

Cranberry Bog Working Group
Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2023 via Zoom

Members Present: Alex Parra, Susan Provenzano, Brian Murphy,
Helen Young, Luke Ascollilo

Conservation Administrator: Sylvia Willard

Public: Iva Mooney, Chris Spinney, Warren Lyman, Wanda Avril,
Ariella Rebbi, Maddie, John Ballentine

Meeting began at 7:12 pm

Chair Murphy initiated the meeting by doing a roll call of all members, administrators, and public. He then recited the Massachusetts governor's order and rules for conducting public meetings remotely. This meeting will be covered by the minutes and not recorded. Murphy also explained public input will be taken when the Chair asks for public input and will call on persons and each will have 3 minutes.

Agenda Item:

1. Review of Minutes from March 20 Meeting - Members needed more review, so March minutes review and approval was pushed to the next meeting.
2. Mowing NOI - Willard shared her screen with the draft of the NOI. Willard was concerned with how to get equipment onto the bog for mowing. Currently there are sand ramps but they block the water flow. She was asked to consult the Trails Committee to construct boardwalks, but the committee felt the ramps they make would not be strong enough to hold the mowing equipment. Willard met with Duffy to talk about the ramps. He showed how the water naturally diverts to other ditches when it hits the sand ramps. More investigation will be done. In reviewing the NOI, Willard added a section to organize the activities according to season instead of time line. Murphy had a question about the Wood Duck boxes and Willard explained that the Waterfowl biologist, H.W. Heusman, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife monitors the boxes at Greenough and other locations around the state. Willard wondered if they would be interested in monitoring and how many boxes would they need and would we be able to have the boxes if they didn't monitor them. Parra suggested leaving the Wood Duck boxes in the NOI and if it doesn't get done it would be okay but there if they can be installed. Willard said the Bog Friends group could do the maintenance. CBWG also needs more information about the size, placement, and construction of the boxes. On the time line, Willard wondered about mowing frequency which is currently 3-4 times a year especially for regulated

dams. Parra thought that too much, but Willard said the ODS was adamant that no woody vegetation grows on the dams. Parra felt twice a year should be enough. Willard summarized that the Martin Street Bog would need work on the woody plants, the Curve St bog could use some native grass seed, but has some native plants. Fiske St Bog needed the Phragmites treated and dead parts cut. More mowing on the Fiske street dike to prevent woody plants from growing. Murphy and Parra felt that stating that places should be mowed as needed would be good. Parra commended Willard on her work. He then wondered about the fixing of the Martin St dam and the leveling of the Fiske St dike. Parra asked that “and spot repairs” be added to the NOI to cover small projects. Willard thought raising the low end of the dike by 6" would allow more boards to be added to the flume but if too much then there is an issue with erosion control. Spinney added that the dogs cause some of the erosion and maybe this should be a continuing repair. Willard added some text about maintaining communication with the Heart Pond Association as they control the water coming to the bog. Spinney said that as long as the water shed is flowing then we should be able to maintain the water level we would like. Murphy queried about the Phragmites management. Willard reported that she found applicators and need the dead plants mowed down, which will be done by Duffy. Must start to treat as soon as it starts to come up. Willard believes the Phragmite roots can be 10 - 12' deep so need to be treated. Murphy suggested a different method of digging out part of the root instead of using chemicals. Maddie Kiszewski talked about her method of eliminating Phragmites. This technique uses sunlight starvation to kill the plants. She cuts the plant below ground and does this three times a year. In her experience she finds that after a few years the Phragmites is under control and other plants have moved in. After each cutting there are less and less stalks and hence easier to cut. Recommends a three-year treatment with cutting three times a year. Murphy feels that this needs to start now as the Phragmites are starting. Willard asked about what type of soil and the study was in sand. Parra asked about carbohydrate starvation would we achieve the same thing with frequent mowing. Maddy said yes, but then the native plants would not have a chance to take over the area, and there is still a bit getting sunshine which will grow. Parra commented that this methodology requires sustained effort over time and so finding funding might be an issue. Parra likes this method as a way to continue the Phragmites control instead of chemicals. Maddie said that has worked with Knotweed and she would be interested in seeing if this would be effective here. Murphy summarized that we do the second year of chemical treatment and then have Maddie come and use her technique. Ascolillo agreed with this plan of treat, then chop, then watch and stay on top of it. There was some concern of new patches. In order to file this NOI it has to be listed in the Environmental Monitor published every two weeks by Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and then presented to Cons Com, so a bit behind. Willard has a resource area map image from Dan Wells that will help explain the NOI. Murphy asked Parra if CBWG needs to do an approval, but Parra feels its ok. Spinney asked about a water management plan for the bog and beaver control, and Willard showed the sections that dealt with that. A motion to accept this NOI was

proposed by Para and seconded by Ascolillo and unanimously approved.

3. Water level - Willard asked Bill Risso about putting boards in the culverts and it was not advised. Emergency action plan for ODS - Willard informed that since the bog was currently in planning that the Curve St dam was not being used as a dam, so should not be a concern. Parra prefers to use inner culverts to maintain water levels in the Martin St bog and the Fiske St bog. Willard also reported that Carlisle did receive approval for the dam repairs from the ODS. Any changes would require a new plan. Ballentine expressed concern about the Curve St dam and the safety for the public.
4. Master Plan - Willard feels that this agenda item could be skipped as it was dealt with at the last meeting.
5. Curve St Dam repair - was just discussed in #3.
6. Friends of the Bog - Spinney reported that there is daily repairs to keep the flumes flowing. There is more beaver activity and he feels that the flumes would benefit from some beaver deterrent. Spinney drew up a plan for managing the water. Spinney and Ballentine have been measuring the water levels and water level has dropped a bit, but doesn't feel another board is necessary. Ballentine reported that there are people ready to help. Spinney will write up a formal report on Friends progress.
7. Annual Maintenance - Can't really be done without an NOI, but Duffy will cut the Phragmites and continue to maintain the bog.
8. Open discussion - Mooney reported that the Hart Pond Committee will be putting in boards to reduce the flow from Hart Pond on Patriots Day. Also Chelmsford Cons Com has asked that there be more formal control by Cons Com of the Hart Pond water levels.

Next meeting: May 15, 2023 at 7 pm

Meeting Adjourned at: 8:43 pm

Submitted by Susan Provenzano