

Public Meeting
Kent Conservation Advisory Committee
June 20, 2018, 7 PM
Kent Town Hall

Minutes

1. Attendees: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Dave Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann.
2. Minutes of the meeting of April 18, 2018 were approved.
3. Outreach Committee reports
 - The Kent Nature Almanac now has 169 subscribers. Dave plans to reformat the almanac as a .pdf so it can be provided as a printed copy. The KCAC is considering writing a news story about the almanac and submitting it to Eric Gross, editor of the Putnam County Courier, to try to increase almanac subscriptions.
 - The link for the almanac as well as some of its photos are posted regularly on the KCAC facebook page. The almanac was viewed via facebook by 57 people this month (139 last month). The article about the Kent Cleanup had 77 likes/views, was shared by 50 users and seen by 1,200 people. Sixty-six people shared the story about the firefly evening.
 - The Kentcac.info facebook page for the fire tower apparently raised \$160.00 for the KCF via a donation button, but that function does not seem to be linking to the KCF account and the information about the donors is not available, so thank-you notes cannot be sent. Bill explained how the donation button was added to that page and will follow up.
4. Hawk Rock/Mead Farm Property
 - The 5-year permit with DEP has been renewed.
 - Dave has obtained permission from the DEP to clear downed trees and brush due to the May 15 tornado from the Hawk Rock/Mead Farm trails. The date of Saturday, July 21, 2018 was chosen, with a rain date of Sunday July 22. The start time will be 10:00 AM. The press release will be due July 2.
5. Kent Conservation Foundation
 - Matt Paul (DEC) submitted paperwork for a DEC grant to help fund the repainting of the fire tower. Bill V. had given him the quotations he had obtained from the painting contractors. If the grant is obtained, the funds would be used to hire a contractor.
 - The May 15 tornado caused a large tree to fall at the base of the fire tower, damaging radio equipment. Dave met with Matt Paul, fire fighters, and NY emergency management staff at the site. The tree was removed the next day.

- The Stewardship Agreement with the DEC was renewed with the Kent Conservation Foundation rather than the KCAC.
 - A graffiti clean-up project was done on June 12, 2018 from 5-8 PM. The Putnam Mountain Bike Riders Association participated with members of the KCF and KCC to clean the large boulders along the roadway as well as the stone chamber. Bill Volckmann ordered the necessary graffiti removal solvent. The volunteers were provided personal protective equipment, including protective suits and face shields. They used a gas-powered pressure washer. Three large plastic cans of water, and almost 2 gallons of graffiti removal solvent (cost: \$200.00). Successful removal required multiple passes.
- Several minors from a town in CT were arrested for vandalizing the fire tower. The removal of the graffiti from the cost \$550.00, plus mileage and labor. The KCAC discussed whether a consequence-based penalty such as helping to remove graffiti might be appropriate, perhaps via a publicized community service event. The committee also discussed possibly writing a news story about the court case for the local papers.
- A total of 1,533 people viewed the Mt. Nimham fire tower fb page during the past week.
- Laurie Rankin has welcomed the KCF to the Forest Fire Lookout Association <http://www.firelookout.org/index.html>, which encourages “efforts of public groups and others in the restoration of forest fire lookouts.” The KCAC voted to recommend that the KCF join this association with a “1 Year Plus membership,” which includes four issues of *National Woodlands* magazine, for \$25.00.
- The Annual Lighting of the Fire Towers event will be Saturday Sept. 1, 9:00-9:30 PM. In a previous year, the KCAC participated. We used a large halogen light and shone it over to the Beacon fire tower.
- Because fire towers were an integral component of firefighting history, many firefighters feel a connection to fire towers. The KCAC might plan an event for firefighters.
- The Putnam County Land Trust will have its 50th Anniversary in 2019. The group has held meetings at five different libraries with representatives of all local conservation organizations to brainstorm about how to celebrate. Beth suggested a weekend of hikes for the county such as a fire tower hike or hawk rock hike. PCLT will share all of the ideas gleaned from these meetings and then develop a plan.

6. Hikes and programs

- The Kent Clean-Up Day had 32 volunteers last year and 232 volunteers this year. Dividing the town in territories and having leaders for each section was helpful. Next year, the card showing the promotions and discounts for those who volunteer will be made more durable.

- The May Hawk Rock Hike was postponed due to tornado damage.
- Night of Fireflies at Town Center: Saturday, June 23, 8:00-9:30 PM
- Butterfly Ramble: Saturday, July 7, 11:00 AM
- Mount Nimham Hike: Sunday, Oct. 14, 1:00 PM. Beth will be unable to attend.

7. Chair's report

- Kent Lakes Committee meeting, June 16. Lake Carmel is one of a dozen in the state that are part of an experiment on treatments to control blue-green algae. The experiment involves three conditions which are each being studied at two beaches on Lake Carmel: hydrogen peroxide ultrasound device, and untreated controls. A doctoral candidate is going to test all lakes in Kent. The 12 lakes will have preference over other applicants in grant process. There are two grant applications before the Kent Town Board for installation of systems to prevent phosphorus from getting into the water. Additional grant opportunities are being pursued. The committee is still planning a lakes forum for the fall.
- Arsenic testing is being conducted in the vicinity of the old arsenic mines on Gipsy Trail Rd. The EPA is involved and an extensive cleanup may be needed. The levels have been tested at 56 ppb on one property. The leachate could contaminate the Horsepound Brook.
- Clearpool Model Forest meeting, May 14. The group is planning a new brochure with an improved map and information on forest management practices.
- Kent has applied to make the town an Arbor Day community
- Cornell Cooperative Extension, no meeting

8. Other

- There now are crowdsourced "apps" available for finding hiking trails. It would be helpful if the community could have a GIS map of trails that could be used to quantify areas of need/damage.
- Next meeting: Weds. July 18, 2018 7:00 PM at the Kent Town Hall.