

Loudon Conservation Commission  
Minutes of January 10, 2007 Meeting

The Loudon Conservation Commission convened at Charlie's Barn at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 10, 2007. The meeting began with a presentation by Eric Orff from NH Fish & Game and Mary Fougere from Friends of the Suncook about the Wildlife Action Plan maps that have been developed by Fish & Game.

Full-size maps specific to Loudon have been created and, while not available January 10, were to be delivered shortly. There were several full-size statewide maps available to review, as well as smaller maps specific to Loudon. Maps will be available if anyone is interested in taking a look at them.

The maps are intended to integrate into a town's master plan to identify where priority wildlife habitats exist. The maps show areas of significantly better wildlife habitat in each town, and also make it possible to identify blocks of habitat that can be linked across town lines. The goal is for towns to make planning decisions based on science.

One of the best reasons for using science-based planning is the recent alteration of the Suncook River in Epsom, which left 1.5 miles of the river dry after the river flooded through an area (that had been a hill before it was an excavation site).

The Wildlife Action Plan maps show several important environmental characteristics, including habitat blocks, water resources, land cover and forest blocks, vertebrate richness and co-occurrence.

The state has used the Wildlife Action Plan maps to determine its priorities for which land should be protected. Likewise, towns are encouraged to use the maps to determine which areas in town are most important to protect. For example, when the conservation commission evaluates acquiring conservation easements, it can use the maps to set priorities about what lands or areas to protect.

The commission discussed its official business following the Wildlife Action Plan map presentation. Julie Robinson, Dan Geiger, Bob Butler and Jess Storey were present.

For 2007, conservation commission meetings will take place at Charlie's Barn on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Julie attended sitewalks the previous Saturday at Tony Murolo's proposed development and the site where Pittsfield Waste Water is proposing a plant.

Tony's development has drainage and siltation issues, which was on the Planning Board's January agenda.

Relative to the proposed treatment plant, which the company proposes to put in near the town dump, rezoning is necessary, as the site is currently zoned for commercial uses. The material to be treated would be residential, coming from Loudon and nearby

towns. The plant treats septage by a series of filters which result in final products that can be used by greenhouses and landscaping operations. This item was also on the Planning Board's January agenda.

The conservation commission continues to pursue purchase of an economical GPS unit to aid monitoring activities. Dan will test a model available on Amazon and report on it at the next meeting.

Julie explained that, with reference to zoning ordinance amendments, the Planning Board is supporting the Conservation Commission's amendments to the Wetlands Ordinance. The changes are intended to correct some erroneous legal references and to clarify ungainly language in the ordinance. The Planning Board, however, is also putting forward an amendment.

The commission has \$163,500 from NCRS that must be used or lost, and Julie asked the commission members to come up with ideas for possible conservation easements purchases.

Regarding monitoring the protected lands for which the commission is responsible, the commission is inviting Chris to make a proposal at its next meeting for a simple plan to organize the files of the various interests owned or stewarded in town and to monitor the interests this year.

Dan continues to follow the saga that is before the Board of Selectman regarding the possibility that the Town take over Greenview Road, which is currently a private road. The commission is concerned about the Town taking responsibility for the road because it was not engineered to prevent run-off into nearby wet areas and could require substantial investment to bring up to spec.

Julie reported that she met with the owner of Villages of Loudon on Foster Road after Roy Merrill had seen that there was cutting going on in the buffer protecting the river. Julie reported that the landowner has stopped cutting. She also explained that the purpose of the buffer is to leave a shrubby, scrubby area of vegetation that provides excellent habitat for wildlife and good soil retention, in contrast to a park-like grassy setting. The landowner is interested in putting a gazebo in an area where the river runs around on three sides, and will attend the February meeting to discuss it. The commission scheduled a site walk for Monday, February 12, at 6:30 a.m. The group will meet at the property.

Julie also reported that she had visited Art to give him a plaque the Town had given him, a picture of him that had been in the files (which she had framed), and a lamp with forest etchings on it. She said he rode his bike 6000 miles last year!

The commissions next meeting is February 14 at 6 p.m. at Charlie's Barn. The public is always welcome, and the commission is actively seeking new members. If you are interested, you are certainly invited to attend.