

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes of September 28, 2021

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

Guest: Mark Nelson

Approval of Minutes of August 31, 2021: D. Sugerman moved to accept the minutes as written, and D. Shay seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by members of the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: In an email sent to LCC members, Treasurer, Amanda Gourgue, reported that there had been no transactions in June. The LCC's account balance is \$12,599.80 and is comprised of:

David Allan Fund Account Balance: \$2,686.69

LCC Account Balance: \$9,913.11

A. Gourgue reported two transactions for this month: 2nd half of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee's (LRAC) grant in the amount of \$5,937.50 was deposited. The invoice, in the amount of \$7,328.76, from Wetlands Scientist, Marc Jacobs, was paid.

Easement Monitoring: Properties Monitored in September: Schulz/Friedlander (9/1), Humphrey (9/8), Brisard (9/15), Noble Farm (9/22).

Monitoring visits scheduled for September/October Chisholm (9/29), Verette (10/6), Schultz (10/13); Lee/Hartgerink (10/20 or sooner).

Education/Outreach:

Social Media: From August 30 - September 26

People reached 2,276 (down 59% from prior month)

Post Engagements 7587 (up 4% from prior month)

Page Likes 7 (same as prior month)

The most popular post was Bill's celebration: 893 reach, 87 Post Clicks, and 72 Reactions, Comments & Shares.

Monitoring Articles: C. Fisher reported that she had written five articles. Four for each of the properties monitored in September and an additional article. All five articles appeared on the LCC Facebook page and the four monitoring articles appeared in the E-Crier.

Library Walks: C. Fisher reported that, in conjunction with the Lee Library, she had led two hour-long seasonal nature walks. The first was an afterschool walk with about twelve children aged from kindergarten to fourth grade. The second walk was a preschool walk with parents, which was very well attended with fifteen participants. Two similar walks are scheduled for December.

Insect I.D. Educational Workshop at Little River Park (LRP), September 18: A. Tappan reported that the event, led by U.S. Forest Service Entomologist Marc DiGirolomo, had 20 participants, the maximum allowed, with ages ranging from children to older adults. All enjoyed learning about collecting and having the opportunity to use the equipment M. DiGirolomo had provided. Collection activities, both before and during the program, resulted in 120 species found on site, two of them State records. The diversity of habitats, and particularly the sandy, early succession area, has proved a fruitful area of study, and M. DiGirolomo has requested permission to continue collecting both at LRP and, perhaps, at Lee Five Corners (L5C). M. DiGirolomo will notify the LCC if any method of collecting other than nets and beat sheets are used. The LCC approved this request. C. Fisher reported that preliminary plans have been made to hold a Moth Night sometime in 2022.

FY23 Town Lands Conservation Projects Underway: Monthly Reports; Long-Range and FY23 Work and Budget Needs:

Town Forest Complex (TFC):

Monthly report: D. Sugerman reported that she purchased markers for the two benches built by students participating in the REACH program. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) permit by notification for bridge replacement has been issued and will go to the Select Board (BOS). The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant wasn't awarded; D. Sugerman reported that there had been a lot of competition and that grants for work on trails are more often funded - she will look into whether bridge replacement would be more likely to be funded by a grant from this program. A. Tappan suggested that the Moose Plate grant program may provide an additional source of funding for some of the planned projects. D. Sugerman will talk to LTC members at their next meeting to arrange a time when LCC members can view a proposed trail re-routing. Regarding the emerald ash borer (EAB) research project, A. Tappan reported that trees involved in the study will be felled on October 5. She will notify (Denise Duval (Interim Town Administrator), Steve Bullek (Public Works Director), Tom Dronsfield (Chief of Police), and Caren Rossi (Planning and Zoning Administrator). Trees will be peeled and EAB larvae removed and put in vials. Volunteers are needed to assist with both moving felled trees and peeling. A. Tappan will take pictures to accompany an E-Crier article about the work.

Long-range and FY23 Plans: Anticipated work over the next several years was discussed. D. Sugerman reported that over a five-year period, the Lee Trails Committee (LTC) anticipates replacing eight bridges, with one or two being constructed each year. C. Fisher reported that all-terrain bicyclists were becoming more frequent, and suggested that the LCC should consider signage prohibiting bicycles; D. Sugerman recommended that, to be sure that bikes can be prohibited, the terms of the easement need to be consulted. D. Sugerman reported that, over a three year period, the LTC will construct three kiosks at the Steven's Field, Library, and Rita Lane trail heads. D. Sugerman discussed the need to have a map of the TF trail system made. D. Genes suggested she look into getting maps made for this and other trail systems on Town-owned conserved lands by Strafford Regional Planning (SRPC). D. Sugerman suggested that all maps and information needs to be posted on the LCC webpage. D. Sugerman reported that paint, hardware (nails, screws, etc.) and other miscellaneous supplies should be added to the budget list.

FY23 Projects and Budget for Town Forest

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Costs:</u>
Bridges: 2 bridges	\$1600.00 (\$800/per bridge)
Signage (5 at each trail head)	100.00 (\$20/per sign)
Kiosk	1350.00
Map (SRPC)	750.00
EAB and other invasives control	TBD

Mills Reserve/Little River Park (LRP):

Monthly Report:

River Trail Project:

Kiosk Panel: D. Sugerman printer's proof of the panel has been approved; the finished panel will be available for pick up on October 13 or 14. LCC will assist in collecting the panel from the printer and putting it in place on the kiosk. D. Sugerman made a motion to approve payment of the invoice from panel-designer Cathy Arakelian in the amount of \$13.95.00, and C. Fisher seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by members of the LCC.

Department of Environmental Services (DES) Mitigation Fee: D. Sugerman moved to pay the mitigation fee to DES an amount up to, and not exceeding, \$399.00; C. Fisher seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by members of the LCC.

QR Codes for Self-Guided Trail Markers: D. Sugerman reported that Amanda and her designer are working on the QR codes; they should be completed soon, at which point D. Sugarman will give the link to Denise so it can be put on the LCC webpage.

Bridges: The construction of two foot bridges remains to be done, preferably this fall, but by June 30 at the latest. The costs for constructing two bridges are estimated to be \$1600.00. Members discussed what would be the best design for these bridges, with anchoring to secure them during flooding a primary concern. A. Tappan suggested

contacting Phil Auger (Southeast Land Trust (SELT)) regarding his design recommendations, and C. Fisher suggested asking him to view the site with LCC and LTC members.

Long-range and FY23 Plans: D. Sugerman reported that a kiosk at the Forest Loop trailhead is needed, and erosion on the trail needs to be addressed somehow. She suggested that additional signage is needed to alert trail-users to erosion areas. A. Tappan reported that field plants and invasive plant species need to be trimmed along the trail through the early succession habitat; in the past the trail has been mowed, but she suggested that LCC members and/or LTC members hold a work day to identify and cut back problem plants. She reported that the stand of black locusts growing on the slope abutting the trail need to be cut back; this could perhaps be accomplished during a LCC/LTC work day.

FY23 Projects and Budget for Mills Reserve/Little River Park

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
Bridges (if not done in FY22)	\$1600.00
Kiosk	1350.00
Maps (SRPC)	700.00
Erosion Control	TBD
Invasive Species Control	TBD

Wadleigh Falls/Lamprey River Canoe Launch:

Monthly Report: A. Tappan reported that she and Mimi Winder met with the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) to outline their proposal to eradicate glossy buckthorn at the canoe launch. A vegetation management plan will be written and submitted to the LCC, LRAC, and the Planning and Zoning Administrator for approval. The approved plan will be submitted to the BOS consent agenda. The work will involve the use of hand tools and possibly a chainsaw and a chipper and can be done any time before there is snow cover. Volunteers will be needed to help cut and drag the largest donor plants.

Long-range and FY23 Plans: Eradicating buckthorn at this site will be a multiyear project.

Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF):

Monthly Report: D. Sugarman reported that the LTC will be looking at an area for a new trail. C. Fisher asked if there are plans to flag the proposed trail and have the LCC do a site visit before work on any new trail is begun. D. Genes noted that as the LTC works under the purview of the LCC, no new trails or reconfiguration of old trails can be done without input from, and approval by, the LCC. D. Sugerman will convey this to the LTC at their next meeting. LCC members discussed creating a new parking area for five to six vehicles off of Garrity Road. D. Sugerman will contact S. Bullek to arrange a site visit with LCC members to see what his proposed layout of the area would be. Once LCC members approve the layout and have gotten feedback from the Lee Police Dept. D. Genes will bring the proposal to the BOS. The question of who will be responsible for funding the parking area is unclear. A. Tappan reported that the DPW has acquired materials to cover the water tower.

FY23 Projects and Budget for Maud Jones Memorial Forest

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
New Trail and Bridge	\$ 800.00+
Parking Area	LCC not responsible for funding?
Water Tower Covering	TBD
Maps (when proposed new trail is made)	700.00
Kiosk	1350.00

Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary (JFWS):

Monthly Report: A. Tappan reported that Chuck Cox will continue to mow the field, and will do so in October after a frost. As he was paid twice last year, \$270.00 of this year's fee has been prepaid. A. Tappan reported that SELT has requested a vegetation management plan, and will allow removal of some woody growth in the field.

For the work of removing this woody growth, A. Tappan reported that S. Bullek has indicated that there may be an opportunity to subcontract the work. A. Tappan will arrange a site visit with S. Bullek and the contractor to show what areas need clearing. The work will be done this fall. A N.H. Electric Co-op (NHEC). powerline right of way (ROW) cuts through the JFWS field. A request has been made to meet with the NHEC arborist on site to discuss invasives and habitat management in the ROW.

FY23 Projects and Budget for Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
Mowing	\$350.00

Lee Five Corners Reserve (L5CR):

Monthly Report: A. Tappan reported that the ten year management contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Service ends in November, 2021. She met with USFWS Biologist, Ted Kendziora, in July and he recommended that the LCC continue with the habitat management plan. As this property is being kept as wild as possible to support its use as future New England cottontail rabbit habitat, no trail improvements are planned. Denise Duval will be contacted to have the trail on property removed from the LCC webpage.

Old Mill Reserve Complex (OMRC):

Monthly Report: D. Genes discussed the need to have the trail around the pond in the Old Mill section mowed. S. Bullek has indicated that this is another property where a subcontractor may be hired to do the work. The question of who should pay for annual mowing of this property (LCC, the Town, or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was discussed. D. Genes reported that managing the property to maintain it as an early successional habitat will require the cutting of many pines, black locusts and invasive plant species. She has been working with NRCS to come up with an estimate for the costs of this work as well as determining where the funding for it will come from. She reported that Don Keirstead (NRCS Soil Scientist/Conservationist) is looking for a management plan for the property. D. Sugerman reported that a member of the LTC is looking for a new project and would be interested in mapping out a new trail. D. Genes discussed the need for studying the OMRC easement and working with NRCS before a new trail can be considered.

Recommendation to the Select Board for Commission Membership: D. Genes introduced Lee resident Mark Nelson who is interested in becoming a member of the LCC. C. Fisher moved that Mark Nelson be recommended as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission and D. Sugerman seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by members of the LCC.

Future Meetings: Time and Location Change: Because BOS representative, Scott Bugbee's, schedule conflicts with that of the LCC for the next several meetings, and because the 7:00 p.m. timeslot on the last Tuesday of the month is also used by the Lee Agricultural Commission (who graciously relocated and allowed the LCC the use of the conference room for this meeting), D. Genes suggested that the LCC consider a change of meeting time. Our next meeting will be held at 3:30 on the last Tuesday of the month at the Public Safety Complex.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, October 26, 3:30 p.m. at the Public Safety Complex

Submitted by: _____
Catherine Fisher