

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee
MINUTES OF MEETING

November 28, 2023

Virtual Meeting called to order @ 7:17 pm

Present: Wendy Sisson, Peter von Conta, Brian McClain, Pam Durrant, Jim Gorss, Petri Flint

1. Minutes of LSS meeting on 10/24/23 approved unanimously.
2. Land and trail updates:
 - Going forward, Jim will act as the point person for organizing and monitoring trail maintenance other than chainsawing (re-blazing, brush clipping, etc.)
 - Other folks noted the specific trails that they regularly walk and can care for:
 - Wendy does Williams, Hermann Orchard, Willard/Poitras
 - Brian does Bare Hill Conservation, as well as Powell/Reed/Abbott
 - Peter does Clapp/Scorgie/Tufts/Smith
 - Petri does Great Elms
 - Wendy recently did some clearing on Willard, but noted that it needs more blazing.
 - Wendy re-blazed in Williams.
3. Planning walks:
 - Spring walk in Hermann Orchard in April.
 - Pam leads a walk most Thursday mornings on different town lands for the garden club.
 - Wendy noted that it would be helpful for the LSS to be notified when other groups are planning walks, so that we can make sure that the trails are in good order for the walks.
4. Trail Care coordination with HCT chainsaw crew.
 - Peter reported that the TrailCare app seems to be the best source of communication among all those doing this work, in conjunction with the email group that was set up. He recommended that emails be sent out to the group in a more proactive way to let others know in advance when someone plans to go clear pins in a certain area, so that efforts are not duplicated.

- Trail Status log still exists, but the thought was that it would be best used for other kinds of trail issues, rather than the downed trees and other chainsaw work that are overseen by the chainsaw crews.
- 5. Coordination with HCT over new trail mapping. Pam reported that she had spoken with someone in HCT about the issue, and they are aware of the need to coordinate any map updates with the Conservation Commission and the LSS.
- 6. Deer Management Program reported that 8 deer have been taken on town lands thus far in the fall hunting season. They will report back again at the close of deer hunting season. No issues with abutters have been brought to our attention.
- 7. Snowmobile season is coming up:
 - Wendy met with Mark Adams to discuss several issues needing attention of the snowmobile club to prepare for the season, including places in Clapp Cove where the track needed to be improved and bridges or other structures needed reinforcement. Mark will need to submit a sketch for one enhancement, since it will involve placing a bridge support in a wetland, which will need to be approved and permitted to go forward.
 - Wendy noted that it would be helpful for the snowmobile club to develop a system of notification for when the trails are open or closed based on snow conditions.
- 8. A written proposed policy statement was requested from the LSS on the issue of memorial markers on town lands. Wendy drafted a policy statement that was unanimously approved, briefly outlining some history around the issue and reiterating our consensus from the October LSS meeting for a policy that “memorial markers are not permitted on town-owned Harvard Conservation land.”
- 9. CPC awarded the LSS a budget of \$50,000 for invasive plant management. Wendy had given a presentation to the group showing before-and-after photos to demonstrate the impact of the removal of invasives from town lands. This grant will allow LSS to resume some management efforts that had to be curtailed in 2023 due to lack of funding, and to continue with efforts to control invasives in more difficult areas, such as the Phragmites on Barton near Bare Hill Pond or clearing on the north slope of Hermann Orchard. Other invasive plant reports:

- Stone was treated again this year focusing on autumn olive. We will keep a watch on Japanese knotweed by Old Mill Rd entrances and gradually control burning bush on the eastern edge overlooking the mill pond.
- Powell had a large project to remove glossy buckthorn by cut-stump treatment this past month, and the remaining brush piles will need to be cleared.
- Dean's Hill – Swallowwort was treated in June but continued work (put on hold this year) on woody invasives is needed.
- Haskell was not seeded this year due to persistent rains and has dominant clover coverage.
- A scout troop will be working on removing multiflora rose from areas in Holy Hill and Prospect Hill (along causeway over beaver wetland behind transfer station).
**post-mtg note: the latter did not take place and is a needed project.

Next LSS meeting will be Tuesday, January 16, 2024 @ 7:15pm

Adjourned at 8:55pm

Petri Flint