

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting

June 11, 2019

Town Hall - 7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Tom Brownrigg, Debby Geltner, Warren Lyman, Andrew Wilmot, Sylvia Willard (Conservation Administrator)

Not Present: Dwight DeMay

Guests: Rhonda Michaud (soon to be a LSC member), Kay Hurley (Carlisle resident)

The meeting was opened at 7:05 PM

A motion was made and approved to change the agenda in order to accommodate a guest and to facilitate the Committee's work.

There was an initial discussion of the impact of deer browsing and the resulting impacts on forest health.

Minutes: The minutes of the May 14, 2019 meeting were approved with amendments.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Letter to Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA)

After discussion, co-chairs Geltner and Wilmot signed a letter, dated June 11, to Secretary Theoharides at the EOEEA asking her to support the State's funding of the proposed Greenough Dam repairs. Before the signing, a motion had been made and approved to approve a few technical changes to the letter.

2. Proposal to Assess Forest Health in Areas Subject to Deer Browsing

Kay Hurley indicated she was interested in getting a LSC response to a project she would initiate to evaluate forest health, primarily over-browsing of understory plants by deer, on one or more Town-owned conservation lands. She indicated that several comments on this subject had been made at the last Town Meeting without any back-up evidence. She will also present her proposed assessment to ConsCom so that her efforts have some official standing or approval. There was significant discussion of the understory impacts due to deer browsing and the methods that might be used to assess and document such. Hurley indicated that, at least initially, she would likely rely on qualitative assessments, including lists of plants present or not present, browsing evidence, and photographs. She thought that the Davis Corridor and the Towle Land would be good properties on which to start the assessment. Although LSC took no formal vote in support of Hurley's proposal, there was strong general support for her proposal, and she was urged to alert LSC when she was ready to start as some LSC members may volunteer to help her.

3. Cranberry Bog Working Group (CBWG)

The CBWG had an official meeting June 10, 2019, which Geltner and Brownrigg were able to attend as LSC representatives. The DEP site visit to the bog was described at the meeting. A significant amount of time was used to discuss a 'white paper' that Lyman had drafted explaining why cranberry farming was not selected for the future of the bog. Meeting guest John Lavery suggested that the Agricultural Commission take the responsibility of finding an agricultural solution for the bog's future if they are so inclined. Other meeting guests suggested using a permaculture approach at the bog, with supplemental income from educational programs. Competition from Clark Farm was suggested as being a problem for such an approach. The next CBWG meeting will be on June 24.

4. Evaluation of Signage on Town-Owned Conservation Lands

There were brief reports from Brownrigg, Michaud, Lyman and Willard on their evaluation of existing, or needed, signage on conservation properties they had volunteered to check. Wilmot agreed to check signage on the Malcolm, Mannis, Russell and Sachs properties. Progress is being made!

5. Bog Bench Safety

Brownrigg agreed to take a look at the log bench at the bog to see if safety can be improved by fixing the top log in place.

6. Benfield Conservation Land Issues

Willard reported that the septic system for Benfield Farms failed a Title 5 inspection!

NEW BUSINESS

1. Davis Corridor Plantings

Willard reported that Alison Saylor had been given a land use permit to plant native plants in an area recently containing trash which was removed by an Eagle Scout project. The area is near the Malcolm Meadows trailhead.

The meeting ended at 9:05 PM.

Next Meetings

- July 9, 2019 @ 7 PM
- August 13, 2019 @ 7 PM

Minutes approved on July 9, 2019
Submitted by Warren Lyman