

CONSERVATION COMMISSION**November 12, 2020****7:00 PM****Virtual Meeting**

Members Present: Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), David Bell, Cris Blackstone, Sarah Finch (Planning Board Rep), Drew Kiefaber (Alternate), and Jonathan Kiper (Town Council Rep).

Members Absent: Sam Kenney

Guest Present: Mark Zankel

1. Pledge of Allegiance**2. Roll Call****3. Public Comments**

There were no public comments this evening.

4. Guest Presentation- Welcome!

Mark Zankel is the New Hampshire State Director of the Nature Conservancy. “Mark’s areas of expertise include conservation partnerships, land and water conservation, nonprofit management, and fundraising. Mark joined The Nature Conservancy in 1994 working as a seasonal ecologist with the Conservancy in North Carolina. From 1996-2000, Mark served as the Director of Science and Stewardship in Delaware. Mark continued to migrate north in 2000, becoming the Conservancy in New Hampshire’s Director of Conservation Programs and, in 2006, its Deputy State Director. In March 2013, Mark rejoined the Conservancy as State Director for the New Hampshire program. During his tenure, he has played catalyzing leadership roles in many landmark conservation initiatives including the effort to conserve 171,000 acres of working forest and natural areas in the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters; the development of widely used landscape conservation plans for the Ashuelot River and Coastal New Hampshire watersheds; the launch of a multi-state collaborative to protect and maintain connectivity for wildlife across the Northern Appalachians; an ambitious initiative to restore shellfish reefs to improve habitat and water quality in Great Bay estuary; and the protection and restoration of thousands of acres in the Ossipee Pine Barrens, New Hampshire’s largest intact pine barrens ecosystem. In 2012, Mark was recognized by New Hampshire’s conservation community for his contributions and track record, when he was awarded the Sarah Thorne Conservation Leadership Award.”

Mark was invited by **Cris Blackstone** this evening to discuss avenues to ‘Build Climate Resiliency’. He used a slide presentation to describe what is going on with the many partners of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in the coastal seacoast area. The TNC has identified three priorities this year: 1) what is our role to mitigating and adaption to climate change; 2) conserving healthy lands and waters; and 3) fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. TNC also has a goal of pursuing a low carbon future, helping nature adapt to climate change, and helping human communities adapt. The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership is a collaboration of conservation organizations in the coastal region that promote landscape-scale land conservation and stewardship (<http://www.greatbaypartnership.org/>). They want wildlife to be able to freely move through a network of connected and protected corridors across the region. A copy of the “Connect the Coast Project” (CCP) may be found here: <https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/nh-connect-the-coast-report.pdf>.

The CCP helped identify the habitat blocks in the seacoast. The other issue addressed involves helping communities adapt to climate change and high sea level changes. For example, the Newmarket culvert on Bay Road was tilted and fish could not get upstream. This was a collaborative partnership with TNC, was a beautiful job and he praised the Newmarket DPW for their partnership and excellent work. The TNC is currently working with five other towns on culvert projects. The TNC is engaged in many projects working with diverse communities to foster inclusion and break down barriers. An example given was the Ossipee Pine Barrens in the towns of Ossipee, Freedom, Madison, and Tamworth, NH. The Ossipee Pine Barrens are a magical place boasting New Hampshire's last intact pitch pine–scrub oak woodland natural community, a globally rare forest type of over 2,500 acres. The area is entirely flat so the TNC could build an accessible trail which is ADA compliant...wheel chairs, people walking with stability issues, and those using strollers. Physical, economical, and cultural issues have been discussed at many small meetings held with groups like the NH Disability Rights Centers, disabled veterans groups, the NAACP, and members of the LGBTQA community. There groups were so important in the planning of the current accessible trail in Manchester. The trail is expected to be completed in 2021. After that is completed, they will start with a trail at Lubberland Creek. **Cris Blackstone** wanted to give a big shout out to Sheila Vargas, Government and Community Relations Manager for TNC, about the trail in Manchester. She is fabulous at giving workshops on zoom! Her contact information is: sheila.vargas@tnc.org , 603-230-9223. **Ellen Snyder** asked whether contractors were used for the trail. Mark said that they used contractors with experience with this kind of work. The Ossipee trail cost about \$1,000 (3/4 mi) and Manchester about \$500,000 (long board walk, .7 of a mile trail, and a parking area for three handicap/accessible vans). They try to raise money on the front end of any project and then fill in as they go. **Ellen** also asked about additional interpretive signage. He said that they want to do many different types of signage (multiple languages, brail), and they will try to do the best that they can to satisfy as many as possible. They are applying for Federal funds from the Land & Water Conservation Fund <https://www.doi.gov/lwcf> . Pete Stekler, GIS & Conservation Project Manager for TNC, 603-230-9222, psteckler@tnc.org , who was the project manager for the culvert project on Bay Road as well as the "Connect the Coast Project" is willing/interested in providing any assistance to the ConCom if we have another culvert in mind. The ConCom has several ideas! Thank you very much Mark for sharing this information with the members and attending the meeting this evening!

5. Approval of Minutes

October 15, 2020

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to approve the minutes as written for October 15, 2020.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Vote: 5-0-0

6. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Snyder reports that the Conservation Fund currently has \$245,778.86. Once the Commission current financial obligations are expended (\$75,000 for the Clarke Farm Easement and \$2,500 for the Heron Point Management Plan) the balance will be \$168,278.86. The annual membership fee to the NHACC has been withdrawn (\$425) this month, but it came out the Conservation Fund and not the General Fund. She will check with Carol to get this adjusted.

7. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

Planning Board: Sarah Finch had no report this evening.

Town Council: Jon Kiper had no report this evening.

The Chair mentioned that the first reading of the executory language for the purchase of the Clarke Farm property will hopefully be ready for the next Town Council meeting.

8. Chairman's Report

19 Moody Point: The CC received notification from the NHDES that the expedited permit request for 19 Moody Point has been approved. The matter was presented by Scott Boudreau for Mark West to the ConCom at the meeting on September 10, 2020:

"Scott Boudreau, Boudreau Land Surveying PLLC, is attending the meeting this evening for Mark West, West Environmental Inc., to discuss an Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit Application for the property at 19 Moody Point Road. He provided information to all members by email prior to the meeting. The owner of the property, Steven Breecker, is also present at the meeting. The plan and application clearly show that there will be 14 SF of permanent impact and 120 SF of temporary impact in the 100' tidal buffer zone.

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to provide the approval of the ConCom for the Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit Application for the property located at 19 Moody Point.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Vote: Unanimously Approved"

Other Mail /Newsletters: The Chair received no other correspondence prior to this meeting.

Report from the Virtual NHACC Annual Meeting: The Chair did not attend this year, but asked others who attended to share their experience. **David Bell** attended and found everything very interesting. **Cris Blackstone** attended and was a speaker: A Better Way: Working with Town Leadership: Jennifer Beck and Cris Blackstone NHACC Board of Directors. **Ellen Snyder** attended the Wetlands Permitting 101 (under the latest DES rules): Mary Ann Tilton, NHDES and the Legal Considerations of CE Monitoring: Amy Manzelli, BCM Environmental & Land Law. Ellen asked if anyone on the ConCom was presently using the GAIA GPS app for mapping when monitoring. She said that there was a free version and a paid version of the app available. <https://www.gaiagps.com/> . It is very helpful and she will send some information along to members.

Monitoring Report Updates: The Chair will be going to the New Roots Farm on Saturday, November 11, 2020. Please be cautious – the ticks are wicked bad this year! Be safe and wear orange! If anyone has any concerns/questions about their monitoring, please let him know. He would like members to give a little update on the condition of the property they monitored this year.

Goal Planning: The Chair would like to have a brainstorming session at the next meeting to help the commission focus on how we can best conserve the lands we have, monitor them, make them accessible to all, etc. All ideas will be welcome!

Photo Exhibition: **Melissa Sharples** reported on the photo exhibition plans. Although there was initially some interest when the call went out, but entries were not forthcoming. They have decided to table the exhibition for this year.

9. Old/New Business

Clarke Farm Easement: The Chair reported that everything is *coming* together for the close to occur soon.

Heron Point Management Plan: The Chair reported that Jon Martin, Martin Forestry Consulting LLC has accepted our offer to prepare the Heron Point Management Plan and trail maps.

Future Speakers: **Cris Blackstone** reported that the speaker for December is still not finalized. The January

speaker will be Matt Tarr from UNH Extension. He works throughout NH in close partnership with the NH Fish and Game Department to assist private landowners and communities improve habitat for wildlife. His specialties include improving forested wildlife habitat through commercial timber harvesting, field management to benefit vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife, shrubland and young forest habitat management, wildlife food plot design and maintenance, wetlands wildlife ecology and management, and methods for improving hunting opportunities on private land.

10. Adjourn

Action

Motion: Chris Blackstone moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Second: Ellen Snyder

Vote: Unanimously Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

The next meeting will be held on December 10, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary