

# **Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee**

**Wadleigh Library, Milford New Hampshire**

**January 16, 2014**

In attendance were members George May (Merrimack), Spencer Brookes, (Wilton), Bill Mahar (Wilton), Marshall Buttrick, Celeste Barr (Milford), Rich Hart (Amherst), Nelson Disco (Merrimack) and Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich)

**Approval of Minutes from November 21, 2012-** Minutes accepted.

**Reappointments-** Marshall has been appointed for another three years. Nominations in process for George, Nelson and Mike in January. All of have been re-appointed. Kleta and Rich are up for re-appointment in February. Rich would like George to pass along paperwork in case he has misplaced it.

**New England Cottontail Habitat-** George and Nelson attended a Lower Merrimack LAC meeting that included a presentation by the Wildlife Management Institute who hope to increase the population of the cottontails and other species, especially on private lands. The population is endangered and they want to expand their habitat. They want to encourage landowners to keep land open and harvesting of old forest. They are offering to consult with landowners. No money is involved. The cottontails prefer meadows and new growth forest around the edges of meadows. Discussion followed about how best to publicize this. Information is available at [www.Youngforest.org](http://www.Youngforest.org)

Celeste pointed out that UNH has also a website with information.

Rich said that Amherst did inventories about 15 years ago and developed a Forest and Meadow Management Plan. Amherst has been actively working on habitat diversification.

George took names of people that the committee could think of that might be interested.

**Display-**George will take the display to put at the Milford Police station for our next meeting with the Contoocook, Lower Merrimack and Piscataquog LACs.

**Year End Report-** George took care of this. He emailed this to committee members the day of this meeting. We corrected it at meeting. He will email us a corrected copy which members are to submit to their towns for insertion in their town reports.

### **Discussion of Permit Applications**

Wilton- Electroplating operation and email discussions

George had written a letter stating concerns we had with the electroplating operations in Wilton. He received a letter from the State (Linda Birmingham, DES) stating all of our concerns had been addressed.

Discussion followed on the legality of our committee doing business via email between meetings. Someone pointed out that we are subject to “Right to Know” laws and Celeste pointed out that no decisions or suggestions we make are legally binding. Rich had questions about RSA rulings requiring notices about our meetings. So if anyone has any objections when emails go around, they need to request that any decisions be postponed and brought up in the public meeting to be discussed there. This segued into an announcement by George.

We have been invited to host a combined LAC meeting.

Tracie Sales emailed George and asked us to sponsor a meeting for the Lower Merrimack, Piscataquog and Contoocook LACs. The State, DES will run the meeting, which will run from 7 – 9 p.m. February 20<sup>th</sup> at the Milford Police Station. There will be discussion on changes to the program and a few other things. We decided it would be a good opportunity to see how other LACs handle the problem of dealing with business that comes up between meetings.

**Public Service email** -161 Union St, Milford-PSNH wants to put in poles within 50’ of the river. George asked for plans, did not receive them in time for the meeting. George pointed out that this was the type of business that can be done via email. We are not clear if there will be transformers on these poles. We decided this was probably not a problem we needed to comment on.

**Possible new Amherst member-** George was contacted by Gabe Bolin, a hydrologist. He is a Resource Consulting Engineer and wanted to meet us. Although he was not looking to join the committee, Amherst has an open seat and could use an additional representative. George will call him back.

**Permit Application for Alteration of Terrain for Pollard Rd in Merrimack-**Meridian sent updated plans and the letter they had sent back to DES. There had been concern for cache basins on Amherst Rd. portion. George had written a letter on Nov. 22, 2013 with recommendations to DES, Merrimack Selectmen, and Meridian. The letter that Meridian wrote to DES in reply was dated Nov. 22, 2013. Not all the issues were addressed. It is in DES's lap.

**Topics for Discussion in Feb.-** "right to know"

### **Local Updates**

**Souhegan Watershed Association-** Canoe schedule is in draft form

**Souhegan Valley Land Trust and Wilton-SVLT** is meeting Feb 17, 2014. Spencer reported on an ongoing situation in Wilton involving High Mowing School and water usage. There are some bad feelings in the neighborhood which might result in a civil suit being filed.

The café up by High Mowing has closed, it expanded without permits, went before ZBA but there were protests.

The Russell Foundation from New Boston with Ian McSweeney doing the legal work, wants to arrange for a group out of California to hold the land owned by High Mowing in conservation stewardship. High Mowing has asked the town for \$80K in "earnest money". The argument is that if the land is left in conservation status, it will cost the town less in the long run than if the land is sold and developed. Selectman chair Dan Donovan has expressed thinking that Wilton has too much Open Land as it is.

SVLT will also be discussing Horseshoe Falls at the meeting. Owner wants \$300K for property. Sam Proctor is to do an evaluation on the property.

**New Ipswich-** The Conservation Commission is gearing up to put signage on river and streams in town. Bob Boynton has created a very impressive map for the town using data from multiple sources. It is interactive and able to receive new data. It allows for someone to overlay different data

resulting in the ability to put together plans of actions more easily shared. It will save time and energy.

Kleta questioned the news that the State will no longer be testing the upper sections of the Souhegan and exactly how the testing was funded. Bob Boynton was concerned that without testing, we would not be aware of future water problems before they became major concerns. George explained that the testing would continue as usual and that SWA (Souhegan Watershed Assoc.) would continue to pay for them as they had always done. In the past, the State had only tested every few years and testing was not consistent. Since SWA had begun testing the State now uses its data for dissolved oxygen. The river is now off the impaired waters list.

George explained that usually the SWA asks for money from the area towns, specifically the Conservation Committees and suggested that Kleta hit up Bob Boynton for at least \$100. Checks should be made out to Souhegan Watershed Association, C/O George May, 157 Naticook Rd., Merrimack, NH 03054.

**Greenville-**Nothing to report

**Wilton-**See above

**Milford-** Nothing to report

**Amherst-**

Three petitions for warrant articles were brought before the Planning Board. Two of them were by Knight and were not approved. The third one barely passed, 4 to 3. The Planning Board doesn't want to put in any zoning regulation that might interfere with new fields so things are "up in the air" till the elections.

There are a number of zoning changes that will be up for vote. They are trying to combine 5 sets of zoning regulations into 3 sets. They hope this will result in clarification of watershed and wetland protection. It should make the regulations easier to apply and increase protection.

State House has approved bill to fix "Red Listed" Bridges. There are several in Amherst on the list. One is at foot of Mack Hill Road over Beaver Brook. Another one parallels the north side of 101.

Three SoRLAC members are on the Natural Resource and Climate Change Committee for Nashua Regional Planning Commission. They met in November, having all sent in topics to be discussed. A plan will be written for the region for Natural Resource Committee.

**Merrimack-** Merrimack is working on their trails. The Town Center Committee is getting help from the National Park Service for a trail to Wildcat Falls. They have all the easements and a pedestrian bridge. There is a Boy Scout(s) lined up to build a "rivulet" crossing toward Merrill's Marauders Bridge and the pedestrian bridge here. Trail bikes might be permitted but no motorized vehicles or horses.

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, secretary

Jan. 19, 2014

**Next Meeting 7pm, Feb 20, 2014, Milford Police Station**

Respectfully submitted,

Kleta Dudley, secretary