

# STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## DRAFT Minutes 23 September 2014

Present at the Morrill Education Building at 7:10 p.m., were commission members John Hemenway, Jared Janisch, Mike Hebb, Matt Perry, Steve Willbanks (Chair), and Amy Metz.

### MAPLE HILL CULVERT REPLACEMENT:

Milone and MacBroom (Roy Schiff) surveyed the Maple Hill Rd culvert on August 29. Amy will forward the field notes from the visit. Initial estimate (not formalized) will be about 100K USD, with 60-70K for a concrete box culvert and 30K for install. In addition to recommendation to replace this culvert from the Fish and Wildlife, it is of the opinion that this is the first culvert after Miller Pond. If the Beaver dams fail at Miller Pond we will have a sound culvert at Maple Hill Road, that will be constructed per an engineered design.

### DAVID PAGANELLI TREE FARM TOUR:

Dave Paganelli hosted a walk in the woods at his Tree Farm on August 30. Through extensive management, Dave is attempting to cultivate the highest quality hardwoods and create an active woodlot.

David discussed recent forest stand improvement work, including pre-commercial thinning, girdling of large rough trees, and hardwood pruning. David also discussed invasive plant control, including hand pulling, foliar spray of herbicide, stump treatment of herbicide and planting of native tree species (and black walnut) to try to fill natural gaps before invasive plants re-establish.

David has managed the "structure" of the forest for wildlife by converting small areas to grass with mowing on a 1 or 2 year schedule, releasing and pruning apple trees (in woods and openings), creating early successional/brush habitat for songbirds, thinning young forest, "legacy" hardwoods, and maintaining patches of mature forest, big trees with high canopy.

David states that interested Strafford residents are free to look around the property on their own time.

### TOWN FOREST AND TRAILS UPDATE:

We had a discussion about how to make the trails system visible to the town while still respecting the private lands that the trails traverse. Suggestions were to start a Strafford Hiking or Trail Running Club. It was suggested at minimum that we draft an article for the Strafford News to promote the trail system as well as the Town Forest. We still need to be clear that the trail system is for "human powered traffic" only and motorized vehicles are not authorized.

Mike cleared some trees on the trail near Podunk.

Whitcomb Hill: David Paganelli drafted Management recommendations for Whitcomb Hill that will need to be reviewed and provided to the Town.

#### INVASIVES:

Steve suggested a follow-up meeting for the landowner invasives group that was formed this year. Steve is also going to contact the towns of Dummerston or Gilford VT to discuss their programs which have been successful. Tim's approach of tackling the invasives on the backroads first and then moving towards the problem areas on Justin Morrill Highway is a good method to keep the invasives localized. As a reminder the four plants which the group is initially focusing on are knotweed, poisonous parsnip, wild chervil and purple loosestrife.

#### WETLANDS:

The Wetlands Workshop begins Thursday September 25. Ten people signed up to get trained on how to identify wetlands and help the SCC with the Town Wetlands Inventory.

#### DRAFT BYLAWS:

Thetford By-laws were used as a baseline, however we updated "Section VII Principle Functions" with language from the "§ 4505. Powers and duties of conservation commissions" from 24 V.S.A., Chapter 118.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

Meeting minutes approved for August 26, 2014 meeting.

Next meeting: October 28, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Metz, acting recording secretary