

Meredith Conservation Commission

Meredith, NH 03253

Minutes of the Meredith Conservation Commission Meeting (public hearing).... March 17, 2005

Meeting:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Sherman at 7:00 PM. Commissioner LeCount read the Notice of the Meeting. The members of the Commission and the Alternates introduced themselves

Members Attending:

John Sherman, Jacquie Colburn, Robert LeCount, Donald MacFarlane, Peter Miller, Ralph Pisapia.
Alternate members: Pauli Novicki, Paul DelFrari, Ron Kiesel.

Invited Guests:

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Northeast Wilderness Trust
Rick Van de Poll, Board Member, Northeast Wilderness Trust
Sumner Dole, Belknap County Forester, University of NH Extension Service
Peter Farrell, Northeast Forestry Consultants

Community Members: See attached sign in sheet

Purpose of Hearing: Hamlin & Eames Properties

Chairman Sherman indicated that the purpose of this hearing was to gather as much information from a variety of resources regarding the options available to preserve the Hamlin and Eames properties as wild areas. He emphasized that the Commission viewed this as an information-gathering session and that no decisions would be made during this meeting.

Peter Miller's Presentation:

Selectman and Commission Member Peter Miller reviewed the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the two properties.

- Eames Property – acquired in October 2004. The \$610,000 purchase price was funded as follows:
\$ 40,000 Eames family
\$100,000 Federal funds
\$470,000 Meredith conservation bond.
- Hamlin Property – Using Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) monies, the Hamlin Property was acquired in December of 1979 for \$270,000. No acquisition costs accrued to the Town. Recreational use was the primary purpose for purchasing the Hamlin property. Since that time, several attempts have been made to enact a management plan for this site. In 1981, the area was designated a Town Forest. In 1988, an easement was drafted but was not put in place. No authoritative plans are currently put in place.

When LWCF funds are used to purchase property, certain use restrictions are placed on the property. They are general in scope and provide minimal protections. Mr. Miller recommended that the Commission pursue opportunities to preserve the integrity of the ecological diversity on the Eames and Hamlin properties beyond those outlined by LWCF.

Mr. Miller stated his desire to protect these properties from human whims and vagaries. With that goal in mind, he has contacted the Nature Conservancy who stated that they were not interested. He received an unenthusiastic answer from the Society of the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) was the only organization that responded with a plan to address the need for additional protection of the Eames and Hamlin properties.

One means to enhance the protection of the properties is to grant an easement to a land trust that will impose defined restrictions for a specific length of time. Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) of Montpelier, Vermont is a land trust that proposes to offer the Town \$60,000 in exchange for a *FOREVER WILD* easement which would permanently preserve and manage the 500+ acre forest.

Town attorney, Tim Bates, has indicated that any conservation easement would require the approval of Dr. Hamlin, the Town meeting participants, and the LWCF liaison. Mr. Miller stated that Dr. Hamlin approves the easement to NEWT. The LWCF liaison has also approved the easement proposal.

A copy of the Mr. Miller presentation notes are attached to these minutes as Addenda I and II.

Rick Van de Poll's Presentation:

Dr. Van de Poll was asked by the Town of Meredith to do a rapid ecological assessment of the Hamlin and Eames properties. His field research revealed that the area favors a wide variety of ecosystems. There are pockets of 400 year-old spruce and hemlock trees (old growth) that support a great amount of biodiversity. Old growth black gum-red maple swamps exist there, as well. Rare plants that are on the state's watch list thrive in this environment. The site contains a Great Blue Heron rookery and wildlife corridors. The high quality swamps, beaver dams, vernal pools, and wetlands also contribute to the uniqueness of this location, which Dr. Van de Poll considers to be the most special of all Meredith town properties and highly suited for research and educational pursuits as well as recreational use.

Representatives of NEWT were then invited to describe the parameters within which they work and the consequences of entering into an easement agreement with them.

Kathleen Fitzgerald's Presentation:

Ms. Fitzgerald, Executive Director of NEWT, briefly described her organization as a not-for-profit regional land trust with properties in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts. Its sole purpose is to encourage "forever wild" designations of properties throughout the Northeast. The means by which this is accomplished is a restrictive easement that is granted by the property owner (the Town) to the Trust (the Grantee). A draft easement was distributed to attendees and Ms. Fitzgerald highlighted the following points:

- Purpose statement – Outlines the vision for the property as delineated by the Town in collaboration with the Trust: to preserve the site as forever wild.
- Prohibited activities – Mining, development, motorized vehicles, logging, etc.
- Permitted activities – Trail and burial plot maintenance, parking lot, low-impact recreation
- Management Plan – In a collaborative process between the Town and the Trust, a guide to the uses of the property is established.
- Compliance Monitor – Periodically, a representative of the Trust will visit the site to assess the health of the region and monitor compliance with the easement agreement.

A copy of the draft easement is attached to these minutes as Addenda III. Information regarding NEWT is attached to these minutes as Addenda IV.

Questions & Comments from the Commissioners:

Ralph Pisapia asked if there was any latitude to modify the agreement.

- Easements are unique to the parcel and the terms are delineated in collaboration between the grantor and the grantee; however, NEWT easement must be *forever wild*.

Ralph Pisapia asked if removal of trees to provide a vista from the site would be permitted.

- Rick Van de Poll said the Management Plan would need to address this. That issue is not addressed in the draft easement.

Don McFarlane stated that the Management Plan must be developed by qualified individuals to include attorneys, environmentalists, and town representatives.

- Van de Poll said this Plan is a coordination of visions of the Town and the Trust. The document is a "living document" in that it should be written to respond to future stewardship needs of the site.

Bob LeCount asked for verification of the stipulation that there will be no opportunity to change the easement once it is in place.

- Both Van de Poll and Fitzgerald responded that his understanding was correct. No changes can be made

once the easement is in place.

Bob LeCount wondered if selective cutting of trees to protect the integrity & health of the forest would be allowed.

- Van de Poll stated that timber management would not be permitted under this easement.
- An alternative option might be to put 2 easements in place, with restrictions pertinent to specific portions of the property.
- Fitzgerald said the easement should be for the entire plot with only one easement.

Peter Miller stated that a verbal covenant that parking will not be permitted has been made to the neighbors to the Eames site. He noted that plans for trails in the Eames property were in process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

General Issues:

- Why are we talking about this?
- Of what value is this property to the community?
- Any decisions must be based on a clear vision of ownership of the property.

Conservation Issues:

- Is conservation sustainable?
- This property is a resource that cannot be duplicated in this area.
- A unique thing should be treated as unique.
- Are we trying to protect an entire ecosystem?
 - No, but this site is an exemplary area.

NEWT Issues:

- What experience does NEWT have in New Hampshire?
- What success has it experienced in other ventures?

Time Issues:

- Forever is a very long time.
- New ideas in the future may favor alternative uses for the site.
- Different responses to problems develop over time.
- The public deserves to be protected from the viewpoints of changing Commission Members over time.

Easement Issues:

- An easement protects property from changing as the community changes.
- Easements put control of the site in the hands of the grantee.
- Devil is in the details; therefore it is critical to draft any documents pertaining to this property extremely carefully.
- The document should be crafted to reflect changes in science.
- What provision can be made for arbitration to resolve future disagreements?
 - The draft easement contains language regarding mediation.
- Using the horseback riding section of the easement as an example, Mr. McFarland wondered if restoring or hardening the trails would be permitted.
- How does the potential need for fire roads fit into the plan?
- How will laws, such as mandated handicapped access, be addressed?
- Neither the grantor nor the grantee can change the parameters for use on this property.

Town/Political Issues:

- It is difficult for the Town to give up control.
- The needs/desires of various town factions must be considered.
 - ATV users
 - Snow mobile users
 - Horseback riders
 - Bird watchers

- Conservationists
- Bicyclists
- Revenue generation
- Is the Town prepared to address legal challenges if the easement does not allow the property to be made handicapped accessible?
- Town's needs change over time.
- The political climate changes over time.
- Each election potentially brings different leaders with changing viewpoints.
- Financial liabilities will accrue no matter what decisions are made.

Phil Mercer and Merritt Webb spoke in opposition to the easement citing lose of control and the inability to consider news ideas in the future.

David Thorpe spoke in favor of the easement.

Peter Farrell, a private forester, noted that stewardship is the primary purpose for considering additional protection for these properties. There is no one right answer. It is critical that any decision must be based on a clear vision of ownership, recognizing that forever is a long time, and there will be a financial liability associated with whatever choice is made.

Sumner Dole's Comments:

Sumner Dole, Belknap County Forester, was invited to share his experience related to conservation in New Hampshire. He declined to make a recommendation but listed some of the many things the Commission should consider.

- New Hampshire is generally quite successful in conservation activities.
- What do you want to do? It is clouded by something else?
- How does this decision relate to the goals and objectives for all properties?
- The process of making informed decisions will be lengthy.
- With whom will you do the project?
- Is this arrangement a legal contract?
- How will disputes be handled legally?
- Costs will be incurred, no matter what decision is made.
- Consult others who have experience with similar issues:
 - New York conservation groups
 - Forever Wild movements began in NY
 - New Hampshire White Mountains conservation group
 - Nature Conservancy
 - University of New Hampshire Land Protectionist
 - Lockes Hill conservation group in Gilford
 - Annual conference of conservationists (NH)
 - Society for the Protection of NH Forests
 - Lakes Region Conservation Trust
- Check the references of any entity with whom you consider working.
- Examine the track record of the partner.
- How substantial is support for the project?
 - Public
 - Private
- If easement is accepted, some changes to the deeds will need to be made & recorded in the Registry of Deeds.
- Perpetuity is a very long time.
- Laws change over time.
- A management plan could address most of these issues.
- Meredith can do many things on its own.
- He predicts that more easements will be put in place over time.

John Hodgdon spoke against placing an easement on the properties. He stated his agreement that the rookery and wildlife corridors should be protected, but noted his concern about logging. The need for lumber is steadily growing in the US and other countries. He indicated his support for successional forestry to address future shortages.

Bob Konchak applauded the Commission for the transparency of this hearing. He asked if there are other options for managing this land. Could NEWT act as consultant rather than grantee? Could Mr. Farrell act as a consultant?

Bob LeCount indicated that the primary goal of the Commission is to protect these properties. The Commission is highly desirous of finding a means of protection and maintenance. It does not wish to be rushed into making a decision. Any decision must be compatible with the Town's desires.

Bob Flanders noted that no action can be taken until March of 2006 at the Town Meeting where the public will approve or reject any proposal from the Commission. There is much work to be done in the immediate future to explore parallel paths and other options while formulating the Commission's recommendation. A period of 3-4 months prior to the Town Meeting should be set aside to educate the public about the proposed action and the reasons surrounding the decision.

Rick Van de Poll invited the attendees to walk through the property to better understand the site for themselves.

John Sherman thanked the attendees for offering such a diversity of ideas, reiterated the Commission's commitment to thoroughly considering the options available for protecting the Eames and Hamlin properties. He stated that letters* or e-mails regarding this issue will be accepted through March 28, 2005. The minutes of this meeting and all correspondence will be posted on the commission's website. Correspondence may be addressed to the Meredith Conservation Commission at 41 Main Street or to conservation@meredithnh.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Griffin
Recording Secretary

***Letters of record are available at the Town Clerk's Office**

ADDENDA I

March 20,2005

To: Meredith Conservation Commission Members
From: Peter Miller
Cc: Selectmen Bob Flanders and Frank Michel, Town Manager Carol Granfield
Re: "Forever Wild" Conservation Easement

I would like this letter attached to the March 17th/Forever Wild hearing file.

The hearing surprised me in several ways. I was expecting a spirited attack on the logging prohibition of the easement. Despite the presence of two foresters in the audience, that turned out not to be a focal point. Rather, the emphasis was more on the recreational impact of the easement. Given that the properties were purchased in part with Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, and given that LWCF's sole priority is outdoor recreation, that was appropriate.

As a result of the testimony presented, I have had several changes of mind regarding the proposed easement as currently drafted.

Recreational Management

I now agree that the easement as drafted places excessive control with the Northeast Wilderness Trust. That Northeast could close trails because of soil erosion is not acceptable. The Town, through its Conservation Commission, should have sole authority to manage erosion and other recreational impacts to trails. If Northeast will not agree to that, then we should not grant them an easement. Northeast can help monitor trail erosion and advise us regarding appropriate actions, but the final preventative and corrective decisions should be ours alone.

Logging

I continue to support the easement's prohibition of logging, provided that the easement allows for the clearing of on-trail blowdowns and widow-makers and the maintenance and clearing of viewpoints (as identified in the management plan). I will oppose any easement on the Hamlin and Eames properties that permits sustainable forestry or so called "improvement/enhancement cuts," for the following reasons.

Sustainable Forestry

Periodic timber harvests for cash income will degrade the recreation and conservation values of these properties. In the vastness of the White Mountain National Forest, commercial timber harvests, recreation, and conservation might be able to coexist. On the 505 Hamlin/Eames acres, they cannot. Hamlin's rare and exemplary plant communities extend from the beaver pond near the south boundary to the old growth and maple groves near the north boundary. As Rick Van de Poll identified, there may be other rare insect, amphibian, and plant species on the Hamlin property. Hamlin has never been thoroughly inventoried for species diversity. The only studies that have been done are Van de Poll's two half-day rapid inventories.

Because of Hamlin's rugged topography, there are pockets of never disturbed forest scattered throughout, not just the extensive hemlock/red spruce/mixed hardwood/black gum tract in the north. Old growth tracts are repositories of genetic diversity. Logging and other human interventions that alter the ecosystem put these rare and exemplary natural communities at risk.

Regarding the recreational value of the Hamlin and Eames properties, period cash timber harvests have excessive risk of uglifying the landscape and damaging the trail infrastructure. It is well nigh impossible to hide commercial timber harvests on 505 acres or to drag the timber out without skidders traveling on or cutting across trails. We can talk all we want about best management practices, but BMPs require knowledgeable, conscientious, dedicated use time after time by everyone involved in the logging operation *in perpetuity*, because easements are forever. Timber harvests can go terribly awry even when conducted by well-intentioned people. A case in point is the year 2000 Hamlin cut. The slash residue of this cut was condemned not only by residents of the Chemung District but also by members of the Commission. This cut complicated the development of recreational trails. Due to the volume of slash and resulting ugliness, trails had to be routed away from the cut as much as possible. When Don MacFarlane and I try to connect Hamlin's blue and red trails (through Eames), we will once again be confronting the massive debris left by this cut, for very little decay has occurred. This cut was done during the Webb/Sherman/LeCount/Robinson/Miller/Colburn/Mercer era. We have all tried to be conscientious and knowledgeable stewards of the land. But we screwed up, and so can and will future Conservation Commissions if an easement allows timber harvests on these lands.

There are two other matters pertinent to commercial timber cuts.

(1) Hamlin was designated a Town Forest so that a small amount of cash could be generated via timber cut to pay for the development of recreational trails. The January 5, 1981 memo to Selectmen from the Committee for Management of Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area states:

“By designating the area as a Town Forest, it would be possible to request management aid from the State Forester allowing for the best overall guidance for selective cutting of small amounts of timber in order to set up a source of revenue for the management of the area so that it would be no burden to the taxpayer for the many eventual benefits to the Town as a Recreation and Nature area.”

This is reiterated in the 1981 Town Report, Article 52:

“Mr. Wyatt explained that [designating Hamlin a Town Forest] would allow for the sale of forest products and the money used to develop the area.”

Trail development in Hamlin is nearly complete. Furthermore, the Conservation Commission's financial situation today is vastly different than it was back then. In 1981, the Conservation Commission's allocation from the Town was only \$200, with a carry over of \$395 from preceding years. The Commission's fund received no money from current use change tax, and there was no Open Space/Conservation ETF. This is a bleak contrast with today's situation. This year, the Conservation Commission has, in effect, a \$25,000 operating budget. As much as \$50,000 of current use change tax could go into the Commission's fund. Another \$25,000 will go into the Open Space/Conservation ETF. The Commission has \$108,000 in its fund. There is

no further need to log Hamlin to pay for the development or maintenance of trails. Thus it would seem appropriate to bring a Warrant Article to Town Meeting de-designating Hamlin a Town Forest so as to protect its recreation and conservation values from the degradation caused by logging.

(2) Finally, there is the matter of the compatibility of commercial timber harvests with the LWCF Act. In 1978, the US Department of the Interior, which oversees LWCF funded properties, informed Dr. Hamlin that “Intensive forest management for commercial purposes . . . would not be acceptable.” This statement was included in a letter of guidance from David W. Gross [Chief, Technical Services Division, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service] regarding the “Agreement of Intent” between Dr. Hamlin and the Town, as later codified in the 1979 “Hamlin Covenants and Restrictions” attached to the deed. Two commercial cuts have been done in Hamlin, one in 1992 and one in 2000. There are no documents in the files showing that the Department of the Interior’s permission for such cuts was requested or received.

This disregard is reflective of a more pervasive disregard for policy and laws pertaining to timber cuts. As I reported during oral testimony at the hearing, RSA 31:113 requires that money received from the sale of trees cut on Town Forests must be put in a forest maintenance fund. Brenda Vittner informs me that no such fund exists in Meredith. It appears the money from the Hamlin timber harvests was put in Conservation Commission Fund 5, in violation of law.

“Timber Stand Improvement Cuts”

I have hiked in old growth or late succession forests from Newfoundland to California and from Arizona to British Columbia. Without exception, these forested tracts are places of exceptional beauty and deep spiritual power. The thousands of hours I have spent there have taught me that forests can manage themselves very nicely without human intervention. That forests require human management to remain healthy is an utter falsehood. It is the Army Corps of Engineers mentality applied to the woods.

The only type of so-called timber stand improvement cut acceptable to me would be clean up following massive natural catastrophe. The hurricane of ‘38 falls into that category. The ice storm of ‘98 does not. The reasons I favor intervention following massive catastrophe are (a) soil erosion prevention and (b) forest recovery. Northeast Trust’s proposed easement must be modified to address the impact of catastrophe. There are watershed protection issues at stake, likewise the recreational value of the land.

“Wildlife Enhancement Cuts”

I have prepared a map of the private lands in the Chemung District that have had timber cuts in the past 9 years. This map [on file in the Annex] shows that extensive timber harvests have occurred in the Hamlin/Eames vicinity in recent years. These cuts provide browse for deer and moose and other species that eat tender shoots. Deer and moose are wide-ranging creatures. There is absolutely no need to cut the Hamlin or Eames properties to create forage for these animals.

The two cuts done in Hamlin since 1992 seem not to have attracted deer and moose. I have hiked on the Hamlin property more than 100 times per year in the past six years, both on

trail and off, crisscrossing the entire property. There has been scant deer or moose sign anywhere in Hamlin all four seasons of the year. Other regions of the Chemung District must be offering superior browse for these creatures.

Old growth and late succession forests are rich in biodiversity. The creatures that live there may not be as high profile as deer and moose, but they have a vital place in the ecosystem, and they deserve to be protected.

Summary Comments

No one at the hearing spoke about the majesty that the Hamlin and Eames properties will someday possess if their forests are protected from chainsaws. I wish to rectify that omission.

Recently, I had the privilege of going on a field trip to a neck of land on Squam Lake that contains a small grove of old growth white pines. I had never previously seen white pines as magnificent as these. They reminded me of California redwoods. That white pines can attain this stature was a revelation. They are living testimony to what the Hamlin and Eames pines might someday look like if we keep the chainsaws out of those woods.

Many writers have expressed the mystery, awe, reverence, and closeness to God that old growth forests inspire. These tracts are wilderness, and they remind us of what North America looked like before human settlement. Meredith is fortunate to have an old growth forest on its Hamlin property. For Meredith residents and visitors to be able to access wilderness by a short walk from their cars is a miracle. With proper protection, that wilderness tract will someday be 25 times as large as it is today. As the Lakes Region and New England get more and more developed, that pocket of wilderness will increasingly stand out as a shining beacon for those seeking relief from suburban blight. The people of the future will thank us profusely for having the vision to create a true and permanent wilderness park.

For all of the above reasons, I am absolutely opposed to the logging of the Hamlin and Eames properties. My position is not subject to change. As a Meredith voter and taxpayer, a frequent recreational user of the Hamlin and Eames properties, a member of the Conservation Commission, and a Meredith Selectman, I will oppose any easement which allows timbering of these properties with the full tenacity of my will and intellect, using all social, political, and legal means available to me.

That most likely excludes the New England Forestry Foundation as a grantee for an easement on these properties, as NEFF's priority is sustainable forestry. If the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests insists that easements include timber harvesting, that excludes them also. Perhaps the Audubon Society or the Lakes Region Conservation Trust offer a middle ground between the extremes of chainsaws and Northeast Trust's radical environmentalism. I suggest we consult them.

I do not oppose timber harvests on all town-owned conservation lands. The 157-acre Leighton Wildlife Area might be a good candidate for timber improvement cuts and wildlife management. It does not have a developed trail system. It has no known rare or exemplary natural communities. The deed language permits it. The 207-acre Feltham property off Jenness Hill Road might be another candidate, if the town decides to make it conservation land.

However, members of the Commission should be aware that any attempt to log town owned lands could face stiff neighborhood opposition. We encountered that after the Carleton Town Forest was marked for timber harvesting in 2001. Many residents of the Chemung District united in vocal, angry opposition to the proposed logging. They were prepared to storm into Selectmen's meeting, had it been necessary. On a split 4 - 3 vote, the Commission decided to suspend the logging operation. That was wise, for to have pushed the logging forward would have led to a lose-lose scenario. As it was, this failed effort left a legacy of bitter mistrust toward the Conservation Commission.

This same sequence of events could unfold with regard to any attempt to log any town owned property. Neighborhood issues are very potent issues, as evidenced by the Planning Board's decision not to bring zoning revisions forward this year. Neighborhood issues elicit popular support, because there are diverse neighborhood issues all over town, and it is easy for voters to empathize with neighborhood issues. Meredith is a Town Meeting town, and it only takes 25 signatures on a petition to bring a warrant article to Town Meeting. An aroused, angry populace could bring any number of warrant articles to Town Meeting, including eliminating Town Forests and stripping the Conservation Commission of its control of these lands. The Town Meeting gave the Commission management control, and it could take it away. Thus we need to be very cautious about logging. We have very little to gain by advocating it. We have a great deal to lose. You do the math.

Thank you for considering these many issues.

ADDENDA II

Eames Property

Purchased October 2004

Purchased for recreation and conservation

- **Extension of Hamlin trail system on additional 195 acres, work has begun**
- **Protection of natural habitat, in concert with other town owned and private lands**

Total project cost: \$610,000

**Funded by: \$100,000 LWCF
40,000 Frances Eames
470,000 Town - Conservation Bond (annual bond payment \$61,127)
60,000 Sweet Water Grant Pledge - Hence this meeting**

Long term protection - LWCF Act; Conservation Easement

Hamlin Property

Presentation utilizes files that had been withheld from the commission by one of its former chairmen and only recently returned. Much of this material was new to me, and commission members will be learning of it for the first time tonight.

Touch on: Acquisition; Recreational Development; Timber Harvests; Easements

Acquisition

Property deeded to the Town in Dec, 1979.

Cost was approximately \$270,000

**Funded by: \$135,000 LWCF
135,000 matching donation from Dr. Robert Hamlin (also soft costs)
0 Town**

**Purchased for Recreation, conservation is ancillary and secondary
LWCF Act
Hamlin Covenants and Restrictions
Dept of Interior 12/08/1978 Letter**

Recreational Development

**Many false starts - as is true for most things related to Hamlin
Development**

- 1980 - Hamlin Ad Hoc Committee - nothing came to fruition
- 1985 - CC recommended reactivation of the Ad Hoc Committee
- 1993 - Public hearing regarding recreational use of Hamlin
- 1999 - Dr. Hamlin complained about lack of recreational development toured, urged control be stripped from CC and transferred to Rec Dept
- 2000 - Current CC began developing trails, grand opening Sept 2002

Timber Harvests

Several forest management plans over the years, commencing soon after the purchase of the property.

- 1981 - Hamlin designated a town forest (first one) - 1/05/81 Johnson Letter
 CC financial assets at that time
 - \$200 Annual operating budget (\$395 carry over; spent \$90)
 - No \$10,000 current use change tax
 - No Open Space ETF
 - Never a bond issue or major one time appropriation
- 1992 - First actual cut so called “timber enhancement” cut - blue trail area
 Files a mess
 Generated very little revenue
 Most trees were put through a chipper and hauled away as chips
 Money not put in forest maintenance fund (per RSA 31:113)
- 2000 - Second so-called timber enhancement cut - yellow and red trail area
 Generated approximately \$27,000 in cash
 Not put in forest maintenance fund
 Some of this money was applied to trail development costs
 CC financial assets at that time
 - \$10,000 current use
 - 1,453 Annual operating budget
 - \$76,550.07 Balance in CC Fund 12/31/99
 - No Open Space ETF
 Much later reimbursed by Meredith Rotary Club
 Quality of cut criticized by commission members and the public

Conservation Easements

Protective status - Protected only by the language of the LWCF Act and synchronous Hamlin Covenants and Restrictions (attached to deed)

LWCF Act allows for exchange of property for property of equal fair market value whose recreational potential is consistent with SCORP. “Primary objective of the LWCF grant program is to secure outdoor recreation opportunity for the public in perpetuity.”

Several small parcels of original Hamlin property have been exchanged for other parcels donated by Dr. Hamlin, to allow for building of septic systems for Wicwood Shores Road residents. Occurred in 1982, 1985, and more recently. The donated parcels include the present Hamlin parking area and two parcels immediately east of it on Chemung Road.

Conservation Easements

1988 - Draft of easement was prepared, town counsel's advice sought 1989, no follow through

2005 - Forever wild easement

Town Counsel Tim Bates 11/15/2004 Letter

Any conservation easement requires the approval of:

Office of Recreation Services/National Park Service

Dr. Robert Hamlin - 3/11/05 E message (below)

Meredith Town Meeting

Peter:

What fine work you continue to do on the Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area! You obviously have great organizing skills to accomplish all that you have done. And you are a superb, skillful writer. I save all the informative articles that you write for the Meredith News that is the best information source other than your emails on current Hamlin Area activities.

I certainly concur with your efforts to establish a 'forever wild' conservation easement for the Hamlin Area and the Eames property. You are fortunate to have the interest and potential financial contribution of the Sweet Water Trust that provides an impetus for consideration by the Town of your 'Forever Wild' conservation easement. And your article covers many aspects and reasons for the easement as well as the extra parcels such as the potential beach area and the two parcels near the parking area that I transferred to the Town in exchange for the septic system area that was needed for proper septic disposal for several of the properties along Wicwood Shores Road.

The Hamlins are certainly fortunate for the major efforts that you have and continue to make on behalf of the evolution of the Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area!

Please let me know if there is anything that I may do to support your efforts.

Bob Hamlin