

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes
Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Present: Dawn Genes (Chair), Catherine Fisher, Mark Nelson, Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman

Alternate Member: Laurel Cox

Emeritus Member: Anne Tappan

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Motion: To approve the Minutes of the December 19 Meeting. D. Shay moved to accept; D. Sugerman seconded; the motion was approved by the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

Edit to 2022/23 Town Report: The LCC approved Mimi Winder's request to change "Management of Town Conservation Land" to "Stewardship of Town Conservation Land"

Monthly Reports

Treasurer's/Social Media: Amanda Gourgue submitted via email. Report attached.

Education and Outreach: C. Fisher submitted via email. Report attached.

C. Fisher reported that two participants in the Library Preschool Walks, Kalika Bower and Jordan Stinson, are interested in becoming alternate LCC members. Both will attend the LCC's February meeting.

Trails: D. Sugerman submitted via email. Report attached.

D. Sugerman reported that QR are in the works, three for points of interest (POI) in Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF), and three for POI's in the Town Forest. A. Tappan suggested that non-permanent fixtures, such as areas being managed (as in MJMF), could merit QR codes.

ZBA&PB: January PB meeting concealed. A. Tappan reported that Planning and Zoning Administrator, Caren Rossi determined that the storage trailer issue on the Rte. 4 parcel near the traffic circle does not need to go to the ZBA for wet soils impact because the trailers are a mobile unit, not a structure. A. Tappan will attend February's ZBA meeting. A. Tappan will create a template for ZBA and PB projects and she and M. Nelson will meet to go over protocol.

Monitoring: D. Shay reported on his research into the use of drones as a monitoring tool, particularly for conservation easements (CE's) that are difficult to access. The FAA requires drone users to have a Remote Pilot Certificate. One possibility, Upstream Lens, is a subscription service and pricey. To better assess how useful this technology may be for the LCC, Michael Routhier, Information Technologist Manager at UNH's Earth Systems Research Center has offered to give a demonstration monitoring one or two CE's.

Stewardship: Mimi Winder submitted via email. Report attached.

Volunteers: A. Tappan reported that the abutters to the Garrity property are interested in doing work there and that other abutters to CE's might be interested in doing similar work. C. Fisher noted that, in past years, the LCC has given the Garrity abutters permission to work on the property.

Motion: To reimburse M. Winder \$27.99 for wire fencing to protect trees from beaver damage at Wadleigh Falls Canoe Launch. D. Genes moves to approve; C. Fisher seconds; motion approved by the LCC.

OLD BUSINESS:

Barry Conservation Camp: D. Genes reported that notices in the E-Crier and the LCC's Facebook page had one camper respond immediately. The ads will continue to run, and should others express interest, the LCC is able to send several children to camp.

Natural Resources Inventory (NRI): D. Genes reported the NRI committee has met twice and will meet again on January 27 to finalize wording of the online survey. A timeline of the project was provided. Mary Woodward will draft an intro to the survey. Links to the survey will be posted in the E-Crier. Participation in the survey will be promoted during the Deliberative Session on Feb. 3. The next NRI meeting will be held on February 14.

Durgin Preserve: D. Genes reported that the Department of Environmental Services (DES) forwarded a design plan for bank stabilization as well as a list of suitable native shore land/riparian buffer plants. C. Fisher and A. Tappan will review the species list and make recommendations.

Old Mill Reserve (OMR) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) project timeline for 2024: D. Genes provided a timeline showing when and where work will be done at Old Mill and the costs involved. First on the to-do list: making a list of contractors to get bids from, comes up in March.

Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF) Forest Management Update: A. Tappan reported on the progress made thus far in the timber-cutting project. Notices have been posted in the E-Crier and onsite to alert the public.

NEW BUSINESS:

Connect to Protect: Funded by the NH Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan, this program would assist the LCC in setting conservation priorities and help to identify Lee's most important resource areas and how to protect them. Autumn Scott, with Strafford Regional Planning Commission, has offered to write up the application.

Pathways for People and Nature: D. Genes shared this one page mission statement from the Newmarket Conservation Commission, which outlines goals for protecting resources, providing habitat stewardship and providing opportunities for public enjoyment of these resources.

Timber Cutting on SPNHF-held CE on Cox property: L. Cox reported that a Notice of Intent to Cut has been filed for the erstwhile Dugas property, now part of Tuckaway Farm. All cutting will be within the exclusion area. Charles Mareno is preparing a forest management plan for all three CE's on the property.

Next Meeting: February 20, 2024

Submitted by: Catherine Fisher

Monthly Report, January 16, 2024

Submitted by Amanda Gourgue

Treasurer's Report

David Allan Fund Account \$2,703.08

LCC Account \$12,977.50

Total \$15,680.63

We had no transactions since our last meeting.

Social Media Report

December 18th - January 14th

People Reached 3,800

Page Visits 170

Page Likes 1

Our most popular post was the Nature Notes from January 8th (The Unlikely Life of the Umbilical Oak). It reached 2,255 people with 47 reactions, 21 comments, and 5 shares. YAY!

Education/Outreach Report for Meeting of January 16, 2024

Submitted by: Catherine Fisher

Activity since meeting of December 19, 2023

Articles Written: The following three articles were written and posted on the LCC's Facebook page and in the E-Crier:

Nature Notes: "The Unlikely Life of the Umbilical Oak: Part 1" (Jan. 8); "The Unlikely Life of the Umbilical Oak: Part II, Girdling"; (Jan. 15)

Random Conservation Notes: "Wild Gardens: A Beautiful Grouping of Different Cladonia Lichens" (Jan 10)

Events since December 19:

Lee Library: A Preschool walk was held on December 21. This was very well attended with 10 adults and an equal number of children.

Upcoming Events:

Lee Library: A preschool walk and an afterschool walk are planned for January. Date TBD

Maud Jones Geology Walk: Depending upon the weather and the timber harvest planned for MJMF, Wally Bothner and I and possibly Don Quigley will do a preliminary walk this month. If the stars align, we'll make plans for a winter walk; if not, we'll schedule the walk for early spring. I will be seeing Wally this weekend, and will know better what our plans are after that.

Tracks and Trees Walk: This was discussed at our last meeting, and I'm game, but will wait to see what is happening with the above walk; "Tracks and Trees" may be slated for February.

Thank you Notes to Easement Property Owners: I've started writing these and hope to have them finished and in the mail by the end of the month.

Trails Committee Report to Conservation Commission

Submitted by Deb Sugerman

January 16, 2024

Trees Across Trails:

- We are monitoring trees falling on hiking trails. Martin Thornton and Chris Regan removed one on the Ridge Trail in Little River Park Jan. 5, 2024. Martin was the Sawyer and Chris was the Swamper, following the current Chainsaw Policies.
- If you are out walking and see a fallen tree, please contact either Deb Sugerman or Martin Thornton.

New Trails Project:

- Naomi Alldredge toured Garrity Reserve with Anne Tappan and abutters on January 12, 2024.
- We have toured all the properties agreed on with the CC, except James Farm, which will be completed as soon as it stops raining and the water level recedes since it is a wet area.
- At the 1.24.24 TC meeting, we will look at all the data compiled and begin to work on a proposal. The proposal will be presented to the CC at our Feb. meeting.

Weather Related:

- The bridges on the Little River Trail have been underwater a lot during the past month, and have been holding perfectly.

No Trespassing Sign on the Little River Trail:

- There has been a lot of chatter on the NeighborLee FB site about the No Trespassing sign wondering if the TC is going to put in a trail to connect the end of that trail to the field. It might be worthwhile for the CC to consider all our options.

Stewardship Report

Submitted by Mimi Winder

January 16, 2024

Wadleigh Falls Canoe Launch: Catherine and I installed fencing around 3 trees to protect them from beaver damage.

Motion: To reimburse M. Winder \$27.99 for wire fencing to protect trees from beaver damage at Wadleigh Falls Canoe Launch.

Stewardship Action Plan for 2024: I am working on a project timeline for Stewardship projects to review at our February meeting. Let me know if there are any projects or areas of concern that you feel should be considered in the coming year.