

## About Parking at the Collins Recreation Area

Since becoming Chair of the Atkinson Conservation Commission a year ago last spring I've had many pressing issues to address. Parking at the Collins Rec Area was not one of them. Upon returning home from being away most of last week I'm just now catching up on the discussion about HS students and their need for more parking, so I thought it would be helpful to give some background information about the Collins Recreation Area and why the parking there was (and still is) limited to the use of the Rec Area itself.

Here are the facts as I understand them.

### 1. The purchase of the land on East Road

The Collins Rec Area land was purchased by the Town in May of 2006, using money from the Conservation Fund, and was deeded as conservation land. This deed can be viewed here:

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29a.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29a.pdf)

A survey of the land can be found here:

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29b.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29b.pdf)

A discussion about the Conservation Fund, which was used to purchase this land, may be found as part of my notes for my discussion of Warrant Article 15 at last February's Deliberative Session, which can be found here (scroll down a bit):

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29c.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29c.pdf)

No additional taxes were raised to purchase this land.

### 2. The Town Meeting vote to allow playing fields etc. here in exchange for a conservation easement on 20 acres abutting the Sawyer Town Forest.

The Conservation Commission's intent in using Conservation Funds to purchase the land on East Road was to propose a "horse trade" to the town which would allow playing fields and trails on the East Road land in exchange for a conservation easement on 20 acres of town-owned land on Sawyer Avenue. While these 20 acres could have been used for the same purpose, it would have been more difficult because of a stream that runs diagonally through the parcel. The CC had long assumed that the 20 acre parcel was protected, and we were quite surprised to learn that it was not. We felt that it was a priority to include the 20 acres as part of the Sawyer Town Forest, especially since the land was surrounded by existing Town Forest land.

No additional land was purchased as part of this "horse trade," and it did not cost the town anything.

The Town Meeting warrant article authorizing this trade may be viewed here (it passed):

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29d.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29d.pdf)

Here is a copy of the town's tax map showing the 20 acre parcel in purple and the 110 acre remainder of the Sawyer Town Forest in green:

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29e.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29e.pdf)

A survey showing the 20 acres (in purple) may be found here (wetlands other than the stream were not recorded since this survey was intended to convey land, not approve a development plan):

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29g.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29g.pdf)

### **3. The Deed Restrictions allowing Rec use of the East Road land**

Subsequent to the Town Meeting vote in March of 2007, The Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission negotiated what could be done with the East Road land, included input from the public, reviewed the issues with the Selectmen, and in January of 2008 these conditions were documented in a Deed Restriction, which was reviewed by Town Counsel, and which may be viewed here:

[http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5\\_atk\\_cons\\_resource\\_docs/document\\_files/29f.pdf](http://www.paulwainwrightphotography.com/5_atk_cons_resource_docs/document_files/29f.pdf)

During this process, we received strong push-back from abutters about the whole plan to use the land for a recreation area, and parking was their primary concern. In response to this, we chose to limit parking to the exclusive use of the recreation area. This limitation also seems consistent with the warrant article (see above) authorizing the deal.

By the way, I listened to the tape of my own September 9 CC meeting and realize that I was saying that parking was for the recreation fields – I misspoke (my bad), and this caused some confusion. The parking was intended for the recreation area. Sorry.

### **4. Conclusion**

I've just spent the better part of my Sunday trying to shed some light on the background behind parking at the Collins Recreation Area, and I hope this information helps us all have a better-informed discussion about the need for additional parking at the high school. The desire to use this land as overflow parking for the high school was never part of the original discussion.

**Paul Wainwright, Chair, Atkinson Conservation Commission**  
**Sunday, September 22, 2019**