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Benches to be added along handicap trail in Belmont Town Forest as Eagle Scout project

By Gail Ober
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BELMONT — In order for a Boy Scout to earn Eagle Scout rank, he has to do a community project and once again the town's conservation land will be the beneficiary.

Future Eagle Scout Kurt Oberhausen presented the Conservation Commission last week with three choices for his project and with the commissioners decided he should build benches for resting along the handicap trail in the Belmont Town Forest.

"The trail wraps along a large pond," penned Oberhausen in his written submission. "No benches or sitting areas are located around the trail."

To earn an Eagle Scout rank, said Conservation Commission Chair Ken Knowlton, whose organization has benefited throughout the years from the efforts of the Boy Scouts, said each young man must submit three possible proposals and complete one

Two years ago, aspiring Eagle Scout Alvin Nix build birdhouses and duck blinds for the Sanborn Farm property. Unfortunately, Knowlton said, sometime over the past summer, the blinds and birdhouses were all taken down and thrown into the woods.

Knowlton reported it to local police and wrote a letter to local newspapers expressing his outrage, but said despite his sadness at the apparent willful destruction, he and the Boy Scouts will continue to improve conservation and town forest lands in Belmont and he and the rest of the commissioners welcomed Oberhausen's project suggestions with open arms.

He said Oberhausen initially suggested either a picnic tables or bench along the trail would be a good project Conservation Commission members felt benches would be better because picnic tables can generate trash and littering.

Oberhausen would also like to include signs identifying different plants and trees along the handicap trail, telling Commissioners it would be a great way for people to learn what plant and tress species are native to the Belmont area.

One of Oberhausen's other suggestions was building kiosks at the beginning of trails in "Pop's Woods" with maps and trail information.

His third suggestion was a bridge along the "Kurtis Bartlett Trail" but Conservation Commission members said it would likely be too involved because it may involve excavation and the ditch he suggested bridging is deep and rocky.

Oberhausen told the commissioners that he liked the idea of the benches best because people who walk along the handicapped trail should have a place where they can rest. Commissioners also liked the idea of the tree and plant identification signs

"Thank you very much and thank the rest of the Boy Scouts for us," said Knowlton.

"We enjoy giving back to the community," replied Oberhausen.

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