

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING

April 4, 2023

Present: Wendy Sisson, Jim Adelson, Brian McClain, Jim Gorss, Pam Durrant

Guest: Margaret Kusner

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

Minutes from the 2/28/23 meeting, as drafted by Jim A and modified by Wendy, were approved unanimously.

Spring Walk (April 8th)

- Publicity completed and launched – Nextdoor Harvard by Brian, HCT eMail blast arranged by Wendy, *Harvard Press* notified and listed under Events by Jim A, physical flyers posted at the library and post office by Jim A's son Nathaniel
- Brian encouraged that committee members register for the walk on Nextdoor Harvard, as that moves the listing up
- Jim A may not be able to go, due to positive tests for COVID 3/27, 3/31, and 4/04
- Ponds at Bowers Springs were gravel pits excavated by Mr. Visakis (sp?) in the 1960s
- Wendy may talk about how the property came into conservation
- Wendy will gather history of the Abbot family from Carlene Phillips, to be able to talk about their role
- Pam will contact Carlene by email to ask, although Pam herself will be out of state and not able to come
- If some of us can park on the opposite side of the road from the Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary parking lot, it may save some room in the lot to accommodate more participants
- Another thing we can tell participants about while walking are the invasives, particularly bittersweet, and the efforts to control them

Oak Sentinel Study Sites for Deer Management

- The Deer Management subcommittee was to place some oak seedlings at a number of sites, with some seedlings protected by wire and others not, to observe the extent of deer browse
- For conservation land, LSS has suggested Clapp-Scorgie off of Turner Lane and the Barton Land off of Mass Ave as two locations for the experiment
- Wendy reported that although only 4 deer were killed last year in hunting on conservation land, a total of around 70 were taken overall in Harvard, many on private land

Dam on the pond at Horse Meadow Knoll

- The dam was breached with the nor'easter on 3/14/2023
- This was a very old beaver dam
- Still figuring out a potential course of action

Kaufman

- Reported by someone who had walked the land as having several trail issues (see email distributed by Wendy 4/4)
- We may want to look at some trail routing/rerouting
- Pam to potentially walk the land to evaluate; Jim A to join if available

Pollinator garden planting on Powell

- The plants should arrive in June
- Need to pick out a good sunny spot, and also probably set up a fence to keep deer out

Site Walk at Rodriguez

- The trail was re-cleared for snowmobiles during the winter, without authorization from the Conservation Commission
- We need a site walk to see what we think, some time before the fall

Amphibian crossings

- Signs arrived 4/4; Brian to pick up from Liz Allard/Land Use Office
- Migrations are not happening as a "Big Night" – more gradual and primarily done by now
- From what Brian has seen, more modest road kill numbers – 5, vs sometimes hundreds in past years; Margaret Kushner saw perhaps 10 killed on Shaker Rd
- Wood frogs definitely have been out and quacking actively; Brian had heard them at the small pond on Powell 4/04

Old Mill

- Peter, Jim G, and Wendy took out the fallen tree 3/12; they also did some clean out that day at Clapp-Scorgie from Pine Ridge Dr
- They didn't have the opportunity to do any signage work at Old Mill – that remains to be done

Earth Day – 4/22, 11-4, organized by the Climate Group

Next meeting: 4/25; proposed date of 5/30 for May

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35