ginny Raub, Secretary

