

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING – approved 11/20/12

October 16, 2012

Members Present: Wendy Sisson, Jim Adelson, Pam Durrant, Dave Kay

Members not Present: Phil Knoettner, Marc Sevigny, Bob Benson

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

Minutes from the previous meeting, as prepared by Marc and amended by Wendy, were approved.

Prospect Hill/Dean's Hill Snowmobile Trail Walk 9/27

- Participants were Don Ritchie, Wendy Sisson, and Phil Knoettner
- In the Dean's Hill section, the trail follows the wood road, and the Snowmobile Club has mowed the clearing at the summit and installed a picnic table
- New route to Turner Lane
 - o Snowmobilers are now looking for an alternate way to get to Clapp/Scorgie conservation land by Turner Lane to hook up with Bare Hill Pond loops; the previous route was on Westward Orchard's private property, and since the McEvoy acquisition of the property, it is no longer available to snowmobilers
 - o Unfortunately, no easy alternative was identified, since the Davis property is also not open to snowmobile use, and any routes through town-owned Conservation Land appear to lead through major wetland (tussock swamp) within the Bowers Brook watershed
- Expansion within Dean's Hill
 - o Dean's Hill is Conservation Land, and its Conservation Restriction is held by the Conservation Trust
 - o The existing trail for snowmobilers on Dean's Hill is permitted under conditions of the Conservation Restriction at the discretion of the HCT and the HCC
 - o Proposed expansions of the trail include running up a fairly steep east side of Dean's Hill, which would be prone to erosion
 - o Snowmobile trail maintenance and traffic between Dean's Hill and the Bowers Brook wetland could also result in invasive plants present on Dean's Hill being introduced into the wetland and transported to other areas of the watershed
 - o Expanded snowmobile trails could also degrade wildlife
 - o For these concerns, the LSS does not recommend the expansion of the snowmobile trail on Dean's Hill, and would recommend continuing with the existing snowmobile trail where it is currently present

Brehm Land – Joint Trail Work with the Conservation Trust

- Want to establish, clear and mark the potential new trail on the Brehm land
- Wendy will send an initial e-mail to the Trust - we'll ask the Trust to identify possible dates that work for their participants for the workday

Update on Other Fall Trail Activities

- Pin Hill -- Jim Adelson traveled the Pin Hill Trail, which is clear of fallen trees
- Old Mill
 - o Jim and Erica Adelson completed a work session on Old Mill Trail, removing many trees and branches
 - o there are still four spots on the trail that require larger chainsaw work to eliminate obstructing trees – this will need to be done by DPW, a professional crew, or possibly Dave Kay
- Prospect Hill
 - o Jim and Erica Adelson completed a work session on Prospect Hill Trail, removing many trees and branches
 - o The field at the entry from Prospect Hill Road still needs to be mowed and to have trees/branches removed
 - o The Dean's Hill portion has not had tree removal; there is at least one fallen tree just at the crossover point from Prospect Hill to Dean's Hill – the snowmobile club will presumably remove this one
- Holy Hill – Ron Kusner completed a work session on Holy Hill Trail
- Vesenska/Black Pond – Phil Knoettner and Bob Benson are planning to work on clearing and remarking these trails
- Additional Town of Harvard Conservation Land signage
 - o while the primary entries of all conservation properties and their trails have these new signs, a number of properties have additional entries that could be marked with signage
 - o if possible, the additional signs will get mounted before winter arrives

Field Mowing

- Wendy had given the list of fields requiring mowing, and any related guidance, to DPW
- Wendy is scheduled to meet with the contractor that DPW uses for mowing on 10/17 to review mowing needs and approach
- The field that is part of Powell-Reed-Abbott, located at the intersection of East Bare Hill Road and Brown Road needs mowing – Wendy will talk to Jim Lee about doing that

Invasives Treatment

- Our contractor was busy all summer, and expects now to be available to proceed with the clearing work
- Wendy will meet with the contractor to decide what we'll be able to get done
- For work on Clapp-Scorgie (and other properties), we'll need to decide which approach to use for the cleared debris; options in increasing order of expense
 - o Pile in a place on the property
 - o Burn

- Chip and disperse
- Chip and haul out
- For work on Powell (cutting Christmas trees)
 - Need to add information on the LSS website, to explain what is being done
 - Need to put a sign on the property, referring people to the website for more information
 - Need to provide an article for the newspapers (*Harvard Press*, *Harvard Post*, *Harvard Hillside*) explaining what is being done
 - Wendy and Dave will work on these communications

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.