

**Land Stewardship Committee Meeting**  
**January 12, 2021**  
**Via teleconference - 7:00 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Tom Brownrigg, Dwight DeMay, Warren Lyman, Rhonda Michaud, and Andrew Wilmot. Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard was also present. Debby Geltner was absent.

Guest: Judy Asarkof

This meeting was conducted by Zoom teleconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with all participants at home. The meeting was opened at 7:05 PM by Chairman DeMay.

The December 8, 2020 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

**Old Business**

1. Drone Use Regulations

Wilmot updated his original report and sent it prior to the meeting. He gave a brief summary of his findings, which included drone regulations from other Massachusetts towns using Google search. One of the issues discussed was whether drone use was considered active or passive recreation, since the latter is generally an approved activity on conservation lands. Brownrigg thought it was passive recreation, since a single person was generally involved, and was not a team sport. However, Willard noted that in the past Towle Field was used for cross-country skiing by the Bill Koch League.

After discussion, Lyman suggested that LSC's position be that since drone use was not a significant problem at this time, that we postpone proposing regulations. Brownrigg suggested that members read regulations adapted by other towns cited in Wilmot's report, in case drone use becomes a problem in the future.

Regarding recent commercial use of drones at Towle Field, Lyman said at its last meeting, ConsCom accepted LSC's statement drafted after the last meeting:

After discussion at its December 8, 2020 meeting, the Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) recommends that Motorola Solutions be notified that their commercial use of the Towle Conservation Land for drone testing is not consistent with Carlisle's rules that limit use of such lands to conservation and passive recreation. Beyond the official rules, the LSC expressed significant concerns regarding: (i) potential interference of other visitor's passive recreation activities; (ii) drone noise, impacting both humans and wildlife; (iii) visual impacts on fauna which might perceive the drone as an aerial predator; and (iv) and the precedent that such unregulated use would set for further commercial activities on Town conservation lands.

Based on the above, Motorola Solutions should be notified that no more drone testing or other activities should be undertaken on the Towle Conservation Land without the prior written permission of the Conservation Administrator, which permission might only be given if the timing, nature, duration, and frequency of such activity, was considered to be an acceptable, temporary, and limited use of the land.

Willard forwarded the statement, agreed to by ConsCom, to her contact at Motorola Solutions, but has not received a response.

Members thanked Wilmot for his well-researched report.

## 2. Proposal by Judy Asarkof

Asarkof sent an update of her proposal to LSC members prior to the meeting. She hopes to begin work at the Woodward Land once the current lease for grazing expires in about six months. She would also like to work in a small area of Towle Field where several uncommon wildflowers grow. She had considered a field that is part of the Russell Conservation Land, but concluded that this is a much larger area than she can manage alone, although she would be willing to help others. She also considered Fox Hill west field, but there is much burning bush (winged euonymus) along the field edges that should be removed before starting other work.

Regarding Towle Field, she would like to inventory plants in a wet meadow at the south side of the main field where there is a wooded island and boardwalk. Some of the uncommon plants there include Nodding Ladies' Tresses (an orchid), Ragged Fringed Orchid, and Virginia Meadow Beauty. She has enlisted botanist Walter Kittredge who previously worked at Harvard University to help with the inventory. She proposes to remove poison ivy by hand in this area. Pesticides, herbicides, and mowing would not be allowed.

Asarkof has been removing multiflora rose and black swallow-wort by hand from Woodward Land. (Willard mentioned that black swallow-wort contains a skin irritant, similar to poison ivy.) Asarkof would like to remove invasive plants in a section of land that borders the Woodward Land, parallel to the Adrian driveway. She said the boundary is not well defined, and work will have to wait until the adjacent open space parcel associated with the housing development is transferred to the Town. If she is granted a license for Woodward, she would inventory plants, maintain trails, remove invasive plants, and plant native species.

Lyman requested that Asarkof provide a map of the Woodward Land in her proposal showing boundaries, and where she proposes to work. Willard said that Asarkof's proposed project at Towle Field would require a land use permit. Normally a permit is given for a single event, but in this case it could be extended to one year, with the possibility of extending to additional years. Brownrigg said that he had seen Nodding Ladies' Tresses and Ragged Fringed Orchid in areas that might be outside of the area shown in Asarkof's proposal, and offered to show these areas to Asarkof.

LSC members thanked Asarkof for her proposal and expressed support for this project.

### 3. Signs on Town-Owned Conservation Lands

#### a. Cranberry Bog Signs

Lyman removed the four "Burma-Shave" dog-related signs from the bog and will store them at his house until spring.

#### b. New Signs for Town-Owned Lands

DeMay and Lyman attended the last ConsCom meeting in order to discuss purchase of signs for conservation lands. ConsCom decided that the request for purchase be postponed until the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Lyman said that this will give LSC additional time to evaluate sign vendors and consider funding mechanisms.

Lyman has found three possible vendors for signs, and has obtained quotations from two of them: Crosby Design Inc., Concord, MA; Express Sign & Graphics Inc., Chelmsford; and Makepeace, Norwood MA. Lyman provided a table showing construction details and costs prior to the meeting. There was some discussion of other information that could be provided. Brownrigg suggested asking the vendors regarding long-term durability of their materials, for example resistance to photochemical degradation. Lyman said that he plans to request more information, but also hopes to see samples of installed signs.

### 4. Fox Hill Nursery Plants

Regarding the six American Hornbeam trees at Fox Hill, Willard asked if these could be removed with their root systems intact and transplanted on other conservation lands. Lyman said the root balls would have to be very large, and since the trees were planted very close together, the root systems would likely be damaged. There was no decision on a course of action, although LSC had previously decided to remove all but one tree.

Willard said she expects to be meeting with John Bakewell soon regarding future herbicide treatments at Towle Field.

### 5. Conservation Land Maintenance Planning: Field Edges

DeMay suggested that discussion of field edge maintenance be combined with the agricultural license agreements held by farmers who use conservation land fields. As part of their license agreement, farmers must periodically cut back trees and shrubs along field edges. Willard said that Mark Duffy has the license for most fields in town, and he has been clearing edges. Duffy and co-workers have cleared most of the fields including Bisbee Land (two fields), Foss Farm, Fiske Meadow, and Hutchins/Robins. Willard said that Greenough fields still need to be done, and that there are white pines growing along Bedford Rd. near the south Foss Farm field that should be removed. Willard said that Mark Duffy's son uses a brush hog, and that the three-year license agreements state that field edges be mowed once during the license period.

Lyman said that he will indicate on his diagrams showing edge clearing in cases where these edges were cleared by a commercial operator.

#### 6. Geocaching Proposal

DeMay said that ConsCom had granted a permit to Krysten Morganti for a geocache on the Bisbee Land. He visited the cache recently and thought that the site has had light use.

#### 7. Bog House Inspection

Lyman suggested that inspection of the Bog House be scheduled after the Covid-19 pandemic has subsided.

#### 8. OS&RP Table 10 Review

DeMay, Lyman, and Brownrigg have submitted comments to Willard. She asked that any other comments be submitted by January 13.

### **New Business**

#### 1. Farm License Agreement Terms

Willard said that farmers will be requesting leases for conservation lands in February. This discussion will include plans for field edge mowing.

#### 2. ConsCom update on LSC activities on January 28

DeMay and Lyman will attend the meeting. Willard said they are allotted 15 minutes, starting at 7 PM.

#### 3. LSC Annual Report

Willard said that annual reports are due March 4. Wilmot volunteered to write the report.

#### 4. Cranberry Bog Update

Willard said that the RFP for the Cranberry Bog maintenance has been sent to four respondents, and proposals are due February 15. She has been in contact with David McLaughlin, chair of the Chelmsford Conservation Commission regarding the biannual Carlisle-Chelmsford bog meeting. They decided that a meeting is not necessary at this time. Willard said that Chelmsford had removed trees from an earthen dam in order to stabilize the dam, under the supervision of a wetland scientist.

#### 5. Curve Street Dam

A draft final report by Weston & Sampson Engineers was circulated prior to the meeting. The report noted several deficiencies in the dam and associated culvert that should be repaired.

Willard noted that if the metal culvert for water control were removed, the embankment and bridge over River Meadow Brook would no longer qualify as a dam. However, since ConsCom has not made a final decision regarding activities at the bog, it decided to retain its classification as a dam.

Lyman noted that there are photos at the end of the report showing areas of damage or concern. Brownrigg asked Willard if the Carlisle DPW could do the dam repairs. Willard said that dam repair requires special expertise, but that DPW could remove trees and shrubs near the dam that contribute to erosion.

**Next Meetings:**

February 16, 2021 @ 7 PM

March 16, 2021 @ 7 PM

Documents discussed at meeting:

- Usage of Drones on Carlisle Conservation Land, revised 1/10/21, A. Wilmot
- Native plant/pollinator proposal for Towle Field and Woodward Land (untitled), 1/08/21, J. Asarkof
- Preliminary Specifications for New Conservation Land Signs, W. Lyman & D. Geltner
- Summary of Technical Information and Cost Estimates for New Conservation Signs, W. Lyman & D. Geltner
- Curve Street Dam Evaluation/Inspection Report, Phase 1 (draft), 10/08/20, Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 2/16/21