

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,
Meeting Notes*, March 21, 2012**

Attendees

Committee members: George Baum, Bill Buck, Beth Herr. Visitors: Jim Baker, Wilma Baker, Janis Bolbrock, Ilene Thompson, Bill Volckmann.

*The meeting began at 7:07 PM. There was not a quorum, but the meeting continued because there were no items that needed a vote. These notes provide an account of the topics that were presented and discussed informally among those in attendance.

1. Chairperson's Report

Correspondence (attached)

The Chair sent a letter to Arlene Oaks via Kent Supervisor Kathy Doherty regarding the CAC acquiring GIS maps with overlays.

With the support of Supervisor Doherty, the Chair also sent a letter to County Executive MaryEllen Odell regarding the possibility of re-activating the Putnam County Environmental Management Council.

The Chair submitted a report on CAC activities for the Town of Kent spring newsletter.

2. Website

With Dave Ehnebuske absent, there was no website report.

3. Natural Resources Inventory

CAC task

The Chair remarked that as dictated by our mandate, one of the tasks of the CAC is conducting a natural resources inventory of the Town. She stated that in order to do this effectively, we need high quality electronic maps of the town. She said that so far, she has not been successful at obtaining such maps. Wilma Baker suggested that she try the County Planning Office on Fair Street. Janis Bolbrock offered another alternative, and will e-mail her the information. The Chair said that she hoped Dave Ehnebuske would help with this aspect of the project.

Beginning the process

As a way to begin the inventory process, three areas have been identified as places to start:

- Clearpool Education Center. As part of their agreement to do the Model Forest Project, Clearpool is obliged to do a natural resources inventory anyway. Since both Beth Herr and George Baum are on the Model Forest Committee at Clearpool, this seems like a good place to start. Beth has already arranged a vernal pool survey at Clearpool on March 25, and has over 100 people signed up for it.
- Dean Pond. Beth has been in touch with Lori DiLorenzo about including the Dean's Pond Unit of DEP as part of our inventory. All participants will need to get a hiking permit from DEP.
- Our own backyards. As a first start at a natural resources inventory, we have begun the Kent Nature Almanac where participants can record local observations,

Training

In order to train CAC members and friends on how to recognize the mating calls and dance of the woodcock, the Chair will hold a training session on Thursday, March 22, 2012, at the Mt.

Nimham parking lot along Gipsy Trail Road at 7:30 PM (one hour after sunset).

These activities are mainly for learning about animals. In terms of plants, the Torrey Botanical Society (led by Dr. Cooney) has plant lists online from various field trips, including quite a few in the Town of Kent. The Chair and Bill Buck will work out a schedule to do a plant inventory at Clearpool, involving relatively few participants as trainees. The goal is to put the voucher specimens in the herbarium of The New York Botanical Garden, and possibly get some logistical support from NYBG as well (e.g., get flowering plant specialists to help with inventory).

4. Hikes and Trails

Dave was not present to present a hike report. However, Beth noted that the next hike, to Hawk Rock, is scheduled for Sunday, April 29, at 11:00AM.

5. Mt. Nimham Firetower

Locks

George Baum presented a report on the firetower. When George visited there last Saturday in order to empty the trash cans, the lock from gate at the base (for which we have a key) was missing. George contacted Adam Stiebeling, Deputy Commissioner of Emergency Services, and he is replacing it. George mailed him two broken locks from the trash to show him that they need sturdier locks than the ones currently being used. George then phoned Bill Volckmann, who came and helped George with the trash cans. The Chair thanked George for continuing to empty the garbage cans at the firetower.

Fencing

George checked out fencing from the Tractor Supply Company in the thought of replacing the current security fencing around the firetower stairs. However, he decided that this was going to be too much work and instead only purchased bailing wire. He is improving the current fencing by tying it to the firetower with the wire and it seems to be effective (and almost free). He intends to work on a flight at a time through the summer months.

Painting and graffiti

The first firetower cabin needs painting again. It is painted twice a year, in spring and fall, and it is time for the spring painting. As a way to divert graffiti from the firetower, it was suggested that we put up a large piece of plywood near the base of the firetower to give the vandals a place to paint other than the firetower itself. Bill Buck thought this would only be ugly in an otherwise natural setting, and would probably only be a warm-up for the graffiti painters. The problem is that some of the graffiti is not child-friendly and so needs to be removed so families feel comfortable visiting the firetower. Another possibility is a video camera to catch them, but it is expensive and not practical. One option is to just put up a sign saying there is a video camera, but not actually have a camera.

Fund-raising

A couple of possible fund-raising activities were discussed to raise money for various firetower repairs. These included possible musical activities, coordinated with a natural event.

6. Firetower at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation

The Chair reported that Ward Pound Ridge wants to reinstall their firetower, but it is currently in pieces in the Catskills. They need to raise \$140,000 to purchase the firetower, move it down to Westchester County, and install it. In order to give the Ward Pound Ridge folks an opportunity to understand the challenges it takes to maintain a firetower, Beth is holding a party at the

Mt. Nimham Firetower on Sunday, May 20, at 2 PM, followed by pizza at her house. CAC members are invited and encouraged to attend.

7. Other

CAC project suggestion

Janis Bolbrock presented the possibility of putting in a native plant garden at the Kent Town Center. It might be in coordination with the Kent Public Library to include various age groups, e.g., creating a children's garden. It was also suggested that the Kent Beautification Committee be included in any planning. Such a project would be a good educational outreach project for the CAC.

Best wishes

Jim Baker was congratulated on his 86th birthday.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

The next scheduled meeting of the CAC will be Wednesday, April 18, 2012, at 7 PM at the Kent Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Buck for Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary

Attachments:

Letter from Chair Beth Herr to Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell

Letter from Chair Beth Herr to Putnam County's Arlene Oaks, Information Technology

Submission for Town of Kent spring newsletter

Maryellen Odell, County Executive
Putnam County Office Building
40 Gleneida Ave., 3rd Floor
Carmel, New York 10512
March 15, 2012

Dear Ms. Odell,

I write as Chair of the Kent Conservation Advisory Committee to urge you to reestablish the defunct Putnam County Environmental Management Council (PCEMC). Composed of representatives from Conservation Boards from the five towns of Putnam, such a council could provide a meaningful forum for environmental issues, strengthen efforts toward conservation education, invite discussion on sustainability concerns, and invigorate voters.

Ten years ago I served on the PCEMC just before Mr. Bondi disbanded the group. The members of that committee were the environmental leaders of our communities and met monthly in the county offices.

In order to revive the council, the towns of Patterson and Southeast would need to form committees and send representatives. I believe that with your direction and support that could be accomplished.

For your information, the Kent Conservation Advisory Committee continues to provide environmental education opportunities and advice for our community: annual hikes to Hawk Rock and Mt. Nimham Tower are planned; repair and maintenance of the tower as well as weekly cleanup keep the area safe and clean for visitors; a website with printable hiking maps, conservation information, and a calendar of events stays current, and unique events on sustainability and environmental topics are offered during the year.

There are new initiatives: The Kent Nature Almanac is published monthly to subscribers via email; it is compiled and edited by the co-chairs from observations made by interested community members. The Kent Natural Resource Inventory will track the flora and fauna of Kent: using historic records from the 1930's, recent data from the Torrey Botanical Society, and partnering with the New York Natural Heritage Program, the Clearpool Model Forest, and the NYC DEP. The intention is to map significant, rare, and important habitats in Kent. Lastly, a new safety railing for the Mt. Nimham tower's stairs is under review.

As you can see we are an active, vital group, and a potential model for other towns. Imagine what could be accomplished if more of these citizens could be engaged. I invite your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Beth Herr, Chair
Kent Conservation Advisory Committee
254 Horsepound Road
Kent, New York 10512
herrszur@comcast.net

Ms. Arlene Oaks
Information Technology/GIS
112 Old Route 6
Carmel New York 10512
March 8, 2012

Dear Ms. Oaks

I write to ask for your help with a new initiative from the Kent Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC). One of the duties of the committee is to conduct and maintain an inventory of the natural resources within the Town of Kent. I hope that your department can provide these essential maps to facilitate the process: both PDF and plotter printed GIS maps of the town of Kent. A green-space overlay with state, county, and town parks, as well as NYC Acquired Conservation Easements would help highlight target areas.

The Kent CAC members include a curator from the NY Botanic Garden in the Bronx, a retired naturalist, a landscape architect, a retired computer genius with many equally talented members in the community. They have located historic records from the 1930's, have recent data from the Torrey Botanical Society, and they will partner with the New York Natural Heritage Program, the Clearpool Model Forest, and the NYC DEP. They also currently maintain the Kent Nature Almanac, a monthly newsletter.

Attached please find the required scanned DIS Digital Data Service Request form.

Sincerely

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee

The Kent Conservation Advisory Committee (KCAC) continues to provide environmental education opportunities and advice for our community: annual hikes to Hawk Rock and Mt. Nimham Tower are planned; repair and maintenance of the tower as well as weekly cleanup keep the area safe and clean for visitors; a website with printable hiking maps, conservation information, and a calendar of events stays current, and unique programs on sustainability and environmental topics are offered during the year.

Watch for some new initiatives by the KCAC: The Kent Nature Almanac is published monthly to subscribers via email; it is compiled and edited by the co-chairs from observations made by interested community members. The Kent Natural Resource Inventory will track the flora and fauna of Kent: using historic records from the 1930's, recent data from the Torrey Botanical Society, and partnering with the New York Botanic Garden, the Clearpool Model Forest, and the NYC DEP. The intention is to map significant, rare, and important habitats in Kent. Lastly, a new safety railing for the Mt. Nimham tower's stairs is under review.

If you would like to subscribe to the Nature Almanac, join a wildflower, butterfly, or plant walk, see what's coming in the calendar of events, or to volunteer, just visit: <http://www.kentcac.info>.

Join the discussion! Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Kent Town Offices at 25 Sybil's Crossing, Route 52. All are welcome.