

Conservation Commission Minutes February 20, 2007

Nancy Sferra's of the Nature Conservancy talked about the Basin Preserve

Nancy Sferra phone number 729-5181 extension 212

www.nature.org there is a link to the Basin Preserve in the "Where we work" section.

Wonderful aerial map!

Also a small map with new trails inventory in the Basin area. Finished 2-3 weeks ago.

Want to build a full inventory.

People interested in lots of activities. Want to make sure trail use is reasonable.

Used GPS to mark trails and places of interest.

Marked "problems" yellow to red, eg trail problem, trash problem.

Next step to see clubs to develop trail system, eg horse club, atv club, sportsmen club.

No good long loop trail. Want to build trail system, esp long hiking trail 4-6 or more miles.

Ridgeline north-south means wetlands in between. Will need bridging and stream crossings, etc.

Crosshatched black-yellow owned by Nature Conservancy, good gravel base.

Town-wide meeting to talk about what to do this summer: trails to work on, dump piles pick up, 14-16 week position this summer taking resumes

www.nature.org can call Nancy to get job description

June 2 National Trails Day

April 21 Bates alumni cleanup cellar hole

April (last Saturday, 21?) Phippsburg cleanup day

Interested in looking at Ecology of pitch pine. UME Farmington prof looking at fire history of Pasture Ridge area. Peat core into wetland to age strata to see charcoal concentrations evidence of wildfires.

Firing off guns issue. Wording for sign at the Green Piece, county car wash. Right behind school. Will put up around perimeter around the green piece. Preserve will still be available to hunting. Just don't want dangerous target practice. Want to get the word out to the town. Hope to eliminate all shooting on the Green Piece.

Want to do Natural Resource inventory this summer: pitch pine area, Pasture Ridge, Fuller Mt, Little Island campsite (often from boats). Natural History and Historic Resource Inventory, eg cellar holes

Neighbors with Sprague Pond and Bijouwer property so would like to integrate trails.

How can Conservation Commission help?

- Ronnie Kamphausen working with Mary Chapin and the school on trail cleanup
- Resource for school

- Field trip for school when weather moderates (Ronnie, Mary, Nancy)
- Hyde School kids work with school kids
- Natural Resource Inventory (*)
- Community field trips (*)
- Land Trust brochure will show a trip to old Feldspar mine
- There's also a garnet quarry. Who was Denny Reed?
- 400th anniversary of Popham Colony, maybe work with that

(*) ideas for Conservation Commission help

Questions and Answers:

- Will trail maker work with volunteers? Yes, plus some Nature Conservancy staff people. Next year maybe Maine Conservation Core Crew. Will post info on town website, cable station, Times Record. What is optimal number of volunteers per work day, have to decide.
- Trails for 4 wheelers, is there a lot of clearing needed? Biggest issue is trails were put in with a long term perspective. No water bars. No erosion control. Some go through wetlands. EG red dots are mostly erosion. Lots of steep slopes with ledge and trails become "rivers". Want to make sure the trails are heavy duty enough for their purpose, eg atv vs horses vs hiking. Types of trails: "multiple use" horseback riders and atvs. Atvs pull over and shut machines off when meet horses, "foot trails" can go into a little more sensitive area.
- Will ATV trail map be available to other people through state map? Probably want to prevent posting maps on state map. Want to avoid bad impact on neighbors. Don't want basin to be the main atv area in the town.
- What about parking for trailhead? The Green Piece might be a good place for a parking area. Down on the basin there are some spots people could park. Will need to decide when decide on trail head. "County Car Wash" by Harris Cemetery where you could drive into pond.
- During hunting season open to just Phippsburg residents? Anyone in State of Maine. Will not advertise as "come hunt here". Will post signs at trailheads to warn wearing blaze orange.
- Will dogs be allowed? Nature Conservancy may designate some trails as off limits some ok.
- Are horseback riding and atv riding in the same class? Depends on trail. Some places horses do no damage other places huge damage if trail built correctly. Same with atvs.
- What about trapping? Need to get back to trappers.
- 4-wheelers club do not give maps to everyone. People say atvs tearing up property. Not the 4-wheel clubs. Kids without licenses are making the mess NOT the clubs. The clubs repair their own damage. If we're out there often enough and communicate with the community, we hope things will go better. Will take action.
- Give Nancy a call if have questions or ideas for her management plan.

- What does a regular presence mean? In summer a full-time staff person. Out here as much as possible. Other stewardship staff too. Not likely much staff presence in winter.
- How many miles of trails? Not sure yet?
- Develop campsites? No plan to. Need to be careful about what they get involved in. Careful of fires. Avoid partying.
- Are you considering making land available for low income housing, new school? Allowance to xfer some land to town. Town needs to decide. An option in the future. Will take that into consideration. Size: in documentation (? Maybe 60 acres?)

Conservation Commission meeting afterwards

Attending: Jo, Jean, Ellen, Ronnie

- 1) Budget for one year \$750
 - a. Brochure Costs
 - i. OfficeMax figures for cover, plastic cover, binding, 17 color pages, ~48 cents per page. 100 copies (Ronnie)
 - ii. How many do we need for a class?
 - iii. New publication.
 - iv. Some of Ronnie's might be good as they stand.
 - v. Long term: all natural history
 - vi. Short term: particular project, maybe twice a year
 - b. Trailhead flyers (plants, animals, etc.)? Land Trust does this so no.
 - c. Students in classroom
 - d. Could do one or two brochures for the schools.
 - e. Brochure on invasive species, natural history, posters
 - f. Proposal due on the 5th. How it will be used.
 - g. Also help to reimburse to go to conferences.
 - h. Notes: may use lots of paper, some money for paper? Some reams of paper? What about postage and mailing?
- 2) Conservation Commission website
 - a. Ideas from Bill Emerson will be sent around to us all via email.
 - b. What can town website take? We can just email photos with captions.

First short term projects:

- At least one booklet. Work with teachers as to what would feel in their current teaching needs. Ronnie's booklets could be good. The amphibians one would be fun. Ronnie's booklets are quite varied subject-wise and reading-level-wise.

Revised Conservation Commission Town Report.

Les Smith brought in maps of wetlands. Should show to Professor Lea. Another one downstairs next to the file cabinet. Eventually return to Les. No rush.

Jean report on first meeting of Kennebec River Commission. She will mail copy of what they did.

RE: Buffers

Jean called the DEP Linda Cokamore. Call NRCS and ask about nutrient management. If no buffer with large animals causes lots of problems. Sent brochures which can be copied. Ask horse people to come to look at this material. Dr. Lea's students will find lots of places that need buffers. Buffers = low shrubs with deep roots to pick up nutrients. Maybe an early summer meeting invite the horse people. Maybe check with Nancy Sferra re horse groups.