

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING

July 6, 2021

Present: Wendy Sisson, Peter von Conta, Jim Adelson, Rob Traver, Pam Durrant, Tom Gormley

Wendy Sisson called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM as a virtual meeting (recorded)

Minutes from the 6/1/21 meeting, as drafted by Jim Adelson and with editing changes from Wendy, were approved

The subcommittee welcomed Tom Gormley

There were no additions to the agenda as prepared and distributed by Wendy

Property and Trail Reports

- Thurston's Cove
 - o Tom Gormley has become the steward for that property
 - o Tom saw on 7/4 that a long-leaning tree had come down, blocking entire access to the water; Tom chain_sawed the tree, reopening access; some brush still needs to be removed or chipped
 - o Tom reported that the chain at the property entrance was still locked; Wendy directed Tom to DPW for the combination
- Holy Hill
 - o Jim A reported that Lisa Eisenberg had expressed willingness to help with some of the trail maintenance at Holy Hill
 - o Wendy provided a summary of items for Holy Hill, for Jim A to pass on to Lisa
 - Marc Sevigny has helped with heavy maintenance, including chain_sawing
 - Likely tasks for Lisa's help
 - Walking the trails to determine problems
 - Lighter branch removal
 - White pine trimming
 - Larger-scale projects at Holy Hill
 - Dancing Ground low-fence restoration, with replacement of the rotting posts – needs to be done professionally, and Wendy has been working to get Middlesex Fence to do the work
 - Remounting of the sign at the South Shaker Road parking lot
 - Possible gravel fill, in the portion of the trail behind Babbitt Lane, where there is a frequent mud problem (it would have to be done under dry conditions)
 - o Jim to send a note explaining these items (done after the meeting)

- Wendy to walk Holy Hill with Lisa to explain (done 7/10 after the meeting)
- West Oak, new HCT property, off of Oak Hill Road, next to Dunlap
 - Vegetation around pond is growing back; it had been cleared by Westward Orchards
 - HCT will monitor for invasives
 - There are three large sassafras trees on the property
 - The property links to Dunlap land and trail
- Old Mill – Peter contacted the snowmobile club about doing some clearing work on the inner loop, but had not heard back
- Stone Land
 - This property off Old Mill Road is not currently being mowed under contract and will need attention to emerging invasives
 - Potential for recreation under discussion as it connects to Harvard Park
 - ConCom will be having a walk there on 7/13 at 5:30, for anyone interested in joining
- Haskell
 - Rob indicated that they are trying to get the land registered, to be eligible for Federal funds
 - Hayfield portion may be mowed after July to allow bobolink use prior to that
 - Planting native grasses is still being planned
 - Rob has done soil samples
 - Wet SE corner would support pussy willow and other wetland shrubs
- Clapp-Scorgie
 - Peter took down a Norway maple
 - That generated a lot of brush, which we have to figure out how to handle for any future Norway maple removal; in this case, Peter put the brush in woods over the stone wall
- Maxant
 - Pam and Wendy walked it
 - They felt that perhaps we should have a fall work day, or at least a walk to assess for potential reopening
 - It does have tough terrain, with water and steep climbs

Emerald Ash Borer

- The insect has definitely been spotted in Massachusetts
- Unfortunately, they will eventually get all of the ash trees

Invasives and the summer intern

- The interns have been extremely nice
- Most recently, they've been working on barberry at Clapp-Scorgie

Abbott Orchard Pollinator Identification – Wendy suggested a possible project to label some of the plants, which Catherine Warner might cover in the Press to raise awareness of native plants and their pollinators

Eagle Scout projects

- For Clapp-Scorgie, Peter is trying to get an update on the kiosk design from Matt Zobi

- Peter had seen a nice kiosk design on Mt. Wachusett (after the meeting, Jim A's wife Debbie Sheetz provided a picture of the kiosk that Peter had seen)

Wendy and Rob are going to Lincoln, to look at their approach to managing old agricultural fields; Pam was interested as well

Areas that are hayed under license to farmers:

- Sprague
- Ayer Rd fields behind the bowling alley
- Williams

Wooden Signs

- Jim A reported completing an inventory of the signs in June, and putting the information in the trail status log
- Wendy hopes to refurbish one this summer and report back

Next meeting – 8/24

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM