

Conservation Commission

Minutes

June 19, 2007

Attendees:

Jo Schumann
Jean Perkins
Gloria Barnes
Ellen Winchester
Nancy Sferra
Ronnie Kamphausen

Visitors re horse buffers:

Cindy Falvey
Julie Larrabee and Greg Giroux

News:

- Ronnie has been working with Phippsburg Elementary students
 - Nature walks with students
 - Use of her Amphibian booklets
- We placed minutes and posters on Phippsburg website
- Ronnie reporting on Promethea moth “progress”
 - One came out. Another moth came out.
 - One of the visitors has had moths all over her door
 - Jean three Luna moths, Nancy three, Luna moths galore this year

Buffers 101 - Discussion of Buffers:

Jean gave a presentation on buffers.

- History of buffers
 - Persian Gulf. Reeds on edge of river. Marshes filtered runoff. Hussein filled in marshes.
 - Marsh reeds protect the water. Marsh grass filters water.
- Miscellaneous info
 - Phragmites very bad – invasive.
 - Seawalls do not really do a good job of protecting the coastline.
 - Best situation on coastline is a house on posts with marsh grass underneath
- Sewer Systems
 - Primary, Secondary, Tertiary (should be able to drink)
 - Kennebec Valley Initiative working to clean up Kennebec River of sewerage
 - Powell, Augusta, Gardiner, Waterville (Bath also):
 - Old sewer systems overflow.
 - Phippsburg no central sewer system. Septic systems.
- Water Testing
 - Jean’s experience: pH, dissolved O₂, N₂ blooms, E coli, nitrates
 - Test every 100’ to find the “point source”
 - Test in summer

Some GOALS:

- Clean up crucial areas:
 - North Creek feeds into Totman Cove
 - Bacterial pollution and not enough dissolved O₂
 - Dromore Bay

- Was clear, now testing for E coli, non-point source from “somewhere”
 - Close to shellfish harvesting for 5-6 years
 - Mill Pond by Parker Head
 - Six houses are now pumped up to town owned group septic
 - One house still “black water” point source
 - Center Pond
 - Arrowhead growing shows too much nitrogen. Likely due to horses.
- Town could require:
 - pumping out septic periodically
 - soil based zoning
 - especially older houses’ systems be upgraded or cleaned
- The Buffer Handbook Plant List
 - If bordering on river, pond, stream. Try to keep native vegetation. DEP might have requirements.
 - Grasses and shrubs better than trees.
 - State has guidelines for “native” plants, e.g. bayberry, beach roses, siberian iris.

Coastal Property – how to improve things:

- Dept of Conservation came out to check one of the visitor’s farm and it looked good. The DEP put dye in septic system. Maybe this should be mandatory after awhile for some/all houses?
- DEP grants to help with repairing septic systems. It is income based.
- DEP has pamphlet on how to maintain septic systems. Try to get some of this info distributed.
- Maybe call Androscoggin for ideas on cost sharing
- Pamphlets: let’s put them on website
- Who is on a leach field and who on a cesspool especially along shoreline.
- Toxins: pesticides could be a problem.
- Could we get everyone tested?
- Nancy Sferra noted: The Basin recently had a trail fixing day. ATV trail straight uphill and crosses stream Made switchbacks, waterbars and moved away from stream.
- Some places the ATV trails are pretty bad. Winnegance Wheelers very conscientious. People from out of town or local juveniles may be sources of problems. What can we do to improve?
- Holding systems not sufficient. Summer houses problematic. Get town to mandate cleaning? Must be a complaint. Committee can relay complaint.
- 1970’s found cattle farms were the worst along Kennebec. Manure pile issue. Old manure piles are likely still leaching into the Kennebec.
- Concern was expressed about a manure pile near a body of water in town and efforts will be made to contact the owner of the property.
- Ideas for manure piles:
 - Ideal solution would be: backhoe and dumptruck to move it out then stake bales of hay.
 - Offer manure to gardeners
 - Composting:
 - Bacteria and nitrogen.
 - Mix manure with soil well it will decompose.
 - Compost pile has to be turned and mixed.
- One of visitors mixes their horse manure with soil and gives it away to gardeners. They are recycling it all.
- NRCS clean up old manure piles may have funding.

Lake Sunapee Protective Association

- Gloria received their pamphlet. It will be used as a resource when we work on our Phippsburg Natural Resources booklet.