

Marlboro Conservation Commission meeting, July 9 2018

Commissioners present: Mike Purcell, Ashley Bies, Adam Gebb, Jaime Tanner, Kevin Kennedy  
Also present: Spencer Knickerbocker (Marlboro College student)

#### New Business

Cross-country ski trail proposed at Marlboro College. It would be a 2.5 km loop that could be used for collegiate competitions, K-12 school activities and competitions, etc. About 2 km of it are original trail, about half a km will be new trail. Some of it will be in a newly-created ecoreserve. The new portion are in what is considered an important wildlife migration route. There is an alternative route that would not impinge on the migration route, but it had been moved from that.

It will be a 20-foot-wide trail. Adam: will that allow for the canopy to be maintained?

Spencer: we'd like to open up the canopy so there'd be more snow on it.

Adam: reducing softwoods is understandable, but hardwoods wouldn't. So hardwoods should be left. Opening up the canopy on a south-facing trail would actually reduce snow cover.

Spencer: the specifications we're working with call for a 20-foot-wide trail. If that opens up the canopy, we'd be happy with it, but we won't be taking out trees just to open the canopy.

Ashley: Concerned that part of the trail (the "lollypop" portion) impinges on an existing migration corridor. Would it be worth reaching out to members of the eco-reserve to see if they would be open to moving this portion of the trail off the migration route and into a different portion of the eco-reserve.

Jaime: her sense is that there is momentum at the college to complete this trail.

Spencer: I'd like to submit an Act 250 permit application next week, and start construction in the fall so the trail is ready when the snow flies.

Spencer is currently filling out the Act 250 permit for the project, and it asks if it could damage or destroy species habitat. Wants to be able to note that he conducted a review with members of the Conservation Commission and they are supportive of the proposal.

Ashley is reluctant to lend the CC's support to a project where wildlife linkage habitat concerns remain unaddressed.

#### **Administer Conservation Commission Budget**

Ashley tallied up mileage that he has put in over the past year for wildlife tracking and attending 487 miles for wildlife crossings, 300 for attending a conference. IRS mileage reimbursement is currently a little over 50 cents a mile. The CC agreed that we should have guidelines for what we will reimburse for, and have a ceiling agreed on for reimbursement levels.

Adam: Freeman Foundation and VT Community Foundation have been supportive in the past of CC efforts. Frame out a wildlife crossings connectivity project with clear parameters.

Possible ways for spending budget: conferences, speakers, logistics of hosting events, expense reimbursement. Also paying up to \$400 to the Windham Regional Commission for GIS mapping.

#### **Collaboration with nearby towns on local wildlife migration linkages/ Hosting fall symposium**

Working with Monica Przyperhart with the state on setting up a regional meeting. But her feeling is that it should be two evening meetings rather than a full weekend day symposium. More likely to get people from the Staying Connected Initiative.

First, a mid-to late-September presentation and discussion session, to get everyone on the same page. Then have a mid- to late-October meeting to follow it as more of a workshop session.

Determine goals, etc. Each on a Monday or Tuesday night.

6pm to 8pm. Invite some experts, such as the Mass Nature Conservancy and the Cold Hollow to Canada conservation group.

Do members of the Marlboro CC want to attend a statewide CC conference and have a session on connectivity corridors on September 29 (all-day conference on a Saturday).

**Discussion of wildlife road crossings**

Ashley has identified a number of important areas that have not yet been identified as road crossings. Do we want to also identify important wildlife areas that aren't necessary part of a crossing and are more than 500 feet from a road. Will continue discussion at the next meeting.

**Update on invasive species**

**Minute-taking for next meeting**

*Respectfully submitted, Kevin Kennedy*