

Land Stewardship Subcommittee Meeting
Via ZOOM
07/25/23

Participants: Wendy Sisson, Brian McClain, Petri Flint, Pam Durrant, Peter von Conta, and Bob Douglas by Invitation.

The meeting started at 7:18pm

1. Remembrance of Jim Adelson. Consider dedicating the Fall walk to Jim. Need to find a date to communicate to Jim's family. NOV 4 is the first SAT in the month. Wendy has composed a letter to Jim's family on behalf of LSS. Discussion of Jim's tenure on the LSS - starting date was not identified in the meeting.
2. Fall Walk: November 4th Saturday was discussed and we will revisit at the next meeting.
3. Next Meeting: AUG 22, 2023
4. Deer Management program (and background context for Petri). Town subcommittee has existed for 5 years and the actual hunting has happened for 3 years. Bob mentioned that the deer cull has resulted in deer movement out of areas where they may have stayed. Hunters are required to hit a small target, the size of a dollar bill.
 - a. Looking at more sites. A small number of additional sites have been added each year. 14 parcels and approx. 500 acres currently in the program.
 - b. Consideration of Tripp land: Conservation restriction held by HCT (Harvard Conservation Trust), wherein the Tripp family expressed desire for hunting only be allowed for management purposes. Houses are to the west of the land, and that portion would be off limits. East of red trail, facing RT. 495 and swamp could be considered as walkers/people would be very unlikely to go there. Bob mentions that this area is ideal and has many deer. This land has the recommendation of LSS. Approved. Policy considerations: Bob: Board of HCT will examine the conservation restriction. LSS recommends to ConCom, who then recommends to HCT. Who holds the restriction makes the final decision.
 - c. Consideration of Stevenson/West Land: Bob also mentioned this land, and Wendy stated that there are no trails or walkers there which could make it a good candidate. Approved.
 - d. Consideration of Old Mill Land: trail has been modified by LSS. Northern end has large wetland along Cold Spring Brook and the trail has been dead-ended on the NE corner. Setback along the RR tracks? Setback from roads is 150'. Consideration of the use of the snowmobile trail during the hunting season. Bob mentioned that all small areas have potential and are worthwhile. Similar to Maxant site in this way, where the first deer of the 2022 season was taken. Consideration of horses on adjacent farm property here in Old Mill. Concern for sensitive sandy soil in that pitch pine/scrub oak part of the site and desire to communicate this to hunters with a limit of one hunter at a time on the site. Approved for a single hunter.
 - e. Noting that if problems arise, areas can be rescinded.

- f. Consideration of Abbot Reed Powell land: Portion of orchard and wooded pine canopy on the identified free area on map shown. High concentration of dwellings and therefore setbacks. Area is well used and probably too densely utilized. Orchard attracts deer regularly. Bob: area is rich in deer who love the apples. Noting that hikers and hunters can coexist where hunters are close to trails. Required deer stand setbacks are 75' from either side of a trail. Wendy expresses opposition wanting to wait longer before consideration of Powell land approval due to the number of walkers and dogs. Extend consideration until next year and revisit. Not approved.
 - g. Consideration of Clapp-Scorgie-Smith-Tufts Land: Wendy: would be beneficial to hunt here but area heavily utilized by walkers. Needs further exploration and consideration of possibilities on the less utilized Tufts-Smith portions, complying with setbacks. Bob will work with hunters to identify some areas that are outside of setbacks, and look like they have potential. Not approved at this meeting.
 - h. Consideration of Harvard Gravel Pit land: Seems ok as there are no walkers in this area, though DPW use would need to be accommodated. Inclusion supported by group.
 - i. Consideration of Warilla land (municipal): Land without trails suitable though access could be tight; access point from Stow Rd. is close to a family home who are opposed to seeing hunting activity. Not a concern if access from Daman-Stevenson is utilized. Question for town whether woods road access from Stow Rd. is on private land. Inclusion recommended by group.
5. Approval of the Minutes: Wendy edited the minutes as presented. Moved by Wendy, second by Peter. Approved by group.
 6. Mowing has been done on fields with black swallowwort inc Clapp-Scorgie, Tufts-Smith and fields at Holy Hill.
 7. Joy-riding on public lands: vehicle violations (cars doing donuts) have been noted by neighbors at Sprague land. Possibility to add signage to try to prevent the activity? Possibility to block off the parking area with chain so entry to the field is not accessible at night? Further consideration is needed to help solve the problem.
 8. Site walk needed at Rodriguez. Possibility to go in the morning before it gets hot. Consider August 12 at 10am will be our meeting time at Cruft Lane.
 9. Pollinator garden in Powell: looking great! Wet species really flourishing.
 10. Chestnut Orchard (Brian): 36 trees showed catkins, maybe 150 nuts will be produced! Very exciting. "Champion" tree has 18-19 nuts on it and can produce as many as 60 nuts. Hope to start crossing these next year with blight-resistant pollen.
 11. Willard Lane garlic mustard patch was weed-whacked by Don Richie. DPW covered the area with wood chips.
 12. Deans Hill swallowwort was growing rapidly with all the rain. Has been treated with herbicide.
 13. Permitting process is underway for roadside knotweed sites. Liz/Wendy
 14. Haskell: buckwheat planting - too wet with all the rain.
 15. Jim A was going to work on the Prospect Hill entrance - bring up at next meeting. Need volunteers.

16. Scout work: Maxant land suggested by the scout. Wendy states the area would need a much bigger effort. Invasive plants have moved in, regular flooding. Complex - needs to be revisited as it is not a job for scouts. Would however be nice to restore the area. For scouts Wendy suggested: Kiosks, Clapp Cove boardwalks, off Ann Lees boardwalk repair; work with snowmobile club: all good jobs for scouts.
17. Petri Flint would like to join the LSS subcommittee, and with unanimous LSS support he will be put up for recommendation to Concom to fill Jim A's seat..

Meeting adjourned at 9:26pm