

**Lee Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting of January 4, 2022**

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

Alternate Members: Laurel Cox, Mark Nelson, Mimi Winder

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Guest: David Moore, Graduate Student, Ecohydrology Lab, Dept. of Nature Resources and Earth Sciences, UNH

Approval of Minutes of November 30, 2021: D. Shay moved to accept the minutes as written; D. Sugerman seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members.

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: D. Genes reported that Treasurer Amanda Gourgue emailed her report on the LCC's account. A \$300.00 credit from Catherine Arakelian was added to the LCC account balance. The total balance stands at \$5870.89 and is comprised of:

Dave Allen Fund Account Balance: \$2686.69

LCC Account Balance: \$3184.20

Education/Outreach: C. Fisher reported that she had written four articles focusing on tree stumps ("Stumpology") which appeared in the E-Crier and the LCC Facebook page. These have proved popular, with Part 2 seen by 1600 people, Part 3 seen by 1300 people, and Part 4 by 1400 people.

Easement Monitoring: A. Gourgue has put together the 2022 easement schedule. C. Fisher asked that, during the next few weeks, those who are participate in monitoring go over the schedule to see if there are properties that might better be done earlier or later in the season. She asked also that participants consider whether they'd like to begin monitoring sometime in March. Changes will be forwarded to A. Gourgue.

Board Reports:

Select Board (BOS): A. Tappan reported that the BOS voted on December 2 to have the Town of Lee become a dues-paying member of Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC); dues have been paid for the next six months. D. Genes reported that she has volunteered to be one of Lee's two representatives on the SRPC's Board of Directors.

S. Bugbee reported that Carey Brown is running for another term on the BOS.

Zoning Board (ZBA): A. Tappan reported that no action was taken at the December 2 hearing regarding the Library Trustees' request for a variance for the proposed Library addition. At the hearing the ZBA stated that the Select Board had no authority regarding actions taken by the ZBA.

OLD BUSINESS:

Updates on Town Conservation Lands:

Lee Trails Committee (LTC): D. Sugerman reported that the LTC was off for the month of December. QR codes, and planning for winter and spring will be discussed on January 5 meeting. She also reported on the following:

Lee Town Forest (LTF) Bridge Replacements: All three bridges (#'s 2, 4 and 6) scheduled for work have been repaired.

LTF 2021 Review/2022 Forecast: A report written by Dennis Regan outlines the work done last year in the LTF and outlines proposed projects in the current year. D. Sugerman reported that she will ask for similar reports from LTC members who oversee Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF) and Little River Park (LRP).

By-Laws: Copies of the finished LTC by-laws were shared with Commission members. A few edits were suggested and incorporated. C. Fisher moved to accept the LTC by-laws, D. Shay seconded, and the LTC by-laws were unanimously approved by LCC members.

LRP River Trail Project: D. Sugerman reported that Martin Thornton has continued work on preparing for construction of the culvert bridge and the brook bridge. He has visited the area every two weeks to note how high and fast the water flow is, has prepared drawings, put together lists of materials and costs.

Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary (JFWS):

Invasives along power line: A. Tappan reported that she and D. Genes met with Cory Keefe, the utility arborist with New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC) regarding the invasive plant species present in the power line right of way. NHEC has scheduled clearing work in this area for 2023.

Mowing invoice: D. Genes reported that the LCC had received, from Chuck Cox, an invoice in the amount of \$455.00, for mowing done on the property. In prior meetings, it has been noted that, last year, the LCC overpaid C. Cox in the amount of \$270.00. L. Cox reported that she had refunded that amount back in April. D. Genes will contact the Town Finance Officer.

Broken Chain at Northwest Gate: A. Tappan reported that a fallen tree limb had pulled out the end of the gate chain from where it was anchored in a tree. L. Cox will inform C. Cox.

Work Groups:

Invasive Species Control: M. Winder reported that she, C. Fisher, and A. Tappan met at JFWS to discuss organizing the working group. A. Tappan described the topics discussed:

The group will concern itself with both invasive plants and animals (insects)

The “Invasives Section” of the “Town Lands at a Glance” document put together by A.

Tappan will be used as a format for recording information about invasives

Planned site visits to each property to gather and/or update information

Training and engaging citizen volunteers

Prioritizing projects/Work Options; creating an action plan for each property

Funding options

Education/Outreach - E-Crier articles; LCC webpage links to information on invasives

D. Genes reminded that group that Biospray should be notified this month if its services are used to treat invasives in 2022.

LCC Web Page Modifications: M. Winder shared an outline of the group’s ideas for web page topics:

Information about LCC - what it is and what it does (land management; education/outreach; invasives, trails)

Education/Outreach - C. Fisher’s articles; QR codes

Conservation Maps/Easements - information on easements; links to booklet on how to conserve land (New Hampshire Land Trust Coalition); link to Town of Lee land map

Forest Management Plans - link to Town Forest Management Plan

Invasives

Trails - Link to LTC website; link to snowmobile trails

Get Involved/Contact LCC

Town Conservation Lands Management: C. Fisher and D. Shay reported that they will use D. Gene’s proposed standardized outline and start with one of the smaller easements. Once they’ve completed filling in the outlined categories for that easement, they will share the document with other group members for any suggestions/improvements. When the group has agreed on the standardized outline, group members will divide the work between them.

Drinking Water: D. Genes reported that the group will begin by going over the Town Master Plan for useful information.

NEW BUSINESS:

Paper Birch Syrup Research Project, LRP: To conduct research into the environmental drivers of sap flow and pressurization in paper birches during winter dormancy, D. Moore requested permission to use nine birches growing in a forested strip abutting the new parking area at LRP. Three birches would each have nine sensors installed to measure sap flow (1), sap pressure (3), wood temperature (3), stem radius changes (1), and wood water content (1). Tissue samples will be harvested from the canopy of these trees throughout the season. An additional six birches will be tapped to extract sap and will be subsequently felled in fall 2022 to examine the wounded tissue around the tap holes. Depending upon the Town's preference, harvested trees will either be left in place or removed. D. Genes expressed concern that the proposed trees are part of a narrow buffer between LRP and the abutter south of the new parking area. A. Tappan noted that the removal of six birches would be a significant percentage of the 18 growing on the site. D. Genes suggested looking at another stand of birches at LRP. C. Fisher noted that a birch stand bordering the early succession area of LRP is less in the public eye, doesn't impinge on any abutters and is an area where the LCC has been working to push back the forested area bordering the early succession habitat. LCC members agreed that the research project is of value. D. Genes moved to approve the research project, if the suggested alternative location is suitable; C. Fisher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members. A site visit to the proposed alternative site was scheduled for Wednesday, January 5, 2022. If the alternative site is suitable, the project will be presented for approval by the BOS at their January 10 meeting.

Zoom Meetings: S. Bugbee reported that the town's Zoom license has been renewed. If the LCC wishes to schedule small group (less than four LCC members) Zoom meetings they should contact the Town Administrator or the Assistant Administrator.

Proposed Apple Tree Pruning Workshop: D. Sugerman reported that she had been contacted by Andy Crowley, Stewardship Projects Manager for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), regarding a proposed fruit tree pruning workshop/demonstration, held on Town-owned lands. The workshop would be led by Bryan Cassidy, with the goal to increase awareness about the ecological benefits of fruiting trees and to provide knowledge about caring for them. LCC members suggested that the old orchard located behind the Public Safety Complex (PSC) in the LTF might be a suitable site. D. Sugerman will contact A. Crowley to set up a site visit with him, B. Cassidy and interested LCC members.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 25, 2022, Town Offices

Submitted by: _____
Catherine Fisher