

Campton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2009, 7pm

This meeting was designated and publicized as a land management meeting. In attendance were CCC members Jess Halm, Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle, Jane Kellogg, Lisa Doner, Jules Doner, and Tammy Wooster. Also in attendance were Campton residents Charles Brosseau, Pat Barker, and Diane Valente.

1. Welcome, Introductions , Overview of Agenda:

Jess thanked the three Campton residents for coming and gave a brief overview of the meeting's agenda. Then she asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves. Jess emphasized that although the meeting was to discuss land management issues of both conservation properties, the primary goal would be to focus on the Pattee Property.

2. History of BWNA Acquisition & Mgmt./ Current Status:

Jane detailed how the 17 acre BWNA was gifted to the town in 2002 with a deed restriction that the land was to remain in its natural state. Jess further explained that the work completed to date including a kiosk, parking lot, trail signage, bridge upgrades and trail work. These projects were made possible by volunteer labor and funded by moose plate revenues and private donor Leah Gray. Melissa completed a comprehensive inventory and map of the flora and fauna of the BWNA which she developed into a trail guide for visitor use. The trail guide was funded by grant money.

Jess reported that Leah Gray has again offered \$500.00 to be used for BWNA management projects this year. Diane Valente asked if the property was a state forest and admitted she was unsure of its location. Pat Barker offered to continue her work with the metal plant markers she has been maintaining/adding. Jane said that we would cover the costs of the markers but Pat said to consider it a donation.

Potential projects were then discussed including erosion control on the bank near the boulder on the lower trail, and invasive species removal. Jess asked all to continue to think about these issues for our spring season work.

3. Pattee Property:

a. In Progress:

Jess summarized the most recent Pattee property issues. The house sale process has begun and a realtor has been chosen and contacted. Lisa and Jules continue their frequent house checks and the property name will be decided during this meeting. CCC members have begun work planning for access to the Blair State Forest via the Pattee property and have walked the forest with future trail development in mind and GPS in hand. A meeting has been set up with forester Bob Hardy on April 22 at 2 pm to further discuss the trail initiative. All are welcome.

b. Input for Short and Long Term management:

Jess directed the group to the Pattee Timeline handout created by Lisa and discussion of timeline specifics ensued.

i. Blanchard House:

Pat Barker asked what the Blanchard House was and Diane Valente asked if it has historical significance and whether it will remain. Jess answered that it was an outbuilding at the 175 end of the field that once served as a house. It is in a compromised state but has potential use. Jane said that the fate of the Blanchard House will depend on what we do with the field. Jules gave the example of a garden shed in the case of a town garden.

Jess returned to the subject of short term goals which have been decided as a name for the property, a parking area, sign and trails. Jess explained that we included costs associated with meeting these goals in this year's budget.

Water matters were discussed next beginning with the point that Ed had a gravity fed well which is believed to originate from an uphill spring. This same spring also feeds the cemetery, but the cemetery has a new drilled well since the spring often dries up in the summer. Charlie Brosseau recalled that the spring may have been deeded over to a developer and that we should confirm with May. Charlie asked if the capacity of the well was known and Diane asked if there was water to the Blanchard House. Jess explained that the answers were unknown and that water would be a limiting factor to what we do with the field. She said that the CCC had investigated the possibility of drilling our own well for the field. Lisa said it's possible that the spring also feeds the Blanchard house since there are old pipes present. Lastly on water matters was the mention that the Kidneys have deeded water rights to drill on one acre of the Pattee property in the event that their well goes dry.

ii. Rey Center Partnership Potential:

Jess explained that early in the Pattee acquisition process we were approached by Nat Scrimshaw from the Rey Center who expressed interest in partnering with us in the context of a community garden. Jess deferred the topic to Lisa who has been the primary contact with Nat.

Lisa explained the concept of a CSA or community supported agriculture program whereby the actual gardening work is hired out and members buy shares of expected locally grown produce. The Rey Center has a well established CSA site on Sandwich Notch Road, but is having difficulty attracting members outside of WV perhaps due to its remote location. Charlie asked how much of the field would be used for a CSA. Lisa answered not all of it, but its worth mentioning that some of the soils of the Pattee field have been classified by the state as highly desirable for farming. The most fertile soil is parallel to Blair Rd towards the house, whereas the rest is sandier and less fertile. Lisa said that recent conversation with Nat has been passive and we are unsure of his current level of interest.

Jane shared a story she heard at a conservation workshop about a couple in another NH town who bought a piece of property, put it under easement and portioned it out. They rented the piece closest to the town center to an enterprising woman who started a CSA and ran it as her business. The program now has 150-200 members.

Jane's point was that with the state of the economy and the localvore mindset becoming more popular, now could be the time for a perfect storm of events to jump start a similar program in Campton.

iii. Other Potential Property Uses:

There has been great interest in leaving the property in a natural state and managing it as habitat for grassland birds. This would entail bush hogging/brush cutting the field every couple of years, and mowing it annually. This approach would allow the town to utilize the field for various field events as long as timing was carefully considered. Best management practices dictate that grassland habitat be undisturbed until after nesting/brooding season sometime in August. Jess mentioned that Carol O'Neil from Campton B&B was interested in using the property again this year for Chamber of Commerce pumpkin carving contest.

Other uses of the land in keeping with conservation mentioned were the planting of fruit trees and/or berry bushes for wildlife.

Lisa reported that PSU has a telescope mounted in a dome on top of the Boyd Center which is used for public viewing. There are interference problems with light pollution and the greenhouse radiant heat and interest is building to relocate the telescope. Lisa was asked if the Pattee property could be considered as a site. She said that the unit is portable and could be mounted in a van with a retractable roof. The dark sky and preferred view to the south could provide an ideal venue for night sky viewing events. The limits would be an electricity source and parking but these are all things to consider. It could be a joint venture between PSU, the Town of Campton and the Rey Center. All thought this was an exciting prospect.

Jess had the idea of compiling an e-mail list of names to keep informed of Pattee property issues. A piece of paper was passed around for this purpose.

Lisa asked if anyone had any further input and Diane Valente said that she was thrilled we bought the property.

iv. Selection of Name for the Property:

Name suggestions submitted by the public were listed on a large sheet of paper on an easel for viewing. All meeting attendees were given three stickers to place beside their favorite name choices. After a second round of voting, Pattee Conservation Park was declared the winning name.

4. **Meeting Wrap-up:**

The three non CCC members left and a few regular business items were discussed.

a. Workday Issues:

On Saturday, May 2nd at 8 am, CCC members will meet at the Pattee house to clean up the Blanchard House and do some trail work at the BWNA. We will assess the scope of the work

at the 4/22 meeting with the State Forester. Also, at that time we will measure the Pattee property boundaries against the deed. Jane will forward Ron's GPS files to Jess to give to Bob Hardy. The question was asked whether it was time to take the sign down from the BWNA parking area but it was determined to still have snow. Jane thought of another potential use of Leah Gray's donation which is to put another BWNA sign along Rte 3. Jess reminded Jane that there is a state highway setback so we would have to find a creative way to hang/post a sign. Lisa said that it was a safety issue since Rte 3 travelers have no warning of an upcoming parking area with exiting cars.

b. Realtor Update:

Jess e-mailed and called Joe McCord with no response to date. She will continue to try reaching him.

Meeting Adjourned 8:40 pm
Next Business Meeting May 13th **7:30 pm**
Earth Day Walk/Meet w/ Bob Hardy April 22nd, 2pm