

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes of August 2, 2021

Members Present: Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Dawn Genes (Chair), Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan

Alternate Member: Mimi Winder

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Approval of Minutes of June 7, 2021: D. Sugerman moved to accept the minutes as written, and A. Tappan seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: In an email sent to LCC members, Treasurer, Amanda Gourgue, reported that the following transactions which had been approved by the LCC at the July meeting:

Martin Thornton	\$96.15
Chris Regan	\$54.93
Cohen Steel Supply	\$522.00
Deb Sugerman	\$90.59
Tommy Dock Products	\$3,801.62

The LCC's account balance remains at \$4,763.39 and is comprised of:

David Allan Fund Account Balance:	\$2,686.69
LCC Account Balance:	\$2,076.70

Easement Monitoring: Properties monitored in July: Henry (7/8), Cox (7/14), James Farm (7/21), DeMeritt Hill Farm (7/28). Nothing of concern was noted on any of these properties. Monitoring visits scheduled for August: Ellis Oyster River (8/4), Woodall/Claridge (8/25), other non-residential easements may be done as weather/schedules permit. The LCC discussed the possibility of monitoring the easement at Echo Ridge; D. Genes will contact Caren Rossi (Planning, Zoning, and Health Administrator) to get her input.

Education/Outreach:

LCC Facebook Page: In an email sent to LCC members, A. Gourgue reported the following figures (June 7 - July 4):

People reached	2,019 (down 29%)
Post Engagements	1,497 (up 206%)
Page Likes	12 (up 550%)

Monitoring Articles: C. Fisher reported that written four articles, one for each of the properties listed above. These have appeared in the E-Crier, and A. Gourgue has been posting them on the LCC and NeighborLee Facebook pages. The article written about the Cox property was shared by the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC), with kudos to the LCC.

Seasonal Children's Walks: C. Fisher reported that she will, in conjunction with the Town Library, lead seasonal children's walks in the Town Forest. She will meet with Ruth Eifert (Director) and Judy Belanger (Youth Services) on August 3 to discuss particulars.

Select Board: S. Bugbee reported that Town Administrator, Julie Glover, has given her notice. Until a new Administrator is hired, Office Manager, Denise Duval, will fill in. Public Works Director, Steve Bullek, has been put in charge of Building Maintenance.

OLD BUSINESS:

Conservation Projects Underway:

Lee Trails Committee (LTC): D. Sugerman reported on the following developments and activities:

Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF):

Parking Lot: Though the State gave the Town a new lot access point on Turtle Pond Rd., upon looking it over, D. Sugerman, C. Rossi, and S. Bullek determined that creating a lot there would be too difficult and expensive. After visiting the parking lot on Garrity Rd., they agreed that expanding it to accommodate six cars was the better solution.

New Trail: Work on marking the new trail will take place in the fall, once the trees have dropped their leaves.

Little River Park (LRP): Trail Tales Grant from Library: Fifteen story boards will be put on the Woods Trail. Paul McCormiskey is working on getting the trail groomed and sites cleared for the story boards.

Town Forest Complex (TFC):

REACH Program: Nine students and two staff members from Durham Parks and Recreation's summer camp program will learn about trail stewardship, work on trail maintenance, and build two Aldo Leopold benches; one bench will be placed near the bog platform and the other at the old dam site. Four LTC volunteers will assist.

Bridges: D. Shay is submitting the application to replace seven bridges; all will be replaced over the course of five years. C. Fisher asked why the bridge on the trail to Wheelwright Pond isn't included on the list, as it is in very poor condition. S. Bugbee suggests that it be added to the list.

LRP Trails Project: D. Sugerman reported that the DES permit has been submitted. C. Fisher reported that the kiosk panel has been completed and that the designer will have the first draft ready in a week or so.

TFC Survey Maps: D. Genes reported that bids for this work were received from Jones and Beach Engineers, Inc. (\$3,000.00) and Landry Surveying LCC (\$1600.00). A. Tappan asked if the map will include internal parcel borders, and show exclusions for the Public Safety Complex and the Highway Dept. The question as to whether the LCC will receive a digital copy and could then print the map in house.

BioBlitz: A. Tappan reported that she, C. Fisher and M. Winder met with Strafford County Forestry Field Specialist, Rebecca Digirolomo and U.S. Forest Service Entomologist, Marc Digirolomo, and decided that LRP was a better BioBlitz venue than the TFC. Beetles will be the focus of this survey, and M. Digirolomo put two insect raps in place to get a sense of what species are frequenting areas of the park. Each trap has a sign explaining its purpose along with a web address that provides additional information. Registration is required, and the event has been posted on Nature Groupie and the UNH Extension Events Calendar webpage; R. Digirolomo has provided a copy of the write-up which will be posted weekly in the Lee E-Crier.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fall Project Planning:

Invasive Plant Treatment: D. Genes reported that she had been in touch with Dennis Hayward of Biospray. The LCC is in their work queue, and a DES permit has been applied for. Over the past several years, Biospray has treated knotweed at Joe Ford Wildlife

Sanctuary (JFWS) and along the roadside at the Rothwell Reserve; bittersweet and other invasives have been treated in the old orchard and surrounding forest at the TFC.

Mowing:

JFWS: A. Tappan reported that Chuck Cox has done the mowing; she will contact him to see if this is something he is still interested in. The work is best done in late October or early November. Given the amount of rain this summer, there is concern about the amount of plant growth in the field as well as how wet the area is. She will also check for fallen trees that need removal. Another matter that needs clarification is C. Cox's use of the buildings on the property to store his mowing/farm equipment; she will check to see if there is any document concerning this.

Alternative strategies were discussed. One option would be to have the mowing done by the Dept. of Public Works, or other locals who do this kind of work. Another is to use rotational grazing. The terms of the easement will need to be checked to determine if his option is in compliance, and Southeast Land Trust (SELT) would need to give its approval. If this option is permissible, D. Genes suggested contacting the Agricultural Commission for information concerning the conservation benefits of grazing. D. Genes suggested contacting NHACC to see if other conservation commissions have used rotational grazing. This topic will be discussed further at next month's meeting.

Lee Five Corners Reserve (L5CR): A. Tappan reported that, in late July at L5CR, she met with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services Biologist, Ted Kendziora, to discuss the 10 year habitat management contract ending in November 2021. A report will be given at a later meeting. During the site visit, the adjoining Old Mill Reserve (OMR) was discussed, including maintaining that property as early successional habitat. T. Kendziora suggested that, through his involvement in the New England cottontail restoration project, as he has worked with Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), he may be able to get this work to go forward.

Old Mill Reserve: D. Genes reported that she and C. Fisher met with Don Quigley regarding cutting some of the large young pines on the property. He suggested that the work might be done as part of the Thompson School's Chainsaw Safety Program. D. Genes reported that S. Bullek had suggested that several Trails Committee members might attend the program and then subsequently deputized by the Town to do this type of work. D. Genes has been trying to contact NRCS to see if they have funds that can be used towards early succession maintenance. This topic will be discussed further at next month's meeting.

LRP: A. Tappan reported that locust trees have grown taller on the slope above the early succession habitat and that the path is becoming overgrown. She suggested that, sometime in November, the LCC hold an education/work day with LTC volunteers to cut down the smaller locusts, remove any invasive plants, and widen the trail.

Eversource: To facilitate putting in a new utility pole, Eversource asked the Town to sign an agreement allowing them to dismantle, then rebuild, a stone wall on the Henry easement.

NH Dept. of Transportation (NHDOT) Mitigation Projects Request: In anticipation of planned repaving work in Lee, NHDOT has requested a list of the Town's preferred mitigation projects. There is an October 5 deadline. LCC members discussed putting mitigation funds toward the costs of putting a conservation easement on a property of interest.

NHDOT Bridge Replacement on Rt. 125: Consultants for NHDOT have requested input regarding the project's impact on streams/wetlands.

Durgin Park Dock: D. Genes reported that S. Bullek had contacted her regarding requests being made that the dock at Durgin Park be replaced by something similar to the one installed in the bog. LCC members discussed questions of whether a DES-issued wetland permit would be required as well as problems with overuse at the park. Additionally, the LCC discussed increased management of the area with upgraded facilities. Public use of the area has already increased significantly. It was decided that more information is needed about the property - whether it is under conservation easement and whether it is considered part of the TFC, and which entity (LCC, Recreation Committee) is responsible for upkeep of the area.

Kennard Property: Acquired by SELT in 2018, a sign has been installed on the property: The Langley and Kennard Forest. Casual public access is permitted and a few parking spaces will be put in.

Next Meeting: To take advantage of the last days of summer, and to enable LCC members to do an on-site assessment of the placement of the kiosk at LRP vis a vis the expanded parking lot, our next meeting will be held at:

4:00 p.m. at Little River Park on August 31, 2021

Submitted by:

Catherine Fisher