

**Conservation Commission
Minutes
November 20, 2010**

Attendees: Jo Schumann, Dana McLean, Ellen Winchester, Ronnie Kamphausen

- Jo:
 - There will be no meeting in December since our usual meeting day is the day of the Phippsburg Holiday party.
 - Call for reports.
- Reporting on Invasive Species Signs:
 - Dana:
 - Reporting on Signs:
 - Has been talking to Reggie Reed from Inland Fisheries. Trying to work something up for the signs. Their signs are too big.
 - Working on something on the computer as far as wording. What type of wording? There is someone in town who can make our signs.
 - Plan to install two signs on Center Pond: one at the first landing and one at Hatch, possibly also by the fish ladder but you cannot back in there.
 - Invasive species:
 - Picked up a nice field guide for aquatic invasives. It is one of the training aids we use for hunter safety. We have to teach about invasives when we teach hunting.
 - Jo:
 - Notes that invasive plants are especially dangerous for such a small pond.
 - Dana:
 - Left field guide for the Sportsmen's Club.
 - Jo:
 - What date? When will people start using the pond?
 - Dana:
 - **TODO: Open water fishing starts in March so before them. Need to get the signs together before February.**
 - **NOTE: Dana's email at Sportsmens Club: admin@psassoc.org checks once per week.**
 - He will send it to us.
- Reporting on Basin Preserve meetings:
 - Ronnie:
 - Has gone to several meetings where people were trying to determine best use of Basin Preserve's 60 acres which are designated for educational purposes. These were group meetings with Nancy Sferra.
 - All the groups are talking about a building, not just trails. They want a location that's adjacent to the school. Talking about a Conservation Educational Center.
 - Land Trust, CC, School, school superintendent, YMCA groups are all interested parties.

- How to determine what would be useful/needed for such an educational center. How to fund it? A not-for-profit org? In process of determining their “mission”.
 - Frank Roberts is an architect familiar with picking a spot for a building. They will go for a walk soon. The green piece would have been a good spot but is contaminated. Too costly to clean it up.
 - Ronnie thinks it’s wonderful that people are looking to make this a conservation center. There is no place for recreation committee to keep their materials. Town is aware of the need.
 - Some programs run by Mary McCauley. She is a registered Maine Guide and phys ed teacher, developing a program to use the property adjacent to the school.
 - Note that, tragically, Ed Secskas is not there anymore. Who will step into his shoes?
 - Just one step in many in the process of developing this plan. Any ideas about funding, uses, etc.
 - Dana:
 - For the building they’ll need electricity and utilities. Will all needs be served in one spot? Is water access important?
 - Ronnie:
 - A green facility would be ideal. It could set an example. Ideally a large gathering place. Still in the designing stage.
 - Name = The Basin Preserve and Educational Initiative
 - Will Nature Conservancy locate in a part of the facility? No, they are not inclined to have a building, just build trails.
 - Dana:
 - Sportsmen’s Club met with Nature Conservancy awhile ago. There is a rock wall in there that is amazing. Trees have grown up from farmland.
 - Jo:
 - Where ?
 - Ronnie:
 - It is centrally located. Get onto it by the green piece and then continues on into the woods.
- Reporting on Geocaching
 - Ellen:
 - Mike’s Geocaching workshop was extremely successful.
 - All attendees experienced looking for at least one cache.
 - Lynn Kay and Ellen searched for five and had great fun. Mike took pictures and posted on town website.
 - Ellen talked to Mike informally about some ideas for our geocache project. He encouraged us to follow the directions on the official website: <http://www.geocaching.com/>
 - Over the winter will try to plan the “multi-cache”.
 - Number of caches.
 - Clues and maybe puzzles.
 - Field trip to begin to locate sites.
 - Have some “swag”. Could use some more.
 - Purchase cache boxes.
 - Decide how best to get the site coordinates.
 - Geocaching website has directions and requirements for an officially registered cache.
 - Lynn Kay is very interested in helping out.

- Reporting on Friends of Bates/Morse Mt.
 - Jo:
 - Met with friends of Bates Morse mt. Discussed the state's plan for Popham. Erosion is threatening the new rest stations. The state is considering whether to dredge a new course for the river so it will go straight out. People that went to the meeting were not happy about that idea. There is now wonderful clamming. Dredging would likely destroy that. What about leaving the river to what it does naturally. Why do such a temporary fix? Spend money for no good reason. We do not want lose the new building. Lots of trees fell. Some excavators tried tying ropes around the trees. If anyone has concerns could contact someone, Laura Sewall.
- Reporting on bulletin boards
 - Jo:
 - Wants to remind the public we have bulletin boards in the Town Hall foyer. We invite people to put up new photos. Would be nice to have more by the Holiday Party. Easy to put them up. Thumb tacks and paper and title and plastic back up.
 - Dana:
 - Has a few pictures of a fawn he will put up.
- Reporting on next meeting
 - Jo:
 - Next meeting will be the January meeting. No December meeting.
- Reporting on great Sportsmen's Club activity
 - Dana:
 - We are having a winter fest. We have a youth field day in the summer: kayaking, archery, shooting, . Try to do one around Jan 9 involve tracks, tracking, snow shoeing. Sled dogs come. Larry Barnes may do some falconing. It is free to anyone. Be sure to see our website or posters. A student at the high school is helping plan. It is our first one in the winter. There is a pond behind club where we will do some demonstrations. There will be other demos. Usually around 50 kids plus parents attend. A lot of adults learn too. We will try to put iout the message in the schools.
- Reporting on plans for future
 - Jo:
 - **TODO: We should take a look at what we've done and where we're going.**
 - Feel in a bit of a slump.
 - Need ideas for one.
 - We do miss Ed Secskas last year ideas to work on. Ronnie did the snail exploration which was very successful.
 - Maybe some of us could volunteer for the Exploratory groups.
 - Maybe do a winter group in tracking or what animals are doing in winter. Maybe Ronnie could do that?
 - Note that there is a new principal.
 - **TODO: We need to explore meeting with the new principal. Ronnie and Jo will go over there. Maybe Jean will be back.**
 - Phippsburg Land Trust (Jo and Gloria attend) is looking into ideas to involve families more. Might want to coordinate some things with them. Talking with Lynn Kay about this.
 - Cleared out all material in basement. Things that turned up. Audubon guide to the Josephine Newman sanctuary.

- We had been told we should make a natural history booklet for Phippsburg. We would every year make a booklet. Ronnie sea life. Jo invasive species. Might not be realistic since so expensive. Lake Sunapee booklet example. Found a list of all the rare plants in Phippsburg. Aerial maps of marshy areas in Phippsburg from the air.
- **TODO: By January we should think about what to do. What direction to go in.**
- **TODO: Annual vernal pool March April and a Geocache. What other things we should do?**

- Adjourn