

Conservation Commission

Wednesday, November 5, 2008
Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present: D. Naiva, G. Wells-Kay, S. Rolfe,
Members Absent: K. Knowlton(e), N. Wederski(e), W. Peterson(u), J. Pike(u),
Alternates Absent: M. McLetchie(u), M. Lewandoski(u)
Staff: R. Ball, D. Rollins

FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION:

D. Naiva introduced Andy Fast who is the new Belknap County Forester. He is one of ten county foresters in the state of New Hampshire. His primary responsibility is to provide technical assistance and outreach education to the landowners, natural resources professionals and municipalities of Belknap County. He was invited by the Commission to do a presentation on forestry management. Several members of the public were present.

In a PowerPoint format he went over the key ingredients of a successful sale. The landowner first needs to determine why they are harvesting the timber. The most common reasons are to generate income, do a land conversion, create a view, access their property or for wildlife habitat. The next step is to find out what they are selling. He said a forester can be helpful in identifying the species, volumes, values and products that the homeowner has and what the market is for their timber. They then need to decide how the timber will be sold. It could be sold by unit of volume with a lump sum payment. It could also be sold roadside or delivered to a mill. The landowner needs to know who they are selling their timber to whether it is to a logger or timber buyer. They should check local references and possibly visit their completed jobs. They should ask questions and compare them with others in the field. It is important that they are well informed. The landowner also needs to know where they will be doing the cutting in regards to their boundary lines. Lastly, the landowner needs to know when the harvesting will be done, the start and end dates. The season and regeneration needs may also need to be considered.

He next went over the process of implementing a timber sale. The landowner needs to understand the basics of selling timber and logging operations. He said that foresters provide management plans for timber sales. Having a forester helps to ensure the landowner receives the best value for their trees. Trust and communication is the key to choosing a forester. Personality, experience, and prices are also important factors. He said the landowner should interview at least three who should provide their references and they should examine sites that they have worked on. There should be a timber sale agreement or contract. This is a way of making sure that all parties are on the same page and it protects both of them. The landowner

should also make sure that the logger is insured. Effective communication is very important with all the people that the landowner is working with.

He then explained that NH has a state harvesting law where the landowner will need to pay a timber tax. The logger needs to file an intent to cut form stating where and how much timber they expect to cut. This needs to be signed by the landowner and the logger. They will then receive a certificate allowing them to do the cutting. By March 31 they need to file a report stating the actual timber amount that was cut. The timber tax is then calculated from this report.

WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN:

D. Naiva introduced Lindsay Webb who is a Biologist for the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program from NH Fish and Game Department. She did a PowerPoint presentation on the recently completed NH Wildlife Action Plan. She said the plan was mandated and funded by the federal government. In order to get federal wildlife grant monies the state had to complete the plan. Every state has developed one. Each plan is a little bit different.

The Wildlife Action Plan identifies species and habitats at risk, assesses threats to their continued existence and offers strategies to address these needs statewide. It is a proactive effort to define and implement strategies that will help keep species off rare species list. It addresses all species. They have identified 123 species and 27 habitats in greatest need of conservation. A profile of each of these species is in the plan. There is also a profile for each habitat.

A reptile and amphibian reporting program is being developed. They are putting together a wildlife sightings database. This is a place where anyone can report on any wildlife action species they see.

The big 5 threats against wildlife are their loss of habitat, impacts of roads, invasive exotic species, pollution and climate change.

She said the plan can be accessed by either a cd that she handed out or by going to the Fish and Game website www.wildnh.com. The Plan includes a series of maps: NH Wildlife Habitat Land Cover, Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat by Ecological Condition, and Conservation Focus Areas Based on Co-occurrence of Critical Habitat Features. These maps were prepared using the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database. Sample maps were shown.

The Wildlife Action Plan can guide land use, stewardship and protection efforts. Land trusts, conservation commissions and other conservation groups can use the plan to identify areas that need protection.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Rollins

