

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,  
Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2012**

**Attendees**

Committee members: George Baum, Bill Buck, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach. Town Board Liaison: Lou Tartaro. Visitors: Tom Hard, Ilene Thompson, Bill Volckmann.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**1. Chairperson's Report**

Kent CAC display

The Chair reported that progress is being made on an exhibit for the Kent CAC. The finished product will be displayed at the next CAC meeting.

CAC History

Based on materials that George Baum shared with the Chair, she would like to work up a history of the Kent CAC in conjunction with George.

Conference of New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC)

NYSACC's annual Conference on the Environment will be held from October 10 – 13, 2012 in Syracuse. The Chair cannot attend, and the CAC is looking for possible participants.

News from Clearpool Model Forest Committee

The Chair reported that a one-acre deer exclusion fence was installed to show the differences between the damage done by deer in the forest and what happens when they are excluded. There is also an experiment to try to eliminate the invasive plant, black swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*) of the milkweed family, by placing black plastic over the populations. A survey of wetlands revealed 32 delimited wetlands and a kettle hole bog. Interns from Syracuse University did not materialize and so a natural history inventory has not been done yet.

Book talk

Dr. Bernd Heinrich will speak about his latest book, *Life Everlasting: The Animal Way of Death*, at 2 PM on Sunday, October 14, in the Gardner Theater at Trinity-Pawling School. The program is sponsored by the Friends of the Great Swamp.

**2. Kentcac.info Website**

Dave Ehnebuske was not present to give a website report.

**3. Kent Nature Almanac**

Beth reported than other than her sightings, there was only one other contribution to the Kent Nature Almanac. She encourages others to participate.

**4. Hikes and Trails**

Invasive Plant Walk

The Invasive Plant Walk on August 19 at Nimham Mountain State Forest and the Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park had four participants. They found lots of invasive plants just around the parking lot.

Fall Foliage Hike

The next CAC-sponsored hike is at 10:30 AM on Sunday, October 14. It is the annual Fall Foliage Hike to the Mt. Nimham Firetower. Beth has other commitments and needs others to lead the hike.

**5. Mt. Nimham Firetower Committee**

Murals

Amanda O'Shaughnessy, an art teacher at George Fischer Middle School, has offered to organize

students to produce a set of murals for the inside of the cabin of the firetower. The Chair will work with George to give a presentation to the students about the firetower.

#### Trash removal

George reported that trash accumulation continues to be a problem. He and Bill Volckmann remove the trash about once every two weeks. On a brighter note, he commented that (a) mystery person/people is/are helping to pick up trash and put it into reinforced plastic bags. Beth will try to solve the mystery.

#### Clearing brush

George rented a brush whacker on August 27th, and he and Jim Baker cleaned out the vicinity of the firetower and stone chamber. A large patch of raspberries is particularly troublesome. They would like to try to replace it with low-bush blueberries, but that is probably not practical. Continuing to whack the patch is probably best. They also removed a tree from in front of the stone chamber.

#### Maintaining the firetower

The bottom flight of stairs on the firetower is less than stable and so Tom Hard was brought in as an engineering consultant to solve the problem. Tom said that welding would be the best, but would be difficult to do. Instead, a brace will be built off-site and then bolted into place. Tom has provided a drawing of specifications for the brace, and this will be taken to Brewster Iron Works to get an estimate to construct it.

The inside of the cabin is scheduled to be painted about a week prior to the October 14 hike to the firetower.

#### New committee chair

George suggested that the Chair of the Firetower Committee be passed over to Bill Volckmann. Since Bill is not a member of the CAC, George will act as a liaison to him and work on getting together a package of materials for the transition. The CAC agreed and was thankful that Bill agreed to take on the task.

#### T-shirts

There has been a demand to reproduce the firetower t-shirts that were originally made a few years ago. These are the bright blue shirts with an outline of the firetower in white. George and Wilma Baker think it was Bill Sampson who made the original shirts, but Bill doesn't remember having done so. George has donated his shirt as a sample for the silk screening. We are awaiting a quote but expect the cost to be about \$7 – 10/ shirt. Sizes need to be ordered in lots of six, so 6 XL, 24 L, and 6 M have been ordered. They will be sold at the Kent Recycling Center on Saturdays.

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

On Thursday, October 4, from 7 – 9 PM, there will be a presentation on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at Teatown Lake Reservation. Pre-registration is required. See <http://www.ellahhh.net/>.

### **7. Natural Resources Inventory**

In advancement of the Natural Resources Inventory, plant collections were made at the Clearpool Model Forest. Bill Buck will help the Chair prepare labels with all the needed information.

### **8. Other**

#### Putnam County time capsule

Ideas for inclusions in a county time capsule were discussed, but no conclusions were reached.

#### Croton CAC initiative

The Croton CAC is continuing its Green Living Series, and the first presentation will be on backyard beekeeping and growing bird-friendly gardens. Beth would like the Kent CAC to think about hosting a similar series.

The meeting was adjourned by Beth Herr at 7:58 PM.

The next meeting of the CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, October 17, at the Kent Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Buck for Jean Ehnebuske,  
ex-officio recording secretary