Defend Our Freedoms - Register And Vote!

By Charlie Darling
***Beacon* staff**

In every generation since our nation was born, young men and women have been called on to put their lives on the line for the freedoms you and I enjoy every day.

On November 2nd, each of us has the opportunity – and responsibility – to ensure that their sacrifices have lasting meaning. There is no excuse for any American citizen to shirk this responsibility.

If you're not registered to vote, it's quick and easy. If you'll be out of town or homebound on November 2nd, casting an absentee vote is also easy. There's no excuse not to vote.

The information below is taken almost verbatim from the New Hampshire Secretary of State's Election Division Web site. The easiest way to get there is via the Voting In NH link at AndoverBeacon.com.

For more information about registering or voting, contact Lorraine Locke, our Town Clerk, at 735-5332.

Who Can Register

New Hampshire residents who will be 18 years of age or older on election day, and a United States Citizen, may register with the town or city clerk where they live up to 10 days before any election. You may also register on election day at the polling place. The town clerk's office can inform voters of what proof of qualification they should bring to register.

There is no minimum period of time you are required to have lived in the state before being allowed to register. You may register as soon as you move into your new community.

How To Register

Apply to your town clerk's office. You will be required to fill out a standard voter registration form and will be required to show proof of age, citizenship, and domicile.

Qualified individuals may also register to vote at the polling place on election day at all elections. You will be asked to show proof of age, citizenship, and domicile.

Absentee Registration

If you meet the state's voter requirements and qualifications and are unable to register in person because of physical disability, religious beliefs, military service, or because of temporary absence, you may register by mail. You should request an absentee voter registration affidavit and a standard voter registration form from your town clerk.

The absentee voter registration affidavit must be witnessed and then both the affidavit and the voter registration form are to be returned to your town clerk.

Absentee Ballots

In New Hampshire, voting by mail with an absentee ballot is limited to a person who is:

- Unable to vote in person because they cannot appear in public on election day because of their observance of a religious commitment, or is
- Unable to vote in person by reason of physical disability, or
- Planning to be absent from the town where they are eligible to vote on the day of the election.

If you meet any one of those three requirements, then an absentee ballot is available from your town clerk 30 days prior to an election. Submit a request in writing to:

Lorraine Locke
Town Clerk
PO Box 61
Andover NH 03216

Your request must include your name, local address, mailing address (if different), and your signature.

Town clerks may accept completed absentee ballots submitted in person until 5:00 P.M. the day before an election or until 5:00 P.M. on election day if received through the mail.

Logging *from page 1*

Andover, Hill, and Danbury. Black bear, moose, deer, many other animals, and dozens of species of birds make their home here. Red oak is the predominant tree, followed by hemlock, white pine, red maple, paper birch, and others. Timber harvests have taken place on this land over the last several decades.

In September, 1992, Leon B. Newman, then owner of the property, granted a conservation easement to the town of Andover, receiving $50,000 from New Hampshire's Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP). The purpose was to preserve forever the open space of the property for the recreation, education, and scenic enjoyment of the public.

The easement permits agriculture and forestry, but they must be sustainable, promote the long-term health of the land, and not cause water pollution or soil erosion. Also, all agricultural activities must be in accordance with current scientifically-based practices, such as those defined by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service. In addition, the Newman easement defines some specific "no-cut" zones. Except for routine maintenance activities, logging is forbidden within 150 feet of the public trails.

The town of Andover, as the "grantee" of the easement, is responsible for seeing that the landowner upholds the terms.

Changing Hands

The property has had five owners in the last decade. In 1996, it passed from Mr. Newman to his son, Leon Newman Jr., and in 2001, it was sold to George and Alice Tombarello of Atkinson for $260,000. No problems arose, and the Boy Scouts and other people continued to use the trails.

In March of 2004, the property once again changed hands. This time Peter & Gary, LLC, a company based in Concord, paid $360,000 for the property. Peter & Gary filed an Intent to Cut notice with the town of Andover. Their forest management plan, which was to cut all trees 12 inches or more in diameter at breast height (DBH) instantly raised the eyebrows of the CC.

The CC called in educators from the UNH Cooperative Extension Service and a licensed forester, George Frame of Feather Ledge Forestry in Bristol. A former USDA forester and ranger, Frame has done forest management plans for New Hampton, Hill, Holderness, and Bridgewater.

Both Frame and UNH-CES County Forester Tim Fleury stated clearly that DBH cutting is not an acceptable forest management technique. It doesn't provide for regeneration of the forest, erosion control, and wildlife management, and would have left the Newman parcel unfit for any further timber harvest for at least 20 years. Cease and desist until you get another plan, said the Andover Board of Selectmen, and the curtain went down on the first act of the drama.

When the second act began, Peter & Gary, LLC, were no longer players. In June, they sold the property for $650,000 to Fortin & Redmond. F&R were known to the town – four years ago, they conducted a timber harvest on 400 acres on Hoyt Road, on the Andover/Franklin line.

This summer, F&R was quick to file an Intent to Cut form with the town office to log the Newman parcel. The town was equally quick to make it clear that it would uphold the terms of the easement.

A Good Plan

By late June, F&R's consulting forester, James Burnett of Vermont Forestry Associates, had prepared a new forest management plan. This time, the plan provided for selective cutting, with different approaches for each of four stands of timber. Best management practices for erosion control were to be followed.

The plan also had provisions for roads, skid trails, clean-up, and a temporary wooden bridge across Mountain Brook. Burnett holds a Ph.D. from UNH and is a former member of the Canaan Conservation Commission.

The plan was "silviculturally acceptable," said Andover's consulting forester George Frame. Instead of clear-cutting, the approach was to mark specific trees for harvesting ahead of time. Measurements of forest density would be taken before and after cutting, and the no-cut zones around the trails would be left undisturbed.

It remained to put the plan into practice. F&R moved in their heavy equipment, and Andover hired Frame to monitor the operations. Frame, who has reported weekly to the town, has been paid from the CC's fund. The initial estimate for his services was roughly $10,000.

When asked in late August how things were going Frame replied, "I have not had problem one." Using GPS technology, Frame took observations of the property before, during, and after logging. If the basal area (the density of the timber in a stand) dropped too low at a certain stage in the cutting, Frame reported this to F&R's forester Jim Burnett, who then "unmarked" trees so that fewer would be cut in the next round.

By the end of August, Burnett said that 175 to 200 acres had been harvested. The timber was trucked back to sawmills in Canada. A team of loggers, mainly from the province of Quebec, spent Monday through Thursday on the site, returning home on weekends. The operation, noted Frame, was large by local standards, with three major landings in use.

F&R, reported Frame in August, was making a sincere effort to do things right, but the CC still had concerns. On several different site visits, CC members noted potential erosion along logging roads and silt deposited in streams. Any logging operation, regardless of the conservation status of the land, is subject to NH Department of Environmental Services regulations concerning wetlands.

DES personnel inspected the site on July 20, noted violations of wetlands regulations, and spelled out restoration plans. Road-building stopped at least once while remedial ditches were built.

Of special concern was a proposed bridge over Mountain Brook. F&R chose a spot which they described as "out of the jurisdictional area" covered by wetlands regulations, since the bridge would be placed relatively high off the banks. When the steel girders

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