

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent, Meeting Minutes, April 18, 2012

Attendees

Committee members: Anne Balant-Campbell, George Baum, Marty Collins, Dave Ehnebuske, Phil Tolmach. Visitors: Jim Baker, Wilma Baker, Jean Ehnebuske, Bill Volckmann.

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 PM.

1. Chairperson's Report

Note: Chairperson Beth Herr was out of town, so Vice-Chair Dave Ehnebuske led the meeting.

DEC's Stream-Monitoring Program

Dave announced a new program initiated by the NYSDEC, WAVE (Wadeable Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators). Created to help assess the water quality of streams in New York, the program enlists and trains citizen monitors to collect and submit data. Both Anne Balant-Campbell and George Baum expressed interest in learning more. See <http://docs.kentcac.info/decwave>.

Medication Take-Back Day

Dave reported that Saturday, April 28, will be the next opportunity for residents to safely and easily dispose of expired, unused or unwanted prescription and non-prescription drugs—including pet medications. No syringes will be accepted. The collection site will be the Wagner Center Pavilion at the Putnam Hospital Center, and drop-off hours are 9 AM to 2 PM.

CAC exhibit

Dave reported that Beth and George have been interested in creating a portable exhibit about the CAC to use at various public events. George began working on this, and he showed CAC members the tri-fold display he created. It features general information about the activities and goals of the CAC as well as photos, posters and news articles from past and recent events. Calling the exhibit “a work in progress,” George explained that some items currently displayed will change as the CAC plans and sponsors new programs and activities. Dave added that Beth is very interested in working with George on this project. The first appearance of the exhibit will be at the Putnam County Land Trust Annual Dinner on April 21.

2. Appointment of committee member

Dave welcomed Marty Collins as the newest CAC board member, and Marty expressed her thanks to CAC members. Dave also welcomed a visitor, Bill Volckmann, to the meeting.

3. Kentcac.info Website

Dave stated that the website had 174 visits in the last month. He said that 68% of individuals visiting the website are new; 32% have viewed it previously. A total of 375 pages have been viewed in the last month. Statistics show that 43 people receive our notices of meetings; 120 get hike notices; and 89 are subscribed to the Kent Nature Almanac and programs announcements.

4. Kent Nature Almanac

Judging from the number of people who have subscribed to receive it, and the number of positive comments, the Kent Nature Almanac is quite a success. Dave encouraged CAC members to send in their observations.

5. Hikes and Trails

Hawk Rock hike

The CAC-sponsored hike to Hawk Rock is scheduled for Sunday, April 29 at 11 AM. Dave and George

are going to walk the path prior to the hike to ensure the trail is clear, safe and signed. Marty Collins said she would help publicize the hike.

Suggestion for new hike

George suggested that the CAC might want to plan a hike followed by a picnic at the Clearpool Education Center. He said that going when the mountain laurels are blooming would be particularly nice. CAC members agreed. George will check with Clearpool to see if Sunday, May 20 or Sunday, June 3 would be acceptable days for the hike. George will try to schedule the hike for the morning of May 20 so he can meet with a group from Ward Pound Ridge Reservation at the Mt. Nimham Firetower. This group was invited by Beth Herr to learn about our experience in restoring the firetower. This activity is scheduled for 2 PM. At the March CAC meeting, Beth encouraged CAC members to join the group and come to her house for pizza afterward.

Future hikes

CAC members recognized the need to determine the dates for future hikes at the May meeting.

6. Mt. Nimham Firetower

George reported that after reviewing all the options for fencing, and consulting with Tom Hard (a licensed professional engineer), the best option is to secure the existing fencing material with bailing wire instead of the deteriorating nylon zip-ties. George said that Bill Volckmann and Paul Wilhelm will be helping with the project, and Dave volunteered to be added to the work party.

George reported that there is new graffiti in the cabin and that vandalism is ongoing. A wooden step has been removed, and recently vandals have broken the welds on the metal steps. Bill Volckmann reported the vandalism of the tower steps to the Kent Police Department. They indicated they would plan an overnight stakeout of the property to catch the culprits.

An extended discussion of strategies to stop the graffiti ensued. This issue will be an agenda topic at the May meeting.

7. ELLA (Hudson Hills and Highlands Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)

Phil Tolmach stated that he is attending a meeting next month, but that he had nothing specific to report.

8. Other

Earth Day

George presented information about Clearpool's Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 21, from 10 AM to 2 PM. There will be free activities for all ages. Dave volunteered to post information about the event on Kentcac.info.

Vernal Pool Survey

Questions arose about the success of the vernal pool survey Beth conducted at Clearpool on March 25. George heard that there was an enormous turnout of over 100 people.

White Pond MUA

Jim Baker asked if a new path had been created (to avoid the road) for the return leg of the hike at White Pond MUA. There was no certainty among CAC members on this question. Jim suggested that the CAC clear a return route. George cautioned that the CAC should not undertake any action on DEP property without their approval so as not to jeopardize our revocable permit on the Horsepond Brook Unit. Approval has been requested, and Beth Herr will follow up.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

The next meeting of the CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, May 16, at the Kent Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary