

Willand Pond Ad-Hoc Committee and Friends of Willand Pond Meeting

November 19, 2008, 5:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Location: McConnell Center, Dover, NH

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chris Parker welcomed everyone to the Friends of Willand Pond Kick-off meeting. Parker then explained that the existing Willand Pond Ad-Hoc Committee and the new Friend Group will likely run as parallel efforts until the Ad-Hoc Committee decides to phase out. The purpose of the Friends Group is to transition to a community member led initiative.

2. Update on the SW Cole Study

Chris Parker explained that SW Cole was unable to attend the meeting, but their work on water quantity and quality issues at Willand Pond continues. The members of the public in attendance expressed their frustration that SW Cole had not attended. Many of the attendees live on or near Willand Pond and expressed concern over the Pond level and water in the basements of many homes that they feel are related.

Parker explained that until 1942 the Pond was a primary water source for the City of Dover. From 1942 to 1977 the Pond was a back-up source, and water continued to be pumped from the Pond. Since 1977 the Pond has not been pumped and appears to be holding more water as Kettle Ponds of this type often do. SW Cole is also looking into alternatives that include pumping some of this excess water out of the Pond, but there are many permitting and logistical issues that need to be addressed. Parker also explained that there has been an informal agreement between Dover and Somersworth for joint review of any proposed projects in the area to ensure they would not create an increase in run-off or pollutants.

3. Introduction to Jeffrey H. Taylor and Associates

Jeff Taylor provided some background information on the work conducted by Jeffrey H. Taylor and Associates in other New Hampshire communities. Taylor then introduced his associate Steve Whitman. Whitman provided some examples of other community efforts he and Taylor have participated in for the Ossipee and Newfound Watersheds.

Taylor asked the attendees to introduce themselves and the community they live in. Many of the participants identified themselves as being from the Wellington Road area, and reported problems with water in their basements. Taylor explained that the firm has been charged with helping get the Friends Group organized over the next six months into a group that can work on behalf of the Pond and the surrounding lands. Taylor explained that they would take minutes during this first meeting, but that the responsibilities need to start to shift to the Group. The activities that Taylor and Whitman will assist the group with include an Outreach Plan, creating messages related to the Pond, and workshops. Taylor provided a handout to lead the discussion further and to get the participants thinking about the form and function of the Friends of Willand Pond Group.

Several attendees asked if the Pond could be pumped out in the interim to bring the water level down somewhat. Parker responded that pumping some of the water out seemed like a reasonable solution, and that he would explore that option further.

Taylor asked the participants to suggest other groups and people that should be involved in the Friends effort. Suggestions included:

- Younger people
- Scouts
- High School students
- Sporting Groups (kayakers, etc.)
- UNH Outdoor Lab
- UNH Recreation Groups
- Commercial entities near the Pond
- Recreation Department
- Gardening and Wildlife Clubs
- Open Lands Committee
- Trout Unlimited and similar groups
- Old Track Owner and other land owners
- WMUR, NHPR and others

Taylor also asked the participants for ideas on outreach related to this group. Suggestions included:

- Notice in the newspaper well in advance of the meeting
- Flyers
- City Websites
- Get residents near the Pond involved
- Use the Boat Launch Board
- Sponsorship from Retailers
- Notices sent home from schools

4. Next Steps

Representatives from the Ad Hoc Committee expressed that the SW Cole report is still underway but that overall a great deal has been accomplished. The Home Depot detention pond issues are being addressed by the City of Somersworth, and land adjacent to the pond is being evaluated by the Dover Open Lands Committee for protection. The issues related to dead trees around the pond still need to be addressed, and the groups involved need to make sure more sources of water are not allowed to empty into the Pond. When the Pond level is back down Somersworth should report to the group on efforts to get the wooden bridges back in place.

Taylor stated that it is clear that the December meeting needs to be focused on a report from SW Cole. A presentation by Jim Gove might also be possible. Any progress on the tree issue should also be reported at this meeting.

Taylor then asked the Group to start considering filling positions like Acting Chair (Tom Fargo), Acting Vice Chair (Peter Allen) and Recording Secretary. Taylor asked the participants to be thinking about other ways to get the word out on this effort, and potential workshop ideas that can be explored. Taylor and Whitman are hoping to meet with the Friends Group on a monthly basis, and to conclude by supporting the Group as they present to a joint meeting of Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions. Chris Parker will set a meeting date and location for December.

5. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 PM.