

EATON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

March 13, 2023

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were Marnie Cobbs, Dick Fortin, Holly Fortin, Robin Nuccio, Heather McKendry, Dick Brisbois, and Tom Head. Also present were Dagmar von Schwerin, Enna Carbone, and Paul Nuccio.

2. **ADMINISTRATION** – Minutes of the February 13 meeting were accepted.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Conservation Fund	\$6,146.66
Forest Management Fund	68,306.76
Foss Mountain Fund	9,757.02
Land Acquisition Fund	15,582.26

TOTAL	<hr/> \$99,792.70
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Donation box at trailhead \$0

Website Donation Income \$0

Voted unanimously to accept Treasurer's report.

4. **SELECTMEN'S REPORT** Selectmen voted against an insurance waiver for the Mennonite blueberry picker feeling the policy should be consistent for all berry pickers on Foss. Several women were stranded 2 ½ miles in from Porter on Willis Bean Road, led there by GPS, requiring a rescue effort by Fish and Game. Potential signage warning of GPS problems discussed.

5. **PLANNING BOARD** PB now meets the third Wednesday of each month. PB is working on amending our current Wetland Conservation Overlay Zone based on a model ordinance from NH DES. They encourage input from ECC. In the past ECC member Paul Savchick was qualified to review applications and wetland issues. ECC discussed how to build our awareness in this field.

6. **FOSS MANAGEMENT** The Mennonite candidate won't be picking blueberries this year for personal reasons. A lease agreement is being discussed with Timo Gould of South Conway. Dick and Marnie will renegotiate the contract with Ryan Bushnell for blueberry picking. Olivia Saunders of UNH Cooperative Extension offered to come pre-harvest and offer any support to Timo.

Paul suggested adding table tents in the Henney Room at the Library, particularly as the EVS will be closing prior to May 1. The group agreed Paul could talk to the Library. There is a need to balance fundraising with increased visibility that may lead to more overuse of Foss trails.

Marnie read updated correspondence from John Neely, US Forest Service, and Ted Kendziora, USFW regarding a potential burn in the future.

Marnie and Dagmar discussed grant options. The Pequawket Foundation grant application, due April 15, will be submitted - maximum amount \$2,500. ECC / Foss Mountain as a 170 (c) municipality is not eligible on its own for Davis Conservation Foundation or the NH Charitable Funds (due to IRS regulations) but could submit in future through the EVPS which is a 501 (c). The Selectmen would

have to weigh in on whether EVPS would get involved. The NH State Parks Recreational Trail grant and Climate Resilience Funds will be researched further for potential in 2024. Discussion moved to starting a targeted fundraiser with a goal to raise \$20,000 by June 2023. Heather, Robin, Dagmar and Paul will meet and present platforms and ideas at the April meeting.

Dick will contact Ryan Harvey about the Foss trail work to confirm his availability, final cost estimate and timeline for getting the work done. He will need 50% at signing of the agreement, approximately \$10,000.

7. FOREST MANAGEMENT - Marnie has acquired and repaired field maps and survey maps from Dan Stepanauskas. Heather will scan Dan's notes and put them on the ECC google site. Two copies of Thorne-Surveys map 1999/2000 of Town lands have been made from Dan's copy and are stored in the file cabinets.

Dan Stepanauskas will be submitting a timber stand improvement proposal. Porter Road and Willis Bean are in such bad condition that they may pose a problem for forestry management.

8. COMMUNITY COHORT - ECC reviewed the well-received and well attended discussion on Thursday March 9 with Matt Tarr, Wendy Scribner, and Dan Stepanauskas. Informal Q&A provided invaluable information on habitat, guidelines for collecting wildlife data, trail impact on wildlife, and the unique qualities of Eaton township with relatively large tracts of open space providing unfragmented habitats for wildlife and flora. Matt Tarr will be teaching less and therefore has more time available to work with communities. He would like to do a field trip up Foss and help us structure information gathering. He felt we already have important tools available with Dan's maps and the NRI.

Marnie will send an email to Dan Stepanauskas requesting an invoice for his time.

The next Community Cohort is scheduled for April 13. Bob Cotrell will talk about Stone Walls using LYDAR in an interactive presentation which Dennis Sullivan will help organize. He is willing to do a field trip on Saturday April 15 from 9:00 - 11:00. The group discussed potential walks - Paul Hill Road, McBriens, Snow Village Inn, Young's Road - and will decide on final walk site. Bob said he would not need to be paid for the presentation, but might want some fee for the walk. Dick F. will check with him.

Marnie proposed a future Community Cohort with hands-on book making - creating notebooks to keep track of flora and fauna found in the woods that could be shared with the ECC and provide some info on species to look out for. Marnie will submit a proposal at the next meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – *ECC voted to again approve \$1,000 for partial scholarships for several students to attend summer programs at Tin Mountain Conservation Center. Judy Fowler will handle applications and awards. ECC is looking for an apprentice to help Judy and learn the process.*

ECC discussed the letter written to Governor Sununu by NHACC regarding the State bill proposing to remove licensing requirements for foresters and wetland specialists in NH. *The group voted to send a letter in support of the NHACC's letter to keep the current licensing requirements.*

Research continues to clarify allowable use of Land Acquisition Fund.

Next steps for ECC Group would retain focus on protecting Town Lands - honing the conservation plan, holding public conservation meetings, ground truthing with volunteer help, ensuring that any new

trails make the least impact on the land possible. The group will set up a meeting with Matt Tarr to work on action items. ECC meetings can also be work sessions to get things done.

Next meeting: April 10, 2023 at 6 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm

Minutes respectfully taken by Dagmar VonSchewrin, submitted by Judy Fowler