

LEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Site Walk Minutes February 8, 2021

Members present: D. Sugerman, D. Genes, C. Fisher, A. Tappan, D. Shay

Others present: David Price – DES East Region Supervisor, Stefanie Giallongo – DES Wetland Permitting Specialist, Marc Jacobs – Certified Wetland Scientist

Purpose: Conduct on site review of the Little River Trail and proposed bridges (wetland crossings) and permitting issues

The group walked the trail beginning at the kiosk. LCC members described the information panels proposed for the kiosk and the numbered sign posts in the habitats that the trail passes through.

In the floodplain area, where the wetland crossings are needed, concerns about the structures were discussed. Boardwalks or foot bridges are needed at two locations. One is to replace an old deteriorating metal culvert and the other is to provide a crossing that is safe for walkers and will minimize impact to the surrounding wetland. Since this is an active floodplain DES noted that the bridges need to be designed with an attachment element that keeps the structure from being swept away during high water. The permit application should focus specifically on the crossings, rather than on the trail as no changes to the existing trail are proposed and no soil disturbance would occur on the existing trail. The square foot impact of the project includes any part of the bridge structure, including decking. There was a question about if the bridges need to be ADA compliant. No, the trail to this location is challenging and to make changes would create significant disturbance to the natural areas. Other trails at LRP are accessible.

The trail dead-ends at the Little River. LCC members explained that this trail has existed for decades and is in use during every season. Trying to terminate the trail to avoid the need for wetland crossing would likely not be successful; people would just make their way around a barrier to get to the river. LCC members, along with a professional forester and hydrogeologist, recently investigated options for a loop trail. There are rivulets and wet areas, lots of blow downs and leaning trees indicating unstable banks left by the former gravel operation. No viable option was found. S. Giallongo stated having seen the site that the in-and-out trail is well established and has a strong educational component; therefore its current configuration is not a problem.

S. Giallongo agreed that the project is viable, i.e. permissible. She will check into the level of the project to determine the type of permit needed. It may not be a major project. It may simply require a trails notification. There may be applicable Env-Wt 407 exceptions. A wetland functional assessment (WFA) may not be needed even though areas within NHDES jurisdiction involve Priority Resource Areas (PRA).

Submitted by: _____

Anne Tappan

Minutes approved at the 1 March 2021 Conservation Commission meeting.