

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

DRAFT Minutes 7/22/'14

Present at the Morrill Education Building at 7:10 p.m., were commission members John Hemenway, Jared Janisch, Mike Hebb, J.T. Horn, Matt Perry and Steve Willbanks, Chair. Also present was Dave Paganelli, Orange County Forester.

WHITCOMB HILL: Mike, Matt & J.T. had accompanied Dave Paganelli on a tour of the Whitcomb Hill Rec. Area just prior to the SCC meeting and Dave will develop a forestry plan for the parcel. He offered general advice on maintaining the site, which he will document in the forestry plan.

CLOVER HILL TREE FARM: Dave, who is also the owner of a 200-acres tree farm on Blanchard Road in Strafford, summarized his efforts since he acquired the property in '05 to control invasive plant species and improve the timber potential. Over time, he has made considerable progress removing and controlling many invasive plant species and will showcase these efforts with a workshop at his tree farm, which is scheduled for 9-1 on Saturday, August 30th. The public is invited.

OLD CITY FALLS: A representative of the Town's insurer, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, visited Old City Falls, at the SCC's request, to update safety recommendations. He felt that in general the pathway to the Falls was well-maintained and the signage appropriate. He did suggest that in addition there were portions of the trail where blazes on the trees might keep people from straying and that dry leaves and dead brush could be kept further away from the fireplace area.

DRAFT BYLAWS: A set of draft organizational bylaws was circulated, based on those currently in effect in Thetford, and the members were asked to read through them and prepare to comment on them at the next meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS: There was a general discussion about the deterioration and abuse of Class 4 roads and the negative consequences to timber lands and recreation. An update on the Maple Hill Road culvert project was deferred until

Amy Metz can be present. The orchids in the Town Forest were spectacular this year and the tours were well attended. To better protect the orchids and wetlands, Mike Hebb proposed constructing a boardwalk along the pathway and it was agreed that he should raise funds to purchase the materials. The application for wetlands field work training through a grant from the New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund has been submitted. Notes from the well-attended public forum on invasive species on 6/18/'14 are included with these draft Minutes. Approval of the draft Minutes for 6/17/'14 were deferred to the August meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Willbanks, acting recording secretary