

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,
Meeting Minutes, October 17, 2012**

Attendees

Committee members: George Baum, Anne Balant-Campbell, Marty Collins, David Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach. Visitors: Jean Ehnebuske, Bill Volckmann.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Chairperson's Report

Correspondence

From ELLA (Hudson Hills and Highlands Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)

Chair Beth Herr reported that she received information from ELLA regarding a program that helps residents of Peekskill find out about getting free home energy audits. "Energize Peekskill" will be presented by the City of Peekskill and the Peekskill Conservation Advisory Council. The goal is to help residents learn how to save money while reducing energy consumption. The Chair stated she likes the idea of offering a "green series" of workshops to interested town residents.

From the DEC

The Chair has been communicating with the DEC's Barbara Lucas Wilson about the CAC's revocable stewardship agreement regarding the Mt. Nimham property. Ms. Wilson would like to have a meeting at the DEC's New Paltz office with representatives from the CAC and the mountain bicycle community to talk over details. Beth Herr and Dave Ehnebuske expressed interest in attending, and the Chair said she would contact them regarding the date for the meeting. George Baum suggested those attending ask about the possibility of the CAC taking on the task of marking the trail from Coles Mills Road.

From Sal Tripi

The Chair received an update regarding the funds in the Mt. Nimham Fire Tower account, \$2, 217. These are funds that were raised by the Friends of the Fire Tower, an offshoot of Plan Kent. Sal Tripi is the treasurer of that group.

Discussion ensued about the rust that has been appearing on the fire tower, and about the need for substantial funding for the professional scraping and painting project that preserving the tower will eventually require. It is not a job that can be done by volunteers. The last time the tower was scraped and painted, the cost was \$30,000.

Since the Town of Kent allocates \$700 per year for the CAC, there was discussion about asking the Town to set aside what is not used each year to help with the funding the restoration.

Dave Ehnebuske moved that the Kent CAC make a request to the Kent Town Board to set aside each year the unused funds that the Town allocates for the CAC for the purpose of restoring the Mt. Nimham Fire Tower. The motion was seconded by George Baum. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting with Go Green

The Chair will be meeting on October 23 with members of the Go Green club at George Fischer Middle School to help them learn about the history and value of the Mt. Nimham Fire Tower. One of the club's sponsors, Amanda O'Shaughnessy—who is also an art teacher—will be working with students to produce four murals for the inside cabin of the fire tower.

2. KentCAC.info website

Webmaster Dave Ehnebuske reported that the website had 117 unique visitors last month, with many views of the Hikes page and the Programs page. Dave said that current statistics show that 90 people are signed up to receive the notices about CAC hikes, and that many people have made comments about how much they like and appreciate the maps on the website.

3. Kent Nature Almanac

Dave reported that 88 people are signed up to receive the Kent Nature Almanac.

4. Hikes and trails

Annual Fall Foliage Hike to Mt. Nimham

Dave stated that 17 people, adults and children, participated in the annual hike to the Mt. Nimham Fire Tower on Sunday, October 14. Several others (who could not be present when the hike began) joined the original group of 17 at the base of the fire tower. They were in time to hear the presentation by George Baum about the history of the fire tower and the role the Civilian Conservation Corp played. Dave reported that the trail from the lower to the upper parking lot was not only clearly marked and well maintained, but that it also took hikers through some beautiful and interesting scenery.

Possible post-Thanksgiving hike

The CAC discussed hosting a "Walk Off the Turkey Hike" for Friday, November 23, at Wonder Lake State Park. Dave cannot lead it since he will be out of town. George said he is willing, but he would like another CAC member to help out. The time to begin the hike was not determined.

5. Fire Tower Committee

Bill Volckmann stated that the drawings of Tom Hard's specifications for the needed brace for the bottom flight of the tower stairs have been sent to the Brewster Iron Works for an estimate.

George reported that the cabin was painted two weeks ago, and has still, remarkably, not been defaced.

Bill reported that his friend, Lou, a mountain biker, has been putting out full trash cans for DEC pickup. Since the DEC has not been picking up the trash, however, George and Bill have done so.

Bill added that the DEC and the mountain biker community worked together to close jumps and steep trails. It is the mountain bikers who have marked the red, blue and yellow trails.

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

Note: Please see text under Chairperson's Report on previous page.

7. Natural Resources Inventory

The Chair reported that she is waiting for the format from Bill Buck. She also talked about the sizable beech tree that was recently found at Clearpool Model Forest.

8. Other

Next meeting date, Wednesday, November 28

Due to CAC members' plans for travel over the Thanksgiving holiday, the regular meeting date (third Wednesday of the month) was rescheduled to the fourth Wednesday, November 28, at 7 PM.

WAVE (Wadeable Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators)

Both George and Anne Balant-Campbell are volunteers participating in the WAVE project. This pilot program trains "citizen scientists" to collect data that will help determine the health of New York streams. Participants are trained to locate, identify and collect certain organisms that typically inhabit healthy streams. The organisms are sent to the DEC for further evaluation.

Medication Take-Back Day

Dave announced that Medication Take-Back Day will be Saturday, November 3, from 9 AM to 2 PM at the Wagner Cancer Pavilion at the Putnam Hospital Center.

Environmental Education Exchange 2012 (E3 Conference)

George announced that Green Chimneys will be hosting a conference on best practices for environmental stewardship, nature-based education and managing natural resources at Clearpool Education Center. There will be workshops for both young people and adults. Sessions for middle-school students will be on Thursday, November 8, and those for adults will be on Friday, November 9.

More information can be found at docs.kentcac.info/e3conf. George suggested that the CAC might want to have a presence at the conference by booking a table for a display and/or materials at the cost of \$75. The table would need to be staffed.

The Chair, Beth Herr, moved that the CAC book a table at the Environmental Education Exchange (E3 Conference) at Clearpool at the cost of \$75. Phil Tolmach seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Thank you

Jean Ehnebuske, ex-officio recording secretary, thanked Bill Buck for taking the minutes in her absence at the September meeting. She announced that she will not be able to attend the November meeting, and asked if anyone would be willing to fill in for her. Bill Volckmann volunteered, and Jean thanked him for his offer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

The next meeting of the CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, November 28, at the Kent Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary