

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING

August 24, 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)

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

Minutes from the 7/6/21 meeting, as drafted by Jim Adelson and with editing changes from Wendy, were approved

John Lee couldn't attend the meeting, but said he would work with Peter on clearing Norway maples at Clapp-Scorgie

Property and Trail Reports

- Holy Hill – Wendy reported a stepover on the main trail from the South Shaker Rd parking lot to the Dancing Ground, but said it was easy and not a high priority
- Williams – Wendy reported a couple of new trees down; she said she'll enter the location information into the log, so it's easier for Peter and crew to find the spots
- In general, this month has not been a great time for trail activity, between the high temperatures, mosquitos, and wasp/hornet activity

Tom asked whether we typically mount an effort to walk and evaluate the trails after a big storm (like Henri); the response was that we do what we can, but it's hard to mobilize to scout all the trails

Run for the Hills – At Prospect Hill/Dean's Hill 10/31

- The course starts at Community Orchards on Prospect Hill Rd
- Jim A said he would walk the trails around Labor Day, for an early identification of any maintenance work to be performed before the event
- In addition we'll want to go again closer to the event

Stone Land

- Marissa Steele is maintaining the mowed area for cross-country running
- From our walk on the property, there is Russian olive in the field; Wendy indicated that our weed tool would probably be able to uproot it, and that she'd be willing to help, and Tom volunteered to do it with her

Bowers Spring/Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

- On the trail connecting Bowers Spring with Vaughn Hills, there is a bridge crossing the wetland that was originally believed to be in Bolton but is now known to be in Harvard
- The Bolton Horse group would like to upgrade the bridge to permit horse travel
 - o They would be willing to build it

- We understand that it's a big job, because of the kind of bridge required to adequately support horse traffic; it would also require redoing a considerable length of approach trail to the bridge, putting down mesh topped with gravel brought to the site with equipment, and require broadening of the trail
- This represents significant impacts in a sensitive wetland area, so we don't recommend doing this
- Wendy will talk to the Bolton Conservation Agent about our perceptions

Haskell

- Rob reported that planted sunflowers grew well and were well received, although they weren't intended to be picked
- Wendy continues to work on ideas for a potential pollinator garden

Chestnut Orchard

- Brian reported that it made it through the hurricane without a problem
- He also indicated that a lot of trees are seven feet tall now
- Brian said that there was a potential problem with potato leafhoppers, though this insect doesn't kill the trees
- Brian also mentioned that he had to go through one or two passes a week to knock off Japanese beetles
- Finally, Brian recapped the purpose of the orchard, which is to grow to the flower stage, not full-grown trees – the trees won't make it

Invasives on Powell, Williams, Bare Hill, and Clapp-Scorgie

- Chemical treatment will be carried out at Powell
- Williams to be treated also
- Both require permitting
- Bare Hill (near Bowers Spring) has buckthorn that needs to be pulled
- Clapp-Scorgie – the summer intern did a lot of manual work pulling out Japanese barberry, which has been knocked back a lot

Holy Hill full workday

- Tentative planned for Saturday, October 23rd
- To remove/trim white pines
- Also potentially move or remove some remnants from an ice storm about 7-8 years ago
- Wendy noted that the sign had been reinstalled at the South Shaker Rd parking lot
- DPW still needs to regrade the piled up material at the parking lot

Fall Walk

- Tentatively planned for Saturday, November 6th (our first Saturday walk)
- Jim A will look at what we had planned for the spring walk in 2020, when we couldn't go because of the pandemic
- Jim A will bring possible options for our next meeting

Abbott Orchard (in Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary)

- Wendy wants to identify certain pollinators, and make signs to label

- Wendy and Pam scouted this area

Eagle Scout projects

- The boardwalk at Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary has been completed
- Materials for the kiosk have been purchased
- Scout still looking for the poles needed for installing bat boxes – Moore's didn't have them

Clearing Norway maples at Clapp-Scorgie

- Some branches will go to the woods
- It's possible that we may bring some wood for people to take as firewood, although there were mixed feelings on that

Next meeting – 9/28

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM