

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee
MINUTES OF MEETING

February 27, 2024

Virtual Meeting called to order @ 7:18 pm

Present: Wendy Sisson, Peter von Conta, Brian McClain, Petri Flint

1. Minutes of LSS meeting on 01/16/24 approved unanimously.
2. Lands and trail updates:
 - West Bare - The boardwalks across wet areas are in need of repair, as some of the 2x10 boards have broken. Brian will coordinate the work and get the materials needed. Petri volunteered to help.
 - Scorgie Trail - Peter noticed that the snowmobile club had rerouted a short section of the trail. Wendy went to check the trail, and suggested that other members of the LSS could check it out as well. She thought that perhaps the changed pathway might actually alleviate some problems with crossing a muddy section of trail, but the group will take a look and assess the situation.
3. Trailcare app & chainsaw crew:
 - Peter noted that the dropped pins have been getting cleared at a good rate, and LSS members mentioned sites where they had seen that downed trees had indeed been cleared, so the chainsaw crew is active.
 - Peter also noted that the email group he set up is not getting used much, and that chainsaw work is currently being documented almost exclusively in the TrailCare app.
 - A question was raised about whether the HCT members on the chainsaw team had signed the town's liability release forms, so Peter sent the release forms out via email to the group to make sure everyone has, reiterating the need to file the form with the town to do the chainsaw work on town lands.
4. Barbed wire removal on Williams:
 - Brian plans to coordinate the removal of barbed wire that surrounds the fields in the Williams Land. He estimates that there are about 2000' of wire to be removed, but plans to walk the perimeter to verify the measurements. He is potentially collaborating with John Lee and Gina Ashe from HCT, who have been supervising Bromfield seniors to work on similar removal projects as part of their required community service hours. Wendy raised the issue of liability and the supervision needed to work with such a group on a project that involves the potential dangers of both barbed wire and Multiflora Rose, which is prevalent there. She recommended clearing the project with Liz Allard, limiting group size

to ensure adequate supervision, and suggesting eye protection be worn by volunteers.

- Wendy noted that she had recently cleared a good deal of Multiflora Rose in Hermann Orchard.

6. Amphibian migration season ahead:

- With the warm weather and rains that are expected this week, it is possible that migration will begin quite soon. Brian has signs ready to be posted at all of the known road crossings for amphibians around town.

8. Geocaching:

- Someone had approached the Conservation Agent about the possibility of geocaching on the Sprague Land, which brought up the question more broadly about whether to support geocaching on town lands. LSS members felt that if it were to be allowed, it would be advisable to have someone with the ability to keep track of the geocached items, but the only way to do that is for someone to purchase and monitor the app. The issue remains under consideration at this point.

9. Spring walk & Hermann Orchard trail

- Wendy had previously thought that a bridge would be needed to cross a wet area, however she noted upon further examination that was not. There is some trailwork needed to clear a part of the trail loop that has not been actively maintained for some years, and Brian and Petri volunteered to help with any chainsaw and clearing work needed.
- The LSS Spring Walk is scheduled for Sunday, April 14 at 2:00pm at Hermann Orchard.

10. Review trail standards document:

- Peter made a number of updates to the Trail Standards document, and asked for input from LSS members on the changes, which were approved unanimously.

11. Educational content for invasive plant control grant:

- Wendy had heard a talk given by Michelle Fronk Schuckel about gardening with native plants. Given the high quality of this talk, Wendy suggested inviting Michelle to give a public presentation on gardening with native plants, as part of the educational component of the grant that LSS received from the Community Preservation Committee. LSS members agreed, and Wendy is going to explore the possibility. Volunteer Hall at the Library was proposed as a possible venue.
- Brian suggested that another talk devoted to the creation of native pollinator gardens would be appropriate as well, and again LSS members agreed.

12. Updates from Wendy on ongoing issues that she is working on:

- Developing maps for kiosks on town lands.

- Finding someone who can do router work to create new signs similar to those in use already in many town lands.
- Approaching 3 Seasons Landscaping to consult about possible work on the Dancing Grounds fence on Holy Hill.
- The Deer Management Subcommittee is in the process of revising their mission to reflect that they are no longer working to create a Deer Management System, but that the DMS is now running an established program.

Next meeting Tuesday, March 26 at 7:15pm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm

Petri Flint