

These minutes are subject to possible corrections/revisions at a subsequent  
Exeter Conservation Commission meeting.

## **Exeter Conservation Commission**

*Work Session Draft Minutes*

Wheelwright Room, Exeter Town Offices

September 13, 2011

Present: Peter Richardson, Don Briselden, Kevin Keaveney, Carlos Guindon,  
Maggie Matick, Ginny Raub, and Kristen Murphy, Town Natural Resource Planner.

Mr. Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Forestry Management Plan and Natural Resource Inventory.

### **Natural Resource Inventory**

Kristen Murphy, the Town Natural Resource Planner, presented the Natural Resource Inventory. The subcommittee met last Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, and went over the draft maps and discussed revisions. Most of the work they did was on the Wildlife Habitat Map. Initially the consultant, Anne Deely, added a point every time there was a record for NH Heritage species. So it turned out that we were having very dense areas where there was a lot of Natural Heritage data. So in order to have a clearer representation, the subcommittee gave one point if there was any record. Also when the consultant was doing the work on the fly, the subcommittee got a sense for how much influence you have on the end product when you choose what is getting a point or how you smooth the data.

The only other major change in the draft co-occurrence maps was the surface water composite. The way she had done it was prime wetlands could never rank as high as a stream could because there was no stream buffer for prime wetlands. Anne is changing how that is getting calculated. Kristen felt the meeting was productive and she was comfortable with the changes.

Kristen confirmed that there had been no ground truthing with this reporting (there were no funds to pay for that). What this process did was use existing data and fed it into a model which spits out a tally of the important existing resources in a certain area. Smoothing actually helps with overall aesthetics as well as allows one to easily look at and quickly see important areas. To be consistent with all resources, Anne chose one standard deviation above the mean value to define the focus area. Additional changes will include adding more roads because it's hard to track where you are on the map especially north of Route 101. Gas lines, power lines, railroads and streets will be included as well.

The final product will have a box describing how the maps were created, each of the categories that went into it, show the stages before they were all combined into one, then the end result map. The final version will be an 11x17 document and a full set of maps. This project is still on schedule to be completed by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Kristen suggested that when these maps are final, they need to have a meeting with all the Land Use Boards and talk through how to use them, what purpose do they provide, how they can help, and what they should/should not be used for.

## Forestry Management Plan

Kristen brought the Commission's attention to the Exeter Town Forest Worksheet, a document that Charlie Moreno, the contractor developing the management plan, handed out a couple of meetings back. The Commission agreed that to discuss/vote as one voice would be more productive than individually.

### I. Management Priority Level

Wildlife Habitat	high	
Forest Health	high	minimal damage, good management practices, diversity of forest dependent organisms (plants and animals), variety of age classes, continue to grow for future generations.
Recreational Uses	medium	appreciation of resource, balanced with maintaining forest health and wildlife habitat, controlled expansion, trail and bikers sometimes have adverse impact (Exeter group involved/communicative).
Scenery/Aesthetics	low-medium	how much cleanup after harvest, logging, major storm cleanup.
Water Resource Protection	high	issue of blowing leaves speeds up drainage, manage to try to absorb heavy rainfall.
Cultural/Historic	medium	granite quarry (research book).
Educational Uses	medium	PEA uses academy forest, learn more about geology, manage timber stand, HS course.
Timber Income/Self-Funding	medium	harvesting, tool to get support from Town.

### II. Questions

- 1) Funding – Is it important that the management of this forest be self-funding, ie not relying on town general funds to cover costs, but rather, expenses covered by periodic timber income and from grants? **YES**
- 2) Forest Health – How important is the eradication of exotic, invasive plants from the Town's Forest? **SOMEWHAT** – *sustain where we are and not allowing it to get worse*
- 3) Recreation – Would you like to develop a wider diversity of recreational uses in the Town Forest? **NO** – *expansion by approved exception*
- 4) Habitat – In silviculturally managed areas, do you prefer habitat management: a) With slow changes over time, versus drastic habitat changes? *Slow managed change, selective logging, deliberate clear patch*  
b) That benefits a diversity of species or for the benefit of specific species? *Qualified diversity (otter, beaver, osprey, herons, deer)*  
Are there specific species you would like to manage for in the Town Forest? **NO**
- 5) Forest Management Access – Do you think it is appropriate to expand internal access (extend the woods road 1500' +/-) into the forest? *Maintain it but do not extend the road (needs cleanup work)*
- 6) Community Participation – Would you like increased local use of the Town Forest? **YES**  
Volunteer projects? **YES**      Educational programs? **YES**  
Other? *Increased awareness of forest and natural resource*

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### III. Types of Recreational Use

#### Trail-Based

Walking/hiking	major use
Trail running	major use
Snowshoeing	major use
Nordic skiing	minor use
Mountain biking	major use
Horseback riding	not allowed
Frisbee golf	not allowed
Ski biathlon	not allowed
Archery course	not allowed
ATVs/dirt bikes	not allowed
Snowmobiles	not allowed - with exception

#### Non Trail-Based

Bird watching	major use
Nature study	major use
Photography	major use
Geo-caching	minor use – stay on trails
Orienteering	minor use – off trail
Fishing	not allowed
Hunting	not allowed
Trapping	not allowed

### Some recommendations for the Henderson-Swasey Conservation Area

- 1) Control/eradicate invasives – *Try to sustain not eliminate*
- 2) Do not expand internal road system (except in response to major natural disturbance) – *Use road system that is already there per previous plan*
- 3) Retain extensive reserve areas – *Yes and to include Fort Rock and most of larger wetland areas*
- 4) Silviculturally-managed areas for: habitat, structural/species diversity, income to fund other Town Forest conservation/maintenance projects – *Income is not the driver but would like to cover costs*
- 5) Expand educational use of the forest – *Yes*

The Commission would like Charlie to use the current mapping. The complete report is expected by the end of the month and they plan to meet with him at the next meeting.

### **Other Business**

Kristen was asked to send out an email with upcoming event details:

September 17<sup>th</sup> – Audubon Beginner Bird Walks

September 30<sup>th</sup> – Storm Water Workshop

October 1<sup>st</sup> – River Clean-up with Brentwood Recreation Department

October 7<sup>th</sup> – Speaking for Wildlife Training

October 15<sup>th</sup> – SELT Fall Fundraiser

Wildlife garden is being put in near Chapman Landing

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The Commission has received a letter from the Town of Newington Conservation Commission stating their position on the health of Great Bay and encouraging the ECC to fall in line with their thoughts. Kristen will email it to everyone.

Sara Demes, a UNH graduate student, has asked permission to create a Forestry and Wildlife Management Plan for the Oaklands. All agreed it was a great way to update the second portion of the plan.

It was suggested that the Morrissette property (the old football field) be put on the list for mowing.

Powder Mill Road (Ryder property) - The owner of the property had taken a loan from the previous owner and they have a ballooning mortgage. They wanted the Town to commit to an additional \$80,000 (double the price) and they needed an answer right away. Kristen sent the information to Bobby and they both agreed that the funds weren't available. In order to get the funds, the ECC would need to go back through the whole Town meeting process.

Southeast Land Trust is still working with the owners of the pig farm and RVC Assessment.

Linden Commons - They have put in all the boundary markers except the leg near the cemetery, so we need to get back out there to check the boundary markers. Pete and Kristen have cut a new trail to move the trail away from the river. There is quite a bit of cleanup needed and a huge pile of woods chips that Jeff Hyland, the Planning Board Inspector, said was available for use on the trail while they last. Kristen proposed a trail day to get the wood chips and crushed stone off of that site and onto conservation land. Both are free, available and would be great to smooth the trails of root surfaces. There is a possibility of borrowing a DPW truck and some help to do the job.

Mr. Richardson adjourned the work session at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Delaney  
Recording Secretary