

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 28, 2021

Present: Wendy Sisson, Rob Traver, Jim Adelson, Brian McClain, Tom Gormley, Peter von Conta

Wendy Sisson called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM as a virtual meeting (recorded)

There was only one addition to the agenda as prepared and distributed by Wendy; Wendy added mention of the lanternfly

Minutes from the 8/24/21 meeting, as drafted by Jim Adelson and with editing changes, were approved unanimously

Wendy reported that the invasive spotted lanternfly, damaging to crops including apples and peaches, has been seen in Fitchburg

- They are particularly attracted to the tree of heaven, a host in their native range in Asia
- Wendy notes there are aeollanthus at the site of the Great Elms farmhouse, the entrance to Trail Ridge and at Hermann Orchard. We should prioritize controlling any on conservation land.

Property and Trail Reports

- Haskell Land
 - o Wendy has made an arrangement with Mike Hampson to hay the existing 5.5 acre hayfield; Mike is paying \$40 per acre annually
 - o Wendy and Rob are also looking into the right way to weed before planting native grasses
- Stone Land
 - o This property will be rotary mowed by Mike Hampson at the end of October and then hayed in subsequent years, paying \$40/acre annually for 4.3 acres.
 - o We need to remove the autumn olive
 - Tom has started
 - We will need to treat those that are too big to remove
 - Once pulled out, they will be left in a pile in the northeast corner of the property
 - Tom is looking for help; there were no immediate volunteers at the meeting

Invasives

- Scott is doing herbicide work to control invasives
 - o Williams
 - o Powell
 - o Shaker Reservoir
 - o Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary
- We will possibly have Scott tackle phragmites near Still River Rd next year – we are past the ideal time for this year

Fall Walk

- From the initial discussion, we concluded that it will be OK to schedule one this fall
- Jim A presented four possible alternatives, with possible routes for each
 - o Black Pond/Vesenska from the Smith Land
 - o Clapp-Scorgie from the Still River Rd parking lot
 - o Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary/Powell-Reed-Abbot from Bolton Rd parking lot
 - o Brown/Great Elms/Williams from the end of Murray Lane
- From discussion, Clapp-Scorgie was selected for this fall, and others may be used for future walks; if needed, we may take advantage of possible parking at Rob Traver's and/or Peter von Conta's houses
- Planned date/time is Saturday, November 6th at 1:30 PM
- We expect to recommend masks, though Wendy is checking if there is any town policy for this
- Publicity
 - o Wendy and Jim A will create a flyer
 - o Brian will post on Nextdoor Harvard
 - o Jim A will send to the Harvard Press
 - o Jim A will send to Liz Allard for the town website
 - o Jim will post the flyer at the library

Trailcare App

- Marc Sevigny and John Lee have been using it
- It is available as a free download
- Trailcare will enable us to pinpoint locations, but we'll also record in the log, to have better view of overall maintenance needs and historical records

Eagle Scout Projects

- Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary boardwalk is done
- Kiosks are done and have been put up for Clapp-Scorgie, Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, and Sprague; Peter will put up maps at the kiosks

Wendy will check the boardwalk at Black Pond/Vesenska

Prospect Hill/Dean's Hill is all set for Run for the Hills, with the organizers taking care of removing the last items

Old Mill

- The snowmobile club has not yet done their work on clearing, particularly on the inner loop
- Peter mentioned that there is additional blowdown that needs to be added to the log

Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

- There is a trail that connects to the Vaughn Hills property in Bolton; this trail section was believed to be in Bolton for a long time, but more recently it's been determined that it's in Harvard
- This trail crosses Bowers Brook on a boardwalk
- There was a request from a Bolton horse group to upgrade the boardwalk to be suitable for horse travel

- We don't recommend that it be upgraded for horses, as this requires both an extensive treatment of the bridge plus considerable distances on land on either side of the bridge within the wetland surrounding Bowers Brook; Harvard doesn't have this type of treatment on trails in town other than the woodland trail behind Harvard Park designed for the high school cross country running team.
- We do need to fix the bridge for human travel; Wendy and Peter or Brian and Peter to check for repair requirements
- Wendy still needs to talk to the trail group in Bolton on our conclusion

Next meeting – 10/26, at 7:15; possible following meeting on 11/30

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM