

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING – approved 10/18/11

September 20, 2011

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

Members not Present: Marc Sevigny, Bob Benson, Ron Kusner

Wendy Sisson called the meeting to order at 7:25 P.M. in the Hildreth House Meeting Room

Minutes from the preceding meeting were approved.

Future meeting dates/times

- 3rd Tuesday of the month would be first preference, if a meeting room is available; this would make the next meeting 10/18
- If there is no meeting room available on the 3rd Tuesday, Tuesday continues to be the planned day, and we'd pick another one – 1st or 4th . (Pam not available the 2nd.)

Invasives Control

- Wendy mentioned potential application to the Community Preservation Committee, for use of CPC funds to undertake restoration projects of fields overgrown with invasives
- Some contemplated projects warrant hiring an outside firm
 - o they have training and licenses for herbicide administration'
 - o they can undertake larger projects
 - o there are at least a couple of possible firms that have been identified
- Potential projects to consider
 - o the field must be considered "salvageable," and have historic, aesthetic, or habitat value
 - o Powell-Abbott
 - While overgrown, the earlier character of the property is still recognizable
 - It provides "a pocket park for the neighborhood"
 - There is a local steward (Jim Lee) and possibly other neighbors who can get involved to continue after the restoration

- Clapp Orchard (on Still River Rd.)
 - Black swallowwort spreading throughout the area and into woods and buckthorn, around the apple trees
 - Possibly split the effort into two phases, with the first phase to cut buckthorn, and the second phase for herbicidal treatment. On second thought, buckthorn will probably need herbicide treatment when cut.
- Great Elms Field on Murray Lane
 - Very heavily covered with invasives – bittersweet, multiflora rose and more plus abutting 2 acre grove of black locust with understory of bush honeysuckle, bittersweet, etc.
 - Even after restoration, these fields would require conscientious mowing, monitoring and spot treatment to reduce re-establishment of invasives
- Williams Land – East of drumlin – multiflora rose and trees growing in between hay fields
- Potential separate plan and grant application for Herrmann Orchard

Trail Re-marking

- Vesenska – Bob Benson and Ned Leeming are planning to repaint the trail markers to make it easier to find and follow. Pam was involved in making that trail and should be consulted if it is unclear where it goes.
- Old Mill – Jim mentioned that some places on Old Mill would benefit from repainting, if there's time for people like Bob and Ned to work on it

Clearing Storm Damage/Fallen Trees

- Holy Hill
 - Let Phil's trail crew (including LSS members who clear trails) take firewood from trees cleared off trails if they want it

- They would have to have signed chainsaw liability waivers to cut and remove the wood
- ATV access will potentially be required for removing the firewood; the most likely access is via the Warner land from South Shaker Rd.
- Phil to ask Jim Burns about possible chain saw help for remaining trees (and about cutting sapling/pole stumps down to ground in PI field); another alternative would be to ask DPW to help with the large trees on Holy Hill
- Small Nature Trail
 - We need to remove those trees that are obstructing the trail
 - Otherwise leave fallen trees
 - Don't clear trees out of the wetland
- Old Mill – Phil and Jim Adelson to potentially do the chainsaw work on the smaller remaining trees on this trail
- Sprague - Bob reports one tree down at far end of loop.
- Black Pond - A tree down at beginning of trail and some branches further in.

Holy Hill Dancing Ground Fencing

- The high fence will be repainted in October or November
- When we get the replacement posts for the low fence, it will require a volunteer group/workday, since it's more than a one- or two-person job

Signage

- Trail entrance routed signs
 - Phil expects to complete the new routed signs for Black Pond, Pin Hill, Powell Abbott (Brown Rd), Powell Abbott (Bolton Rd)
 - For the signs with lengthier wording, Phil is working with a new approach for the wording to be painted, since routing such signs would take too much time
- Additional trail signage

- Wendy has found and communicated with Voss Signs, who does extensive work of this type and appears to offer suitable signage at very reasonable pricing
- Voss has indicated a “life expectancy” of 15-20 years for aluminum signs, and 7-10 years for plastic signs; from our discussion, we decided to go with aluminum signs for those applications where either aluminum or plastic were considered
- Wendy and Kim Becker had created some sign mock-ups for us to look at
 - Wendy wants to make some additional changes on wording/design before the order goes to Voss
 - Pam will look at the wording that Bolton uses for the easement/private land sign
- The money for this signage has already been planned by the Conservation Commission

Mary Abbott Trail Boardwalks/Waterbars

- Wendy, Phil and Jim did a site walk in August to evaluate
- From Jim’s subsequent research on waterbars, other techniques to divert trail water may be preferable; in this case, it may be possible to divert some of the water flow higher on the trail
- Jim will return to look at it during heavier rain
- For any eventual waterbar work, committee members have access to the needed tools – grub hoe, crow bar, and shovels
- The current boardwalks are slippery and not useful for this type of terrain, and will be removed
 - Phil thinks we can use some of them for certain flatter sections on the Small Nature Trail
 - Others can be stored with the DPW, if not used immediately

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.