

Lee Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting of August 11, 2014

Present:

Members: Laura Gund; Bill Humm, Chair; Anne Tappan; Richard Weyrick, Emeritus Member

Alternate Member: Catherine Fisher

Visitors: Quinn Griffith, Sherri Griffith, and Adam Griffith, Lee

Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes of meeting held on July 7, 2014, were accepted with changes.

Updates and Announcements:

Easement Monitoring: During the past month monitoring visits were made to the Brady, Maud Jones Forest, Lee Town Forest, Claridge/Mills, Blicke, Demeritt Hill Farm and Old Mill Reserve easements. No problems were found. The following monitoring visits are planned: Grumbling (8/14); Sandborn (8/20); Tuckaway & Randall (8/27); Hutton (9/3); Riverside Farm (9/10).

Rothwell Stewardship Plan: Ellen Snyder is working on the contract and has approval from Sharon Meeker, on behalf of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) to delay her report so that LRAC members will be able to participate in a site walk of the property on September 10 at 10:30. She will attend the LCC meeting of Tuesday, September 2 to discuss her work.

Conservation Lands Management:

Maud Jones Memorial Forest: R. Weyrick reported that Will Stone and his group have scheduled one more workday in order to complete painting of trail blazes. An event to formally open the new trails was discussed.

Little River Park: A. Tappan reported that she and C. Fisher have removed 250 black locusts from the slope beyond the playing fields that is part of the woodcock displaying grounds. They have been removing 50 trees/week and have several weeks' worth of removal left to do, but are reaching the point where chainsaws will be needed. C. Fisher reported that they had discovered two dump sites within the park: a pile of old construction debris at the base of the gravel banking and the remains of an abandoned campsite consisting of tires, a mattress, boards and tarps. A site walk with B. Humm and R. Weyrick was planned for the coming weeks in order to survey how best to proceed with both locust-cutting and debris removal. The small number of invasives found within the park, coupled with its notable habitat and species diversity was discussed. An informal species survey is being undertaken. C. Fisher forwarded a request by Shirley Walker of the Senior Advisory Commission to place metal identification tags on certain wildflowers growing along the trails in the park; approval was granted.

Durgin Preserve: B. Humm reported on a recent Select Board meeting at which a Lee resident requested that trees be cut at the preserve in order to improve sun bathing conditions; following this request, B. Humm informed the Select Board that the LCC would be unlikely to approve such action. Following a brief discussion in which A. Tappan stressed the importance of vegetative buffers to both wildlife and water quality, it was agreed that B. Humm will convey to the Select Board the Commission's strong reservations regarding the removal of any trees or vegetation along the shoreline.

Joe Ford Wildlife Preserve event: The July 24 event was a success with thirty people from NH Audubon, Strafford Rivers Conservancy and the town of Lee attending. A path mowed by Chuck Cox allowed attendees to walk the perimeter of the field and get a sense of the property.

Old Mill Reserve: During a monitoring visit, C. Fisher, A. Hartgerink, and Dick Weyrick viewed the slope where Don Keirstead of NRCS has proposed thinning a dense stand of young white pines in order to improve shrub bird habitat; they reported seeing no difficulty with this action. Prior to any

tree-thinning B. Humm reported that a letter will be sent to abutters and a public hearing with the Select Board will be held to give abutters an opportunity to voice concerns.

Lee 5 Corners Reserve: Prior to a site walk with B. Humm and D. Weyrick, Ted Kendziora (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) discussed mowing the field as part of his plan to improve the habitat at the reserve; on viewing the area all were agreed that no mowing is needed at this time. It was noted that about 90% of the Japanese knotweed sprayed last year is gone. Following a site walk by Lenny Lord (Rockingham Cty. Cons. Dist.), B. Humm and D. Weyrick, L. Lord emailed a request to spray the buckthorn growing there. Approval was given and spraying took place on Aug. 11. Additional spraying of knotweed and autumn olive will be done at a later date and funded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

OLD BUSINESS:

GRANIT Data Base Update: B. Humm reported that he and Laurel Cox went to the Strafford Regional Planning Commission to look over their map of the town for any necessary corrections. They filled out data sheets and sent them to the Regional Planning Com. A small invoice from L. Cox will be forthcoming.

Kennard Property: B. Humm reported that there have been some conversations between the attorney for the town and the attorney for Ron Kennard, but acquisition of the property continues to be a slow process.

NEW BUSINESS:

Town Fair: C. Fisher and D. Weyrick will lead nature walks at 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. C. Fisher will ask Sharon Taylor if the library has a tent available for use that day. Barring that she will check with Dick Babcock.

OTHER:

Public Access to Town-Owned Properties: A. Tappan and D. Weyrick will work on updating Alan Eaton's 2006 article "Town Properties with Recreational Opportunities." B. Humm will invite a representative from the Recreation Commission to make suggestions and attend article-revision meetings.

Possible Conservation Easement Property: Steve Haendler, who owns a small farm and tree farm abutting the Ath-Mor/Merrill dairy farm on Lee Hook Road has expressed interest in putting the property under conservation easement. Dave Viale, of South East Land Trust contacted B. Humm regarding his committee's interest in preserving the property. D. Viale will look into various possibilities for securing funding sources for this acquisition including Great Bay Partnership and NRCS before meeting with LCC in September or October. The possibility of the LCC providing transaction costs was discussed.

Next Meeting: September 2, 2014

Submitted by: _____
Catherine Fisher

