

Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Area Advisory Board

The Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Area Advisory Board has met regularly to continue the plan to turn the former Campground into a area where the public can go to enjoy a quiet, natural place to walk, hike, cross country ski, walk dogs, horseback ride, canoe, kayak, picnic, and swim.

The board has finalized the conservation easement, which will allow the property to be used only for its intended purpose – outdoor recreation and open space. The easement is the only legal method that ensures future town administrators or a vote at Town Meeting cannot sell off parts of the property to developers or use it for other than its intended recreational and conservation purposes. The Easement has been presented to the Board of Selectmen, which has their necessary signatures, and is now in the hands of the Rockingham County Conservation District, as they will oversee the easement.

At the same time, we created and finalized a Master Plan for the property. The plan provides accurate information about existing conditions and possible uses for the property as well as how we will achieve development of the long-term recreation and conservation goals. The plan will ultimately be incorporated into the Town's Master Plan. To make the Master Plan work, we are asking the voters to approve the transition of the current Advisory Board to the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Area Commission. This will give the board budgetary authority to raise and appropriate funds, and move the lines of the Town's budget that manage the property under the auspice of either Government Building, and Recreation, to a Wason Pond line. We hope the voters will authorize this move to be effective July 1, 2007, giving the commission a year to put "all the pieces" together.

The Town can see that the Mom's Club Playground has finally been located at Wason Pond, in a area just west of the Community Center. There is still much finished work to be done, but there are a group of volunteers committed to finishing this project for the children of Chester to enjoy this summer.

Site plans have been completed for the proposed athletic fields, parking, and road changes, and the Recreation Department is working on funding these projects in 2006.

Portions of the back part of the property will be planted with grasses, trees, and shrubs to correct damage caused by years of overuse. The plantings will promote wildlife habitat. The Town applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$4400 from the New Hampshire DES Watershed Restoration program. The money, which will be matched by volunteer time and equipment, will be used to replant eroded shoreline around Wason Pond with 750 shrubs and trees, remove unwanted shoreline structures (docks and bulkheads), remove several back-flowing unused septic lines at old campsites, and excavate a trench behind the beach to alleviate the iron staining on the beach.

We have also been approached by several potential Eagle Scouts about various projects. One completed project by Chris Snyder was his mapping the trails via GPS, creating weatherproof maps, and mounting these maps at trail entrances and intersections. Walking or biking through the trail system is much easier now since he

completed this project. Tommy Cicciarella would like to create a foot bridge over the dam, and Aaron Landau is planning on making exterior restoration to the barn this summer!

Speaking of the dam, we have discovered that it will need considerable repair to the concrete structure before we can replace the dam boards. If left unrepaired, we could lose the dam altogether. We have been in contact with the Board of Selectmen regarding this matter, and they are making plans for the repairs this spring.

The Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Area Advisory Committee is in need of members. We need one At-Large member of the public, and two alternates. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, 7 PM at the Wason Pond Community Center, and we welcome the public to attend.

We hope that all residents will take the opportunity to enjoy this valuable property, and enjoy this quiet open space throughout the year.

Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Advisory Board

Hilary Hall, Chairperson

Brad Wamsley, Don Parnell, Greg Lowell, Camilla Lockwood, Bill Chirgwin,
Bill Lonergan

Rules & Regulations for Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Area

Hours – Dawn to Dusk (Basic guidelines – Contact Recreation Commission if significant time is necessary before or after dusk)

Carry In – Carry Out (No public trash receptacles are provided)

No smoking or alcoholic beverages.

No OHRVs. This includes ATVs, snowmobiles and dirt bikes.

Only authorized vehicles permitted beyond the bridge – foot traffic only.

Primitive camping (Tent) allowed in designated areas. (Prior arrangement must be made with the Recreation Commission)

Camp Fires by permit only.

All pets must be under the direct control of the owner, and none are allowed on beach when other people are utilizing the beach. Owners are responsible for picking up after their pets. (Pets are allowed in water away from beach area)

No horses on beach or in water.

No discharge of firearms.

No motorized (Fuel) watercraft.