

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING – approved 7/6/2011

May 10, 2011

Members Present: Wendy Sisson, Jim Adelson, Phil Knoettner, Ron Kusner, Pam Durrant

Members not Present: Marc Sevigny, Bob Benson, George Watkins

Wendy Sisson called the meeting to order at 7:20 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room

Minutes from the preceding meeting were approved.

Holy Hill Dancing Ground Fencing

- There are approximately 90 posts in the low fence, and they've lasted 35 years since they were redone in 1974, but most are now rotted
- Phil suggested that we replace one side per year, with the materials costing approximately \$700 for each side; to be paid for by the Highway Dept
- While the posts are rotted, the horizontal members are in reasonable shape, and can be removed, repainted, and reattached to new posts
- We have people from the COA volunteer effort to do the work

Williams Land

- Phil planned to order wood, paid for by the Highway Dept, to replace the bridge
- Phil mentioned a potential work day for Sunday, May 22

Signage

- Highest priorities for new signs are Pin Hill, Abbott-Powell-Reed, and Black Pond/Vesenka; later in the meeting we also mentioned a sign for Stone
- We will be using the Trex (sp?) material for the signs for durability; aesthetic preferences seemed to lean towards using the woodgrain sides of the boards, rather than the flat sides

Mary Abbott Trail Boardwalks

- The boardwalks were unstable and had been moved out of place, but someone has put them back in position, albeit without securing them
- We'll want to use gravel to secure them; we will experiment with types of gravel available from the Highway Dept before getting them to deliver a load for use on these boardwalks

Chainsaw Usage Principles (Summary)

- All volunteers planning to use a chainsaw must be approved by Phil Knoettner and have a waiver on file at Town Hall
- In addition, for each project, another copy of the waiver should be signed and deposited in the box at 105 Slough Road (Phil Knoettner's)
- No solo use of chainsaws; all chainsaw projects should be undertaken with two or more people
- Chainsaw users should carry a cell phone, in case emergency notification is needed
- Chainsaw use should be limited primarily to clearing fallen and leaning trees and branches; felling of large trees or removal of overhanging trees and branches should be referred to the Highway Dept.

Trail Reports

- Old Mill – trail is primarily clear, with one tree still requiring removal, and one overhanging tree from the Dec 2008 ice storm that requires easy walkaround
- Stone Land – the Harvard Conservation Trust sign needs to be removed, and a new sign created at the field entrance from Old Mill Road
- Ohlin Land – in good shape and not requiring further work at this time
- Town Forest – in good shape and not requiring further work at this time

- Maxant – there are some blazes, but the trail is not very clear; we need to re-establish the trail, and should have a site visit to plan the work
- Small Nature Trail – in relatively good shape; the bridges and boardwalks are holding up
- Bare Hill Sanctuary – there is a fallen tree that would be nice to remove, although it's lower priority; we need to review boardwalks
- Hermann Orchard – Paul is getting an estimate from removing the apple trees; Wendy is getting advice from a wildlife biologist, since Hermann and Rodriguez are a significant habitat for a lot of animals
- Powell-Abbott-Reed – we need to do a site walk to determine the approach, and plan to make that the site of our next subcommittee meeting

Trail Standards/Land-Use Rules

- Wendy proposed a new preamble which was accepted as proposed, with a minor modification to say “over 1,700 acres” rather than to state a specific number of acres which would likely change over time

Invasives

- Because of time constraints, we postponed Wendy's presentation of additional materials on invasives to a future meeting; in addition, it was noted that many of the invasives are present at Powell-Abbott-Reed, so we'll have observation opportunities with our next meeting
- Several on-line references on invasives were mentioned, including New England Wild Flower Society (www.newfs.org) and Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (www.IPANE.org)

Next meeting planned for 6/7, at Powell-Abbott-Reed, with potential earlier starting time, as early as 6:30; expect to meet at the entrance at the intersection of Brown Rd and East Bare Hill Rd.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.