

KENT CAC 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

I am pleased to submit the following report on the activities of the Kent Conservation Advisory Committee. The Committee is composed of seven volunteers appointed by the Town Board to advise the Board on conservation issues and to conduct such programs as allowed by Kent code ARTICLE VII. The current Committee membership is given at the end of this report. Our meetings are open to the public, advertised in advance in the local newspaper, on the Town's web site, and are normally held on the third Wednesday of each month (except for July and August) at the Town Administrative Office Building. Reports of our monthly meetings are on file in the Town Clerk's office and are available on the Town web site www.townofkentny.gov.

The primary focus of the Committee has been to encourage the enjoyment, appreciation, and the preservation of the natural areas within the Town of Kent. We design our programs for the participation of family groups in the hope that future generations will continue our stewardship of open spaces and also that they will be as we are, enriched, calmed, and strengthened by the experience of being in a natural setting, unorganized by man, and surrounded by the broad biodiversity found in the steep slopes, woodland, wetland, and meadows of Kent. We also comment, when invited by the Town Board or the Town Planning Committee, on development proposals or other projects that have an environmental impact.

The CAC is proud to announce that we have been recognized by the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions for our Mt. Nimham fire tower restoration project. The Chair traveled to Watkins Glenn, NY on November 13 to receive the award at the NYSACC annual meeting. We are also pleased to note that New York State has finally implemented a water-bottle return law, which we have actively promoted.

OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

On 03 May, Tom Maxson lead our annual hike to Hawk Rock and Mead farm. David Ehnebuske traced the trail by GPS for placement on the CAC trail page. The GPS tracks for subsequent hikes were also tracked by Dave. The hike was preceded by trail work and ground clearing at the Mead farm. About 40 persons including many youngsters attended. Jim Baker discussed typical farm activities in colonial days, the trail passed an oak tree measuring 175 inches in diameter. The pictographs on Hawk Rock have now been traced by Tom Maxson to sons of the Hunt family in pre 1940. However the big draw for this hike continues to be the

stone chambers which we continue to protect from incursion by tree roots and improve accessibility.

On July 26, a hike through the California Hill State Forest. was led by David Ehnebuske and accompanied by Tom Maxson who presented many historic details about the area. We visited several homestead ruins discovered by Maxson's explorers. A large contingent of kids came out.

On October 4, a hike to the fire tower on Mt Nimham was organized. We had two starting locations to accommodate hikers seeking a longer hike. The longer route started at the Mt Nimham Headquarters parking lot. Over 30 persons attended and enjoyed the views of the fall foliage from the tower.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Our page on the town web site has been expanded to include numerous items relating to CAC activities. In addition we have included a link to a supplemental site: www.kentcac.info which will contain more detailed information. We are indebted to member David Ehnebuske who has set up the site and serves as the webmaster.

COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Publicized and attended the opening of trails into the Wonder Lake NYS State preserve. The trails were constructed as a joint project between NYS and the NYNJTC. Subsequently on August 3rd, the CAC met with representatives of the NYNJTC on planning for an E-W trans Kent trail which had been proposed by Tom Maxson.

We collaborate with the Hudson Highland Preservation Committee led by Tom Maxson on the documentation of stone chambers in Kent and on planning for preservation activities at the Mead farm site in the Horsepound Brook unit.

GENERAL

Jim Baker represented the CAC at a meeting called by Rob Norris of DOH regarding the drilling of percolation holes within wetland buffer areas. Each Town is expected to develop a local ordinance. The Planning Board will lead on this.

Through Anne Campbell, two archeologists were invited to inspect the Mead farm site and evaluate opportunities for conservation and archeological activities. We

have subsequently defined the CAC vision for the site which would be used to guide further activities.

The Chair was invited to join Legislator Tamagna's Commission on Energy Conservation and Green Energy. Several meetings were attended and the group was invited to inspect the geothermal installation at the Kent Town Hall.

The trash at the Mt Nimham fire tower has escalated to a level where we have asked for increased surveillance by the local police department. Also we have placed a trash depository by the tower. We thank Tom Maxson and his colleagues for conducting periodic clean-ups in the area. These actions have significantly reduced the level of trash.

Annual reports for 2008 were sent to the DEP regarding our revocable permit for the Horsepond Brook area and to the DEC regarding our Stewardship agreement for the Mt Nimham fire Tower area.

I want to thank the members of the committee for their support and efforts, our liaisons Councilwoman Penny Osborn-Tarbox and Councilman Louis Tartaro, and particularly Ms Jean Ehnebuske for volunteering to become our unofficial recording secretary. We also thank the Town Board for their financial support of our programs.

Respectfully Submitted,
George Baum
Chair Kent CAC

Membership: George Baum, Bill Buck, Anne Balant-Campbell, David Ehnebuske, Joseph Greico, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach.