Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC)

Meeting: April 18, 2017, 8:00 AM

Members present: Ginny Jeffryes, Kim Cowles, Chris Nicodemus, Jill Brewer, Mary Grote, Mark Ober

Guests: Rebecca Brown of Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust; Edward Rolfe; Larry Plate

DES wetlands permitting training on 3/30 – well attended by other communities’ CCs, total of 31 attendees, including our members. Good information.

Chris reports on tri-town meeting of Ammonoosuc Stream Crossing Assessment Project. Meeting #2 was April 11. Sugar Hill has more problematic culverts than Franconia and Easton. On town roads, there is a problem one on Wells Road by Horse and Hound, which is currently being worked on. Map reviewed. Chris notes that Meadow Brook is misidentified on the map.

Ed and Larry are here to express concern about the DRED - NH Parks& Rec planned new Profile Lake Trail issue. They were at the public hearing April 6th. Ed knows the Lake well, having visited it many times a year for many years to fish and with his children daily after school. Ed got the feeling that the hearing was a formality, because they already have all their permits. At hearing State said initially that it was for ADA access, but as time went on it became clear it was for generally accessible trails [universal access] , and primarily as a monument to the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund, which is a private entity which is funding it. There aren’t enough visitors to justify need. Ed thinks this is a poorly considered plan. There is a cultural heritage around Profile Lake related to fly fishing, the Profile House and other history. Land had been given to State for preservation, but will be damaged by this. Ed detailed multiple justifications that State made at the meeting which were not accurate. It is illogical to do this, and it will damage the biology of the lake. The Pemi Trail needs improvement instead. This proposed trail will also limit the amount of fishing that is possible at the lake. 60% of fishing is done from where the boardwalk is planned, and they won’t be permitted to fish there. The new trail will also cause conflict with climbers and boaters at the boat launch and climber staging area. They considered no other alternatives. None of the people running the meeting knew the trails around it – hadn’t walked it. Ed took a couple people for a walk along the part of the Pemi. Ed asked for a moratorium for 1 yr to gather accurate data and look at alternatives. There is a way to make a trail on the west side of the lake that would fit in and not interfere.

The Forest Society (SPNHF) gifted the land to the State. He contacted someone at their office. But the head of SPNHF is on the Board of the Legacy Fund. This body of water was given to the State to protect for the people.

Friday April 21st is the last day that the State is accepting public comment.

Rebecca Brown agrees that this is bad news, wrong-headed for many reasons.

Some discussion among FCC members in agreement with Ed’s concerns.   
Rebecca thinks we need to be sure the Executive Council and the Governor are aware of our objections.

Ed has put together a plan B for a substantive alternative that would actually enable beautiful access, views.

He’d like us to put a letter together opposing this, requesting the plans be withdrawn.

State’s proposal will not be something beautiful.

To continue discussion after Rebecca’s issue since she has to leave shortly.

Rebecca Brown of Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust:

Requesting FCC to be a partner of a regional conservation project. ACT is looking at the Ammonoosuc Watershed Regional Conservation Plan protection which was done in 2005 by Watershed to Wildlife. Trout is the indicator species of clean cold water, and waterways also are part of Emergency Management planning. Jessie Moore, the ecologist who works for ACT, has done some updated GIS maps of farmland assessment, and various other views, to look at which areas are important to protecting our water resources for the future. Goal being to look at ideal landowners who might be willing to protect their lands: private, voluntary, non-regulatory. They’re proposing an Ammonoosuc Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which is funded through the Farm Bill. Preventing runoff, protecting wildlife corridors, and the various other conservation goals. She’s approaching various conservation commissions. ACT would have a technical advisory team that would have a member from the FCC. We would help with identifying high value resources in Franconia, and approaching landowners.

Chris makes a motion: “We are supportive of ACT’s proposal to develop a Regional Conservation Partnership Program.” Jill seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Discussion resumes of the planned Profile Lake Trail:

Following brief discussion of above info presented by Ed and supported by Larry.

Jill Brewer makes a motion: “We support the withdrawal of the current plans for a Profile Lake Trail as proposed by the State and the Legacy Fund, and we will submit an official letter stating such to the relevant parties from the State.” Mary seconds. Motion passes unanimously. We will cc to Gov, Exec Council, local Rep and Sen. Ed is willing to send us a draft of a letter to send this week, since due Friday. He will.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 a.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday May 23 8 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Ginny Jeffryes