

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes of Meeting of March 29, 2022

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

Alternate Member: Mimi Winder

Select Board Representative: Katrin Kasper

Guests: Martin Thornton, Chuck Cox, Eric Fiegenbaum, Scott Lawler, Marc Jacobs, Aaron Wisell

Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2022 and Minutes of March 10, 2022: D. Sugerman moved to accept, as written, the minutes of both meetings; D. Shay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members.

Treasurer's Report: In an email to LCC members, A. Gourgue provided a link to the LCC Balance Spreadsheet. She reported that the only transaction for March had been the Barry Conservation 4-H Camp fee of \$540, which has been sent out. The total balance stands at \$5081.89 and is comprised of:

David Allen Fund: \$2,686.69

LCC Account: 2,395.20

OLD BUSINESS

Education/Outreach:

Social Media: In an email to LCC members, A. Gourgue reported that though the LCC Facebook (FB) numbers continue to reflect a downturn, this is due to a post from January that went viral, thus skewing numbers. Overall, the numbers remain good, and from February 27-March 26, were:

People Reached: 4,127 (down 28%)

Post Engagements 629 (down 18%)

Page Like: 1 (Down 86%)

The most popular post was C. Fisher's Pipsissewa article, which was seen by 1,400 people, with 27 post clicks, and 64 reactions, comments & shares.

Articles for E-Crier/FB: C. Fisher reported that she had written five nature articles and a write up about the March 19 Tree Identification Workshop.

Events Held:

Tree Identification Workshop, Little River Park (LRP): A. Tappan and C. Fisher reported that, despite very rainy weather, 15 people attended this event co-sponsored by the LCC and the UNH Cooperative Extension. Led by Coop.Ext. specialists Rebecca DiGirolomo and Wendy Scribner, participants learned some of the basics of tree identification. The degree of interest and camaraderie exhibited were remarkable and most participants stayed longer than the two hours slated for the event.

Apple Tree Pruning Workshop, Town Forest (TF): A. Tappan reported that the three hour event was attended by 12 registrants, four LCC members (C. Fisher, D. Sugerman, A. Tappan, and M. Winder). A. Tappan had borrowed tools from the Tool Lending Library at Southeast Land Trust (SELT) in Epping; an orchard ladder was provided by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). Under the patient tutelage of Bryan Cassidy, all the apple trees in the field were given their first pruning in decades. Participants were engaged and enthusiastic and all pruned limbs were either stacked in piles as habitat or dragged into the abutting wood as coarse woody material. A. Tappan reported that a side benefit of the event was that she became familiar with posting events on Nature Groupie.

Upcoming Events:

Lee Library After School Nature Walk: C. Fisher reported that she will lead an after school walk in the TF on April 5, from 3:45 until 5:00.

Lee Library Preschool Nature Walk: C. Fisher reported that she will lead a nature walk for preschoolers and their parents in the TF on Thursday, April 7, from 10:30-11:30.

Oyster River Parents and Preschoolers (ORPP) Nature Walk: C. Fisher reported that she will lead a walk in the TF on April 9, from 10:00-12:00. This annual walk is notable for the multigenerational family groups who attend.

Frog Walks: C. Fisher reported that she hopes to lead two vernal pool “frog walks”, one in the evening and one in the morning, in the TF. These had been, for several years, an annual event, but have been on hiatus due to the pandemic.

Moth Night, LRP, June 25: C. Fisher reported that plans for this event are moving forward. The event will run from 8:00-11:00 p.m. Sam Jaffe of the Caterpillar Lab will be in charge of the events, which will include light traps, a projector screen, a digital microscope and live caterpillars. The latter three items will be set up in the pavilion area. Overhead lights will need to be turned off and electrical outlets will need to be turned on. Mercury vapor lights will be used for several traps, and children will be required to wear anti-UV safety glasses, which R. DiGirolomo will provide and make available to participants. Number of participants hasn’t been determined; there will be a requested contribution with suggested amounts of \$5, \$10 or \$25, and there will be a \$0.00 option. Caterpillar Lab fee will be in the \$500-1,000.00 range, and will be paid for by the UNH Natural Resource Program and the Coverts Cooperators Program. Set up will be managed by C. Fisher and R. DiGirolomo, who will be on site from 6:30 pm to 12:00 a.m. (or whenever everything is packed up). C.Fisher will return on Saturday a.m. to make sure nothing has been overlooked and to pick up any trash that was missed.

Lee Trails Committee (LTC) Projects and Updates: D. Sugerman reported on the following:

AARP Grant: The grant application for funding for kiosks (4), bridges (3), and benches (3) has been sent in; notification is in mid May.

Recreational Trails Program Grant: The application, seeking funds for two bridges in LRP and two bridges Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF) is due on April 15 and is nearly completed. Notification is on May 15.

Moose Plate Grant: Though not necessarily a source of funding for LTC work, D. Sugerman suggested that there may be LCC projects that might qualify for funding from this program. Proposal are due in September.

Trail Days: Workdays are scheduled in MJMF and LRP on April 30, and in the TF on May 14. A. Tappan suggested that the working group be aware of hemlock branches that overhang the trail. These should be checked for hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA). Infected overhanging twigs should be cut and bagged. C. Fisher asked why it was necessary to bag twigs if the surrounding trees were already infested. A. Tappan will walk her woods with R. DiGirolomo, and will ask about disposal of infested twigs.

Bridges:

TF: Temporary bridge on site #4 in the TF will be completed using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

MJMF: Esker bridge was ice-covered and unusable all winter. D. Sugerman made a motion that the LCC approve replacing this bridge; C. Fisher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by LCC members. D. Sugerman will submit proposal to the Select Board. If grant money is available, bridge will be replaced this year; if not, it will be added to the bridge-repair list.

Recreation Education & Adventure Close to Home (REACH) Camp: Students in this program worked with LTC on trails projects, including making two benches in TF. People from the program contacted LTC about doing another project this year. D. Sugerman suggested cleaning up the area near the ballpark trailhead where trees were cut and left in place, presenting a messy entrance to the TF. LCC members will view and discuss this at the LCC/LTC TF site walk.

TF Trail Relocation: To view the work that has been done and see proposed trail reroute to relocate section of trail where a section of trail has been closed because of unsafe conditions, a site visit is planned for the week of April 18th.

Trails Tuesdays: Every Tuesday, the LCC FB page will feature an article/information about Lee's trail system and general trail information.

Dog Waste Along Trails and Off-Trails: C. Fisher discussed the increased amount of dog waste encountered along the trails at LRP and the TF. She noted that during the Tree I.D. workshop at LRP, numerous piles of dog waste were found both along the trail and deeper into the woods. Even off-trail, dog waste poses a hazard to water quality and wildlife. She noted that D. Sugerman had suggested that education should be the first approach to tackling this problem. C. Fisher suggested that articles in the E-Crier and on the LCC Facebook page and informational posters placed on trail head kiosks would be a good start.

Discussion on Use of NH Fish & Game's Guidebook "Trails for People and Wildlife": LCC members discussed the NHF&F guidebook as an important resource to avoid negative impacts on wildlife and sensitive habitats when designing new trails or relocating existing ones. M. Thornton provided copies of maps of MJMF and its trails created using the "Trails for People and Wildlife" and the UNH GranitView heatmap, in which high valued, wildlife habitats are assigned "hot" colors (orange and red); moderately valued habitats are cooler (cream colored), and low impact areas are the coolest of all (blue). The map for Maud Jones showed that the layout of the planned "Esker Trail" does not impinge on high valued wildlife habitats. LCC members agreed that a map should be created for the TF and any other Town-owned conserved area where changes in trail systems are planned.

Work Groups Updates:

Website Changes: D. Sugerman and M Winder distributed copies of the group's draft for the LCC web page. A. Tappan reported that she had gone through Lee Town Reports and found reference that the LCC was created at the March, 1967 Town Meeting, Warrant Article 16; this information will be added to the LCC web page. LCC asked to go over the draft and suggest final edits.

Town Land Summaries: C. Fisher reported that she and D. Shay had completed summaries for MJMF, Garrity Reserve, James Farm, Ellis Oyster River and Reserve, Little River Reserve, and. Rothwell Reserve and C. Fisher is currently working on a summary for Old Mill Reserve.

Updates on Town Conservation Lands:

Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary: A. Tappan reported that she met with Doug Cygan and S. Bullek at Joe Ford regarding treating knotweed using mesh. A location on a banking of Layne's Brook near the woods road was chosen as a possible place to test this method of treating knotweed. A. Tappan reported that she is working to create a focused vegetative management plan to allow LCC members and volunteers to conduct manual removal of invasive species.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in TF: C. Fisher reported that, though this winter did knock back the severity of the infestation in some of the TF's dense hemlock stands, the LCC should discuss what actions, if any, should be taken. She recommended that the LCC begin to discuss a strategy in the event that these trees succumb. In several locations in the TF trails wind through dense hemlock stands which could pose safety hazards down the road.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed Car Wash at Lee Traffic Circle: S. Lawler (Engineer and V.P., Norway Plains Associates, Inc.) presented proposed plans for developing a car wash on Route 4 (68 Concord Rd., Tax Map 7, Lot 8-4). Parcel is in the Town's Commercial Zone and also within the Wet Soils Conservation Zone. Existing building and infrastructure is to be removed and variances will be necessary to allow construction of 2-bay structure, pavement, holding tanks for recycled wash water, three vacuum stations, and dumpster pads to be constructed within the 75 foot setback from wetlands. New structure is will have a smaller footprint than what currently exists. A Special Exception is sought to construct a stormwater management system within 75 feet of

wetlands. CC members asked questions of S. Lawler and M. Jacobs regarding water recycling, sludge removal, use of silt fencing during deconstruction and construction, soils type, and whether there is a vegetation plan. D. Genes asked if the dumpster could be reoriented away from the wetlands. A site walk on April 4, at 3:00 p.m. is planned.

New Headquarters for Southeast Land Trust (SELT): SELT has moved to new headquarters at the Burley Farm, 247 North River Road, in Epping. The phone number is unchanged: (603)-778-6088.

Easement Monitoring Begins: Monitoring visits are scheduled for Garrity Reserve (3/30); Fogg (4/6); Riverside4 Farm Drive (4/13); and Aldag (4/20).

New Hampshire Timberland Owners Assoc. (NHTOA) Dues: A. Tappan moved to approve the expenditure of \$30.00 to pay NHTOA's annual dues; D. Shay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members.

Proposed Trail Re-routing in TF: To view the work that has been done and see proposed trail reroute, a site visit is planned for the week of April 18th.

Bill Humm an Emeritus LCC Member: D. Genes informed LCC members that Bill Humm has agreed to stay on as an emeritus member of the LCC.

Mimi Winder a full LCC Member: Mimi Winder agreed to move from an alternate member to a full member of the LCC.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Submitted by: _____
Catherine Fisher