

Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force Meeting Agenda: Monday March 11th 2013 8:30 AM
Location: 2nd Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall 334 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA

Task Force Members: Christine Ward, Ron Dlugosz, Joe Sokul, Jessica Dezieck, Nina Evans, Dale Abrams, Suzanne Fowle Schroeder, Deb Phillips, Chris Rembold (ex-officio) & Amanda Sewall, conservation Agent

1. Move to approve 1.14.13 LMITF Meeting Minutes as written.
2. Updates on Recreation Area Maintenance (Joe Sokul, DPW Superintendent)
 - Engineering for Lake Mansfield Road: RFP to go out in Jan 2013
 - Improvements to the Speed Hump/ Cross walk
3. Moving Forward with Phragmites control at LM
4. LMITF 2012 Report (Attachment 1)
 - Prepared and provided to Kevin O'Donnell for inclusion in the 2013 Town Meeting Report
 - Task Force Members should share the report w/ respective committees/ groups they represent
5. LMA Community Gathering / Info. Outreach on 319 Grant: Work involving drainage and road Planned for spring 2013.
 - A big Thank you Nina & Richard Evans and Chris Rembold for a great discussion and a wonderful evening.
 - Next Steps: Letter to affected Neighborhoods, article in LMA NL.
 - In addition, Ron spoke to the need for revitalizing the LMA Steering Committee. Ron & Christine will be working this year to developing the committee to engage new community members in order to provide for the continuation of LMA.
6. Email from Tom Coote, Simons Rock College
 - Brainstorm ways to engage Simon's Rock Students & Professors in LM Stewardship
 - Build on Simon Rocks Premier Volunteer Day
7. LMITF Role in 2013/ consideration of a revised meeting schedule to quarterly rather than monthly.
8. Updates from Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Parks Commission, Town Planner, Lake Mansfield Alliance and others.
 - LMA: Lake Mansfield Internship ~ Included in Jessica Dezieck internship are weekly visits to the forest and follow-up journal entries that address trail conditions, report on trail-users observed and include Natural History Observations. This systematic stewardship is helping to assure that our trails are in good shape. In addition, Jessica and Christine are developing ways to provide her natural history information to the community as a way to foster a stronger community understanding and appreciation of this natural resources area.
9. **Next Meeting: April 8th, 2012 at 8:30AM, Town Hall 2nd Floor Meeting Room**
 - **Upcoming Dates:**
 - i. **LMA Newsletter scheduled to be Mailed on April 2nd**
 - ii. **Berkshire School Volunteer at LM on Thursday April 18th/ The Great GM ATTACK!**
 - iii. **Lake Mansfield Clean Up and Celebration Day on Sunday April 28th 10:30 – 3PM**

Future consideration: Design & Installation of changing facilities at the LM Beach Area/ Next Steps; Internship at Lake Mansfield; Working with Simon's Rock College (water quality monitoring) ; Phragmites control;

Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force: 2012 Report

Provided to: the Great Barrington Board of Selectman and to the Committees represented on the task force

2012 Task Force Members:

Christine Ward, Chair (Citizen at Large), Ron Dlugosz, co-chair (Citizen at Large), Deborah Phillips (Select Board), Joseph Sokul (DPW Superintendent), Dale Abrams (Lake Mansfield Alliance) Nina Evans (Lake Mansfield Alliance alternate), Jessica Dezieck (Conservation Commission), Suzanne Fowle Schroeder (Planning Board), Amanda Sewall (Conservation Agent, ex-officio) Chris Rembold (Town Planner, ex officio). No representative served from the Parks and Recreation Commission

In March 2006, the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force was created by the Board of Selectmen and charged with the development and implementation of a Lake Improvement Plan. The plan would provide for public safety, use and accessibility, water quality improvements, protection of the watershed and stewardship of the Resource area. In 2012, the Task Force continued to meet in order to provide guidance and direction for the care of the Lake Mansfield Recreation area. Below is a report on this effort as well as actions and goals for 2013.

I. **Water Quality Improvements and Assessments:**

- a. One of the major threats to the Lake's health, runoff from the Castle Hill Avenue storm drain system, will be addressed by a \$266,500 grant from Massachusetts DEP. This project will reconstruct the catch basins and storm drains on Castle Hill Avenue, to better catch and filter the runoff before it empties into the Lake. Engineering work and bid documents were prepared in 2012. Construction is planned to begin in April 2013. The grant will be matched at 40% by Town funds including volunteer and staff time. The Task Force and the Town Planner will work to educate the public about the scope of work and impact on regular traffic in the area of upper Castle Hill Avenue preceding the commencement of work. This work will have a significant impact on the water quality at Lake Mansfield by eliminating the significant annual contribution of sediments to the lake.
- b. The unpaved parking area at the beach continues to contribute sediments the lake in form of unfiltered run-off during storm events. Unmitigated storm water is also a concern along Lake Mansfield Road and where Knob Hill enters Lake Mansfield Road in the boat launch area.
- c. The Conservation Commission funded a Lake Mansfield 2012 Aquatic Vegetation Survey prepared by Geosyntac in September 2012. This report provides an updated assessment of the composition and distribution Lake Mansfield's aquatic vegetation community, to aid lake management planning efforts.
- d. The summer season's water testing results, provided weekly by The Town's Health Agent, showed that Lake Mansfield waters were healthy for swimmers throughout the 2012 swimming season.
- e. New signage and a dispenser for Clean Boat Certification Forms were maintained at the beach area, providing information on ways to protect the lake from the threat of zebra mussels and other invasive species. Clean Boat Certification Forms, required to be completed by all boaters, are made available at the kiosk and are also provided at www.mass.gov/lakesandponds.
- f. A grant through the Massachusetts Environmental Trust was sought but declined in 2012. The proposed project was designed to determine the lake's overall water quality and chemistry; to judge the impact of nonpoint source stormwater on lake health; to judge the impacts and benefits of the Town's nonpoint source stormwater improvements; and to establish an educational partnership program with college students of Bard College at Simon's Rock. Alternative ways to accomplish this work must be sought in 2013.

II. **Protecting the Buffer Zone and Sensitive Habitats** – Application of the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act

- a. The mowing policy developed for the Lake Mansfield Recreation Area aimed at supporting sensitive habitat area and encouraging plant growth that can help prevent erosion was successfully applied in 2012
- b. A small stand of invasive phragmites south of the outlet brook has been targeted for removal. The task force has requested that the Conservation Commission seek and fund services aimed at eliminating this invasive plant species in 2013.

III. **Use and Accessibility** – 2012 once again saw an increase in Recreation use of the lake, beach area, forest trails and Lake Mansfield Road for Recreation. Although the greatest number of users are noted in the summer season, the Recreation Area is a popular destination throughout the year. The task force was without a representative from the Parks and Recreation Department in 2012. It will be important to work at filling this seat in 2013.

- a. The strong summer programming provided through the Parks Commission is essential to our safe and well maintained waterfront. In 2012, lifeguards logged 15,670 Lake Mansfield visitors May 31st through August and 52 children were provided with swimming instruction.
- b. Improvement of the cross walk speed hump, recommended for the safer crossing from the parking area to the beach area scheduled for April 2012 was not able to be accomplished. The Task force strongly urges that this work be completed as early as possible in 2013 in order to enhance the safety of these much used space.
- c. Trails in the Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest are improved and maintained through the efforts of Lake Mansfield Alliance (LMA), a project of Great Barrington Land Conservancy, and the oversight of the Conservation Commission. This work, overseen by Lake Mansfield Alliance, is provided by volunteers, LMA donations & grant funding. 2012 efforts included regular trail maintenance, clearing of fallen trees due to storm damage, hand-pulling and cutting of invasive species and the development of an improved trail map and trail brochure (accomplished in partnership with Housatonic Heritage through the grant supported GB Trails 2012 Collaborative Trail Project). A number of community volunteers and local students were engaged in the work. Greenagers was hired by LMA for summer a ½ day of summer trail maintenance. Goals for 2013 include the continuation of trail maintenance and efforts aimed at invasive species control, the installation of benches to provide resting spaces for trail users, and the development of Trail Internships aimed at connecting with and developing the skills of our future resource area stewards.

IV. **Public Safety** - While use increases, the safety of recreational users continues to be a priority for the Task Force.

- a. Obsolete telephone poles, carrying only two telephone lines and constricting the roadway and pose potential risks, long targeted for removal, were removed in 2012.
- b. The condition of Lake Mansfield Road, including the degradation of the bank and road surface which challenge motorists and makes multi-use (two-lane traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.) passage difficult, continues to be of primary concern. The task force strongly urges that these conditions continue to be carefully monitored and that solutions be provided for in upcoming planning & budgeting. An engineering study to be funded through Chapter 90 funds is proposed by the DPW for 2013. This study is essential to providing the community with the information needed to plan for the future improvement of this much challenged area.

V. **Continued work In the Coming Year** - The Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force (LMITF) will continue to work to provide for the health and safe recreational use of the Lake Mansfield Recreation Area. We appreciate the Town's dedication to this invaluable natural resource and recreation area.

Provided by Christine Ward, chair
January 23, 2013