

Meeting Minutes - Upton Land Stewardship Committee

January 5, 2012, 7.30 PM
Nipmuc High school Gathering Room

Members Present:

Scott Heim; Mike Penko; Marcella Stasa; Bill Taylor; Cathy Taylor

1. Three eagle scouts were presented awards of appreciation for bridges built at Howarth Glen and Peppercorn Hill (Patrick Nigro; Jeff Gruber, and Eric Rapp).
2. LSC submittal for 2011 Annual Town Report reviewed and approved.
3. SWF - work date planned for Saturday at 1pm to install fencing along easement near the SWF store. A boy scout (Chris Dumas) has agreed to build the SWF stream crossing in the pasture. This will be a major project and the bridge should be suitable for vehicular traffic.
4. Peppercorn Hill: National Grid easement issue – no new news. A boy scout is trying to replace the Mill River Bridge on NG land and is trying to work out an access agreement (there is no existing easement).
5. Stefans Farm – solar farm issue discussed. BOS gave a private party permission to look at town land for potential site for solar farm (Stefans is the obvious target). Marcella to talk with Blythe. Marcella to check on status of Stefans Farm habitat management plan being prepared by MA Wildlife. LSC will plan to certify vernal pools this spring. The Eastern Box turtle report from Stefans submitted to NHESP in 2010 has been accepted by NHESP. New NHESP rare species maps for entire state due out this spring.
6. Stefans Farm – both convex mirrors along Mechanic Street have been vandalized (ie. destroyed). The mirrors cost \$120 each. No determination made on whether or not to replace them.
7. Community Garden – nothing to report at this time.
8. South Street Gravel Pits – town has an agreement in principle to purchase about 70 acres for active recreation. There would be potential to create trails along West River and to greatly improve access to the Goss Pond property managed by the LSC.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Minutes approved April 5, 2012

Meeting Minutes - Upton Land Stewardship Committee

February 2, 2012, 7.30 PM
Nipmuc High school Gathering Room

No minutes available.
Meeting not held.

Mike Penko
Secretary

Meeting Minutes - Upton Land Stewardship Committee

March 1, 2012, 7.30 PM
Nipmuc High school Gathering Room

No minutes available.
Meeting not held.

Mike Penko
Secretary

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

April 5, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room

Members Present: Matthew Bachtold, Scott Heim, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

1. Stefans Community Garden: Need to construct two new beds this year for people who have requested plots.
2. Land Stewardship Plans for Peppercorn and Warren Brook: Review 2007 Stefans Plan and other LSMP to develop outline (MP to email examples). Will likely focus on Peppercorn first. TD worked on it a few years ago and there is a 2001 Forest Management Plan available.
3. Forest Policy: ConCon still is working on it.
4. Stefans: MDFW wildlife habitat management report received (dated Feb 2, 2012). MS to forward to LSC.
5. Stone Landscape: CT indicates Historical Commission may be working on a non-contiguous designation to include the Heritage Park, Pratt Hill, and possibly others areas. Paul Louthier (National Registry of Historic Places) is involved.
6. Stefans: New NHESP rare species maps not yet available so we don't know if box turtle habitat at Stefans will be designated as Priority Habitat. The 2010 box turtle report from Stefans was accepted by NHESP.
7. Stefans: LSC plans to work on improving the main cartpath, including possible culvert installation and placement of fill material to elevate the path. Work area extends from near pond to first large field. MS and WT to check out area and talk with Tim Davidson. RDA or NOI filing required. Work also needed on the spur trail which leads to the old dam and beyond. The existing foot bridge on this trail needs to be upgraded and wet crossing on either side of stone pile needs to be improved.
8. Stefans: Invasive control using herbicide planned for June of this year with fields to be mowed in fall (favorable vote). The fields were last mowed in 2010. Consider staggering mowing for habitat management as suggested by MAFW.
9. Howarth Glen Field: Field last mowed in 2010 - spot herbicide treatment this year and mow field next year (favorable vote)
10. SWF: A boy scout (Chris Dumas) has agreed to build the SWF stream crossing in the pasture. MS is preparing NOI. Bridge will be designed for horses, pedestrians, mountain bikes, but not vehicular traffic. We will rely on easement through SWF pasture for vehicular access.
11. Peppercorn Hill: National Grid easement issue. Progress being made on a license agreement with National Grid. MS and WT to meet with town manager – town will likely need to sign a liability waiver. The adjacent beaver pond is now largely dry.
12. MP suggested developing spreadsheet listing needs at each property and completed projects.
13. Meeting minutes for January accepted and approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

May 3, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room

Members Present: Matthew Bachtold, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

1. Stefans Community Garden: Need to construct 1 to 3 more beds this year for people who have requested plots. Suggestion made to let gardeners know that if plots are not worked by sometime in June they will be assumed abandoned and reassigned.
2. Stefans Farm: no news on solar farm.
3. Stefans Farm: Discussion about upgrades to trail system and related wetland issues. Need to prioritize areas. 7k budget to complete the trail system is available Site visit scheduled for Sunday May 20th at 10 a.m.
4. Whitney Conservation Area: Stefans work day planned to install fence around bridge site. Chris Dumas expects bridge to be completed by June.
5. Peppercorn Hill: Motion made an accepted to name trails for John Robertson and Mr. Kerr, as well as Francis Walleston (which was voted on several years ago by ConCom).
6. Peppercorn Hill: Nothing new regarding National Grid trail easement issue.
7. Forest Policy: ConCom is still working on it. Little progress last few months due to lack of time for discussion.
8. MP would like to install memorial bench near a vernal pool on the Snow Family Conservation Area. The committee supported idea but feels a policy is needed for accepting such donations.
9. Whitney Conservation Area: Fence design discussed. Bill to research fence post pounders. Posts will likely be 60" high, set 4 ft deep.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

June 6, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room

Members Present: Matthew Bachtold, Scott Heim, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

1. Stefans Community Garden: 2 plots vacant and in need of gardeners. United Parish may be interested. BVT interest in uncertain. Four new beds were built this year; 2 still need to be filled with soil.
2. Stefans Farm: Wetland delineation along cart path needed for NOI. Trail work does not need to be completed until 2013.
3. Peppercorn Hill: MS working on draft stewardship plan.
4. Peppercorn Hill: MS, WT, and CT interviewed John Robertson regarding history of the Peppercorn Hill acquisition. MS to write up notes from the meeting (it was not recorded). A fourth person, Fred Sanford, was also active with the acquisition (so we there will be four named trails).
5. ~~At~~ Peppercorn Hill (Mill River): Town counsel is working on easement with National Grid.
6. Bridge/Boardwalk Inspection: Yearly inspections needed in the future as the infrastructure ages. A ca. 20-25 years old bridge at Peppercorn should be inspected soon.
7. Forest Policy: ConCom is still working on it.
8. Signage: MS is making signage using stencils. MP will try out router.
9. Sweetwilliam Farm: Store lot has been sold. There was no need to resolve parking lot issue with a new easement deed. LSC will wait for new owner to contact us. A draft the easement deed was reviewed/approved by SVT.
10. Trail Maps: The idea of numbering trail intersections in field and on maps was discussed and approved.
11. Whitney Conservation Area: Still waiting to hear about Trails Grant. Contingency plan to fund fence and parking lot is needed. Minimum cost of fence is 3k. Eagle Scout bridge expected to be complete by end of June. LSC authorized \$100 donation to help Scout with cost of materials.
12. Interviews: MP to contact Gail H. and Mr. Howarth. MS to contact Sonny Poirier, Jane Richards, and Anne Foye (Stefans).
13. Work Day: July 8 to flag the Whitney-Warren Brook trail; July 15 to clear the trail. [8 a.m.]
14. Safety: Need to use proper safety equipment when using power tools (chaps, helmets); keep others away from power equipment in use; buddy system, carry first aid kits; 2-way radios (buy three), encourage use of safety glasses, use permethion to deter ticks; hold safety briefing before each work event.
15. Pratt Hill: Doug Harris would like LSC to help monitor the tribes newly acquired property...occasional walkthroughs.
16. Check list for Stefans/Community garden handed out for review and discussion at next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

July 5, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room; 7:30 pm

Members Present: Matthew Bachtold, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

1. Stefans Community Garden: BVT is using one of their two plots this year and have planted potatoes. In general gardens are growing well! Three frames are not filled but there is no demand for them this year. The picnic table has a broken leg (most likely vandalism). MS to set up a display at Lisa Stratton's Farmers Market (the market is in parking lot behind Stratton's store on Main Street).
2. Minutes for May 3 and June 6 reviewed and approved.
3. SWF/Whitney: MS ordered wood for railing (end of FY 12 expense). MS is investigating purchase of gravel for the parking area. Signage needed to deter trespassing on SWF. Recreational Trail Grant awards expected later in July. No new info on SWF sale. Site visit needed to flag Whitney West trails. Gail Harrington is willing to be interviewed regarding her time at SWF.
4. Stefans Wetland Delineation (for trails): Site visit planned for July 22 at 8 am.
5. Peppercorn CA: Mill River Bridge repair project (Nolan Hobart Eagle Scout Project). The access agreement between town and National Grid moving forward. Town Counsel has reviewed draft agreement and provided a few comments, but no show stoppers.
6. Master Task List: Marcella working on it for SWF.
7. Discussion about how to attract more volunteers.
8. Long general discussion about CRs and the extent of legal protection in place for various town properties.
9. Discussion of Groton, MA ConCom timber harvest. Possible site visit by LSC to Groton discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

August 2, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room; 7:35 pm

Members Present: Matthew Bachtold, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

1. Stefans Community Garden: Most gardens are doing well, just one is unused. Most people are carrying in water. Suggestion made to dedicate one plot for growing garlic as a potential fund raiser next year (revolving fund required). Discussion about establishing a community garden at the Heritage Park. MS to attend HC meeting in August. C. Henderson is in charge of landscaping at the Heritage Park
2. Stefans: MP and SH to flag wetlands along the cart path (not done in July as planned).
3. Peppercorn CA Stewardship Plan: BT and CT to work on history. MP to provide MS with write-ups previously done by Tom Dodd and others. GIS maps needed. Problems/Opportunities: Pipe gates and signage needed to deter use of motor vehicles; establish trail to 2nd Peppercorn Hill (possible western long range view); trail relocations near bog where there are many wet spots. Site visit scheduled for August 12th, 9 am (meet at Crockett Road parking area).
4. Whitney CA: Estimated cost of fencing is about \$10,000, including installation. An RFP is needed since cost is over \$5,000. Need to attempt to get three quotes. Fundraising for fence and parking area – letter to go out in August. The parking area and east side fencing on store lot should be a priority. Need to ask new owner (Potheau) about what type of fencing he would prefer; ask George Paterson if he could move rock pile located in the easement (the rocks were dumped there by RN, and apparently came from the SWF wall along North Street which was breached to provide access to the farm stand). Motion made and approved to ask ConCom for \$2000 to help fund the parking lot.
5. Interview: Gail Harrington (SWF) interviewed by MS, BT, and MP. Poirier interviews on back burner, Gail H. told us of a Poirier living in Poland, ME who should be interviewed.
6. ADA Compliance: Town needs a policy to be in compliance with Act. MA Audubon has a policy which may serve as a model. It allows “powered mobility devices”. Electric vehicles are limited to 4 mph, 500 lbs, and a 36” width. We need to identify ADA trails. Dennis, MA has a Brail Trail.
7. Stefans: Invasive control discussion. Herbicide to be applied this fall to control rose, followed by a late fall mowing of as many fields as possible.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Meeting Minutes - Upton Land Stewardship Committee

September 9, 2012, 7.30 PM
Nipmuc High school Gathering Room

Members Present:

Matthew Bachtold; Scott Heim; Mike Penko; Marcella Stasa; Bill Taylor

1. MLT Whitney Fundraiser: Letters to individual and organizations in prep. Envelopes with MLT letterhead ordered.
2. Whitney: Goal – get fence set up this fall, parking area is secondary concern.
3. Whitney Yard Sale fundraiser (at Stefans): Ok received from TM. Date is Saturday October 13th (rain day October 14th). Need to spruce up Stefans (mow parking lot, etc).
4. Heritage Day (Saturday September 29th): Open Space/ LSC will share a table.
5. Warren Brook Open Space/FUSF Discovery Hike: scheduled for Sunday September 30
6. Community Garden: A gardener asked for two beds next year. Committee voted to guarantee one. Two unfinished beds need to be filled with soil. Area needs to be weeded with weed whacker (MS).
7. Work days schedule: Warren Brook/Whitney 9am September 16 and 1pm September 8. Community Garden: 9am - noon October 7.
8. Town Crier: MS to post article looking for local land stewards for individual properties.
9. Stefans: Mowing trails. Current method (using weed whacker) is a problem - exposure to poison ivy. LSC should consider purchasing a mower (e.g. Billy Goat brush cutter) and trailer. It could also be used to maintain fields at Whitney and Heritage Park. Possible town meeting article.
10. Stefans: Mowing fields. Whether or not to mow this fall discussed. Mow all fields or just some of them to maintain a diversity of habitats? Can mow ca. 10 days after treating invasives. MS to contact mowing contractor (Rick Rainville). No decision. Invasives to be treated in September/October this year.
11. Snow removal: Talk with new DPW director about plowing Stefans lot and new owner of SWF store lot about plowing the Whitney Parking Area (once it exists).
12. Whitney parking area: Ask George P to grade after fence is up? Need parking available once fence is up to discourage on-street parking.
13. Stefans scout project: Scout on board to build a bridge across stream. Need NOI for all Stefans trail work in wetlands or buffer zone. MP needs to finish delineations.
14. Peppercorn Hill: National Grid has signed license agreement with town to allow repair of the Mill River Bridge and use of trails on grid property.
15. Stefans safety mirrors: Motion made and passed to expend \$350 for new (unbreakable) mirrors. Previously installed mirrors were vandalized.
16. ADA: Need to id trail loops for ADA use. Oak Knoll?, Peppercorn Hill?, Goss Pond/South Street Park (someday if land is purchased)?? Walk areas in late October/November to scout out potential ADA trails and needed improvements.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

October 4, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room; 7:30 pm

Members Present: Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

Guest: Alan Miano

1. New Town Website update : AM - website to go live in mid October. There will be a subscription feature for news and events that LSC/OSC/ConCom may find useful.
2. Stefans Farm Community Garden: Fall cleanup work date is Sunday October 7. Need to fill beds, remove weeds, and mow parking lot.
3. Sweetwilliam Farm Pasture: There have been complaints about it not being mowed (aesthetics). Animals are still using the pasture but there are tall weeds and grasses. Rob N. had not mowed it as expected. Need to review SWF CR regarding field maintenance. LSC to take no action at this time.
4. Howarth Glen field: The field needs to be mowed (last mowed in 2010).
5. Stefans Farm fields: also need to be mowed. What is the acreage? Last time it cost about \$600 to mow all the fields on west side of Mechanic Street. Mow in late fall to minimize risk to eastern Box Turtles.
6. Stefans: MP needs to delineate wetlands for trail improvement NOI.
7. Peppercorn and Warren Brook: MS to hold off on recording COC's.
8. Peppercorn Hill: Signage at the Crockett Road parking lot has fallen down. Posts still up and it should be possible to reuse them to hang new sign. MS to work on sign.
9. Warren Brook: Oak Knoll "trail" sign removed. This prompted some on-line research regarding ownership of the access strip to Warren Brook CA. According to research and town treasurer (KG) town does not own it. It s still owned by Ole Silver Maple, which no longer exists (dissolved in early 1990's). Taxes have not been paid. LSC voted to ask Ken G. to formerly acquire property for the town (unanimous). Bill/Marcella to send a letter to KG.
10. Peppercorn Hill: Boy Scout bridge project on Nation Grid property moving along. MESA review complete. ConCon hearing for the project is next Wednesday.
11. Suggestion: Add Boy Scout project recognition page on LSC webpage. 7 projects completed in recent years; post brief description of project, pictures, etc.
12. ADA: Trails policy needed. MA Audubon has a policy that may be useful as a template. Policy will need to be reviewed by Town Counsel. Question: would requiring access to be via electric vehicles be discriminatory (EV's are still quite expensive).
13. Whitney Fence/Parking Area Fundraiser: Yard sale planed for October 13. AMC Worcester is a possible source of funding.
14. Forest Policy: ConCom is still working on it. LSC will need to do a first-cut on land classification to designate reserves.
15. Heritage Park CR: MLT to hold CR. An individual contacted by CT indicates that Whitney CR historic preservation language is not robust enough to protect the Heritage Park chamber and ceremonial stone landscapes in general.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 pm.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

November 1, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room; 7:30 pm (no quorum until 8:05)

Members Present: Scott Heim, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

1. SWF/Whitney Fence: Two quotes received: \$9,700 from Misty River View and \$18,900 from Reliable Fence. One more response is expected. The Misty River quote is dated and needs to be confirmed as still viable. It was decided that 12 ft. post spacing is appropriate. To date, approximately \$13,500 towards this effort has been raised or donated to MLT.
2. SWF/Whitney Fence: Motion made to authorize MS to award fence installation contract with 12 ft. post spacing and no gate. Contract to be awarded to lowest bidder unless installation schedule proposed by bidder is not acceptable. Unanimous favorable vote. MLT will write the checks; proof of liability insurance required.
3. SWF/Whitney Fence: A donation towards fence from AMC (Worcester Chapter) may be forthcoming. They contributed \$5,000 (to SVT) towards SWF/Whitney acquisition costs.
4. Peppercorn Hill: Boy Scout bridge project on National Grid property is complete. A wide beam from the old bridge was dropped off at Stefans. It is composed of Eastern Hemlock and is notched, suggesting it was once part of a timber frame building.
5. Stefans Farm: Eagle Scout bridge project - 16 ft intermittent stream crossing west of the uppermost field. Permitting - RFD probably ok. Site visit scheduled for November 10 (9 am) to check out the crossing and delineate wetlands and locate a mitigation area in vicinity of pond for other trail work.
6. South Street/Goss Pond: BT and MS to cut trail from Goss Pond to the South Street Property for Open House planned by Rec Com.
7. Whitney/Parking Area Fundraiser: BT to prepare description of proposed work and obtain quotes.
8. General: need to walk trails to access post Hurricane Sandy clean up needs.
9. Minutes from October 4 meeting approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

December 6, 2012

Nipmuc High School Gathering Room; 7:30 pm

Members Present: Matthew Bachtold, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

Guest: Cindy Maher

1. Whitney Conservation Area: Installation of east-west pasture fence by contractor is underway. AMC Worcester awarded \$2,500 grant for the fence and will pay contractor directly. Balance to be paid by Metacomet Land Trust. A total of about \$15,850 has been raised for the fence and parking lot. The pasture fence contract cost \$8,700. The LSC will need to install ca. 150 ft. of N-S fencing along eastern end of Whitney CA to deter pets and people from entering the pasture. Some of this work will be within or near wetlands and we need to check to see if permit is required (possible agricultural exemption?). The LSC will also need to install railing along the top of entire fence. Work day planned for Saturday, December 8 (9 am).
2. Stefans Farm Community Garden: Mostly prepared for winter. MB and MS will finish prep.
3. The LSC was introduced to Cindy Maher. She and her husband Dennis are interested in becoming stewards of the Warren Brook Conservation Area. Cindy would also like to join the LSC and will send a letter of interest to ConCom and BOS.
4. Stefans Farm: Most of the upper (west side) fields have been mowed. Some fields were too wet to mow or could not be accessed by equipment due to woody growth. Work days needed to clear woody vegetation from field edges.
5. Stefans Farm: Discussion about implementing MA DFW recommendations for turtle habitat, expanding fields, and alternative access to the fields. MA DFW report to be placed on town website.
6. Stefans Farm: East side field also needs to be mowed (woody vegetation is encroaching into field near West River). There are funds available for Wood Turtle habitat work or studies in the NHESP landfill closure account. Upton can make recommendations on how this money is spent, NHESP approval required [ca. 25K is available].
7. Stefans Trail Improvement: Wetland delineated and GPS'd by SH and MP. Potential wetland mitigation area identified.
8. Stefans Trail Improvement: Boy Scout Bridge is being planned. The scout wanted to cut on-site cedar for supports or use aluminum. LSC did not support either proposal.
9. Howarth Glen Conservation Area: The field was mowed by Mr. Howarth in November.
10. Whitney Conservation Area: Letters of thanks/acknowledgment to donors drafted by MP and to be sent out in December (MS to review; MLT president to sign).
11. Former Sweet William Farm Store Lot: Construction of new residence is underway. Parking and trail easement blocked by dumpster and construction materials. WT to contact owner and request removal of items from the easement land.
12. Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area: Vista pruning site visit set for January 13th.
13. Sweetwilliam Farm: Signs donated by BSTRA to alert riders not to trespass on private property have been installed. BSTRA noted that passages through SWF stone walls need to be widened to 5 ft. for horses. A total of three stone wall crossing are needed on easement land between SWF fields and North Street.

14. Howarth Conservation Area: The boundary to an abutting parcel has been surveyed by owner (Alan Miano) and we need to reroute a few hundred feet of trail that followed an existing cart path from private property onto the Howarth Conservation Area.
15. Oak Knoll Access to Warren Brook Conservation Area: Ken G. (town treasurer) is working to obtain town ownership of the orphan strip of land.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.