

East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Present: Arthur Carlson, Chairman
Mark Christiansen, Member
Penny Heller, Member
Marvin Schutt, Member
Ron Nichols, Alternate

Absent: Tom Kalal, Member
Laura Ashburn, Alternate

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-Officio

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
Feb 20 2015 AT 10:48 AM/PM
Brook J. Jones ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Call to Order

Chairman Carlson called the February 11, 2015 Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources to order at 7:07 p.m.

I. Additions to the Agenda — none

II. Public Delegations — none

III. Presentation

- A. Presentation by DEEP Foresters regarding their updated plan for the forest (approx. 1 hour)
- Tom Worthley**, Forest Management and Stewardship, University of Connecticut (UConn) Department of Extension, College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, provides information and education regarding forest management to, primarily, private landowners, forestry professionals, communities, tree wardens, and, more recently, utility companies. With approximately 60% of the State being forest cover, of which 85% is owned by private individuals and organizations, and 70-75% being tree-covered, he stated that we are currently living in a unique period of time in which the number of people living in connection with the forestland is truly unique in this part of the world. The forest, which provides a number of benefits, including water, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics, requires some management to ensure that an environment in which an optimum array of these benefits can exist.

Dick Raymond, CT DEEP Forester serving Eastern CT, is one of two Service Foresters in the State. He works one-on-one with private landowners and municipalities determining their needs, wants, and objectives to develop a plan as well as disseminate information and conduct outreach projects. He reported that current discussions include new regulations regarding the movement of firewood due to the invasion of the emerald ash borer.

Lisa Wahle, New England Cottontail (NEC) Project Contract Biologist, DEEP Wildlife, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the New England Cottontail Program. The NEC is currently a candidate species for being Federally listed as an endangered or threatened species, their most critical threat being the loss of habitat (quantity, quality, and connectivity), increased vulnerability to predation in inadequate habitats, and competition for resources. While their actual population is unknown, the NEC resides in the southern portions of Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York east of the Hudson River. The NECs require large habitat patches comprised of field shrubs between the ages of 3 and 15. Because their habitats are ephemeral, re-generational cuts are critical for their well-being. Their habitats have been threatened due to the declining seedling/sapling acreage as well as competition for space with the Eastern Cottontail, which was introduced by the tens of thousands during the early 1900s by various Fish and Game Clubs for hunting purposes.

In 2000, the Fish & Wildlife was sued to list the species as endangered or threatened. In 2006, they declared it a candidate species with a final decision to be determined by October 2015 leading to the establishment of a formal initiative for research and conservation efforts. Currently, a conservation strategy is in place with 81 goals, including a captive breeding program as well as habitat creation. In the State of CT, the goal was to create approximately 24,000 acres of habitats in 12 focus areas, i.e., two acres per NEC. Due to the existence of its sympatric Eastern Cottontail, biologists have recently adjusted that number to five acres per NEC in CT. NEC populations are determined primarily by the collection of fecal pellets, and trapping and obtaining DNA samples from the animals, themselves. Habitats are created through controlled burns, which help bring back shrub lands, the creation of brush piles, plantings, and preservation of rock walls. These projects are conducted incrementally so as to provide patches of habitats of various ages within the landscape.

There are approximately 50 wildlife species that have been determined to have the greatest conservation need in CT that require shrub land habitats, including butterflies, moths, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates. Her organization is working to engage and work with foresters and private landowners, acquire funding, outreaching, and provide technical assistance in an effort to develop habitats within which the NEC and other species, threatened/endangered or otherwise, may live. Concerns include the fragmentation of forestland, issues of harvesting and the assessment of taxes, and the need for both short- and long-term planning in the management of forests.

A recess was taken at 9:09 p.m. and reconvened at 9:30 p.m.

Ms. Heller and Hardy departed from the meeting.

IV. Minutes

A. Minutes of January 14, 2015

The deletion of the following line on Page 2, Item V(A), second paragraph, third sentence, was proposed:

- Inbox (9999+)
- Drafts (521)
- Sent
- Spam (148)
- Trash
- ▼ Folders
 - MABL ideas
 - soccer
- Recent

Nursick, Kevin J Jan 15

To me

Hi Mark -

The Department is aware that an Aquifer Protection Area (APA) is located adjacent to and under I-95 at Exit 74. However, the Department does not retrofit existing roadways with systems to accommodate the containment or removal of fuel or hazardous material in the event of a spill. Should a new state project that involves full depth reconstruction or the widening of a roadway be initiated, appropriate systems to protect APA's and other sensitive environmental features would be incorporated into the design and construction.

The responsibility for containment and clean-up of fuel/oil spills associated with incidents (crashes etc) resides with the appropriate local Fire Department (East Lyme in this case). DOT would provide protection of the scene for the emergency responders. For major fuel spills, DEEP personnel also would respond to the scene. If you need a point of contact at DEEP, I suggest Mark DeCaprio.

Respectfully,

Kevin Nursick
CTDOT

Name: Mark Christensen
 Contact phone number: 860-437-8771
 Contact E-mail address: greenacresinc@sbcglobal.net Reported Town: East Lyme
 Topic: Safety Concerns
 Comment: Dear DOT:

I am a member of the East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Commission. We are currently reviewing the safety of our water supply. East Lyme draws public water from an aquifer that goes under I-95 at exit 74. We are wondering what containment/mitigation/removal procedures that the ConnDOT has in the event a fuel spill or hazardous material spill along I-95 in East Lyme, over our water supply. Also, are there plans in place to divert and contain any fuel spills that may occur, separate from normal road drainage? I believe that there will be plans to widen I-95 soon, and the town would be grateful if some hazardous material containment/removal system were included in this design. Several years ago, there was a large fuel spill from a tanker truck accident at the I-95/I-395 merge. Had the accident occurred just 30 seconds later, it would have impacted the main source of drinking water. We have already contacted the East Lyme Water department and we want your insights, so please don't refer the question back to the town water dept. Thank you Mark Christensen member, East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Commission

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