

**Lee Conservation Commission  
Minutes of Meeting of April 26, 2022**

**Present members:** Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Dawn Genes (Chair), Amanda Gourgue (Treasurer), Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan, Mimi Winder

**Alternate Member:** Laurel Cox

**Emeritus Member:** Bill Humm

**Select Board (BOS) Representative:** Scott Bugbee

**Guest:** John Hutton

**Approval of Minutes of March 29 meeting and April 19 Town Forest Site Walk:** D. Sugerman moved to accept, as written, the minutes of both the March meeting and the April site walk; D. Shay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members.

**Treasurer's Report:** A. Gourgue reported that there had been no changes in either account. 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:** A. Gourgue reported a great month for the LCC's Facebook (FB)page. From March 28 until the April 24, the most popular was C. Fisher's March 28th article about cardinal courtship feeding which was seen by 3,300 people, had 83 post clicks, and 218 reactions, comments and shares. The second most popular post was the April 15th #funnyfriday post about a trail camera which was seen by 2,200 people, had 74 post clicks, and 228 reactions, comments and shares.

**Articles for E-Crier/FB:** C. Fisher reported that she had written four nature articles and one write up about the March 26 workshop on pruning old apple trees.

**Events:** C. Fisher reported on the following:

**Events Held:**

Frog Walks: Due to the busy nature of the past month, no Frog Walks were scheduled.

April 5th Lee Library After. School Nature Walk: The hour-long walk was attended by about 20 children who were eager participants with lots of questions. Because the library's winter nature walks had such a high turnout, Children's Librarian, Judith Belanger, did not advertise either this event or the subsequent preschool walk.

April 7th Lee Library Preschool Nature Walk: Another fun, hour-long walk attended by 25 parents and children.

April 9th Oyster River Parents and PreSchoolers: This multigenerational walk had 27 participants and was notable for how engaged everyone was in learning about the natural world.

**Upcoming Events:**

May 3rd, Town Forest (TF) Nature Walk with the Sunrise/Sunset Club: This club has scheduled a walk in the past; many Lee residents are members.

TBA, Tadpole Stroll, TF: If time permits, sometime in May or June. This walk features a visit to the vernal pool located behind Mast Way.

June 25, Little River Park (LRP): Moth Night: The event has been approved by the BOS.

Electricity will be turned on for the pavilion, and power will be turned off in the parking lot.

Public Works Director, Steve Bullek, will be attending with his eldest daughter. He will take care of all issues electric and will bring a light tower to the parking lot, so that participants can better see their way to their cars at the end of the evening. Both the multipurpose and the back multipurpose fields at LRP have been reserved. A Zoom meeting was held on April 13 and

attended by Sam Jaffee (Exec. Dir., Caterpillar Lab), Haley Andreozzi (UNH Coop. Ext., Wildlife Conservation State Specialist), Rebecca DiGirolomo (UNH Coop. Ext., Assoc. Field Specialist), and C. Fisher, during which plans were made for two live-streaming events to be held on the Coop. Ext. FB page. Both events will feature S. Jaffee; in the first he'll discuss NH's moth species, and in the 2nd he'll discuss backyard moth-viewing.

**Easement Monitoring:** D. Shay reported the following properties monitored in March and April: Garrity Reserve and Woodrow/Stone (3/31); Fogg (4/6); Riverside Farm Drive (4/13); and Aldag (4/20). There were no serious issues reported for the above properties, though, for future reference, photographs of a junk pile on one property were taken. Monitors were unable to locate a corner pin on the Aldag property. Monitoring visits scheduled April and May: Barth and Crosbie (4/27); Sanborn (5/7); Grumbling and Jenkins (5/11); Brady (5/18); Lee Little River and Mills Little River Park (5/25).

#### **Updates of Work Groups:**

**Webpage Group:** D. Sugerman reported that the webpage is up and running. Members will be listed alphabetically by last name, with titles in parentheses, followed by a list of alternates. A grammatical problem with the first paragraph was discussed; whereas the language used on the website is informal, the RSA regarding number of members is written more formally. LCC members agreed that a less formal wording works better. A. Gourgue is working on pictures and fonts to make the webpage more visually appealing. The trails maps are basically incorrect, and the map of the trail at Old Mill Reserve (OMR) should be removed, as the LCC has opted to no longer maintain the trail. Conservation Lands maps need to be reworked as they are out of date and many corrections are needed. D. Genes and L. Cox discussed deciding what maps are needed and contacting Strafford Regional Planning (SRP) to have maps created. LCC members agreed that the co-occurrence map needs to be updated, and that the town buildout map should be removed from the webpage, and that no town lands maps should be included until an updated map is made. Trails maps will be put on the Lee Trails Committee (LTC) webpage.

**Water Resources Group:** D. Genes discussed using the NH GRANITview application as a tool for locating priority conservation areas. There are many excellent maps and lots of data and the application is easy to use.

**Invasives Group:** A. Tappan reported that the garlic mustard patch at LRP, which was pulled last year, needs work. She spoke with LTC member, Paul McComiskey, about culling and removing invasives in the early succession area of LRP/Mills Reserve; native plants over-hanging the trail should also be trimmed back.

**Easement Summaries:** D. Shay and C. Fisher reported that summaries have been written for James Farm, Lee Little River and Mills Little River Park, and Ellis Oyster River Reserve. D. Genes shared printed versions of some of the summaries and commended the work put into them.

#### **Updates on Town Conservation Lands:**

**OMR:** Though the file on this property suggests that there is a management plan, there is, in fact, no plan. LCC has a compatible use agreement from Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), which allowed the LCC to have the trail mowed in late 2020, but last year no mowing was done. D. Genes reported that she contacted the NRCS field office but was told that the State office handled all wetland reserves. D. Genes suggested hiring Ellen Snyder (Ibis Wildlife Consulting), who has done two other management plans for the LCC, to create a management plan for OMR.

**LRP:** Garlic Mustard: A. Tappan reiterated that the area where garlic mustard has been pulled in the past, needs another go-round. Last year, the company Extreme Networks held a "Day of Giving" and spent part of a day pulling garlic mustard, filling 23 trash bags. Extreme Networks has contacted A. Tappan about taking part in a similar event this year.

Erosion Control: Following a visit to the Forest Loop Trail with LTC members Martin Thornton and P. McComiskey, A. Tappan and C. Fisher discussed the possibility of blocking access both above and below the areas on the slope that are experiencing foot traffic and using little bluestem

grass plantings (plugs and/or seed) to aid in stabilizing the slope. After a brief discussion, C. Fisher moved to approve the expenditure of no more than \$100.00 towards the purchase of little bluestem plugs; D. Shay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by LCC members. Screening Planting: A. Tappan reported that during the previously referenced site visit, the possibility of planting shrubs to screen the new parking lot from the abutter was discussed. Plantings would also screen the trailhead to the Little River Trail. D. Genes suggested members give some thought to what needs to be accomplished and how to pay for it. A plant list needs to be generated. D. Genes will speak to Planning and Zoning Administrator, Caren Rossi, regarding what entity is responsible for putting screening plants in place.

**Lee Trails Committee:** D. Sugarmen reported on the following:

**Grants Submitted:** Application to American Trails for a \$4,200 grant to be used to replace five foot bridges in the TF. Grants will be announced in May; competition is fierce: there were 292 applications requesting three million dollars for the \$50,000 available.

**Trail Work Days:**

April 30, 10 a.m.-1:00 p.m. - Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF) and LRP. There will be two volunteers and three LTC members present for each location.

May 14, 10 a.m.-1:00 p.m. - TF. There will be six volunteers and seven LTC members present. A. Gourgue suggests that these dates be put on the event calendar of the LCC's webpage.

**Trails Updates:**

MJMF: Replacement of the esker bridge was approved by the BOS; timing is dependent upon funding. D. Shay reported that he has submitted the application for a permit for the building of two bridges to the Natural Heritage Bureau. Once the permits are received letters to abutters will go out. D. Superman asks if there is a template for letters to abutters.

LRP: Funding in the amount of \$1500 was approved by the BOS. M. Thornton is putting together a materials list, and when ordered all materials will be delivered to S. Bullek. Work will begin following the trail workdays scheduled in May; dates will be determined during the LTC's April meeting. QR codes will be put up on April 30 - the April 26 "Trails Tuesday" posting on the LCC FB page featured "How to Read a QR code." Once the bridges are completed, a community event will be planned to celebrate completion of the Little River Trail project - perhaps on June 4, which is national Trails Day. A completion report will be filed with the Lamprey River Advisory Committee.

TF: M. Thornton, Christine Regan, and Dennis Regan are working on overlaying the trails map, boundary maps, and GRANITview map; the LTC will look at their work at the LTC April meeting. Site walks to see the footbridge improvements and to view the proposed trail relocation site were held on April 19 and 21. The purpose of the proposed reroute is to avoid a very steep portion of the trail where erosion along the ridge is a growing concern. Following a discussion by members of the LCC, D. Sugerman moved to approve the rerouting of this portion of the trail and C. Fisher seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by six members of the LCC; A. Tappan voted not to approve.

**Recreation Education & Adventure Close to Home (REACH):** Ideas for this summer's program include: building additional benches, cemetery cleanup, rock wall clean up. LCC members are encouraged to come up with additional ideas.

**Comments to Other Agencies/Boards:**

**Proposed car Wash at Lee Traffic Circle:** A. Tappan reported that she is working on a draft letter to be submitted to the ZBA. She will circulate the letter to LCC members for comments and suggestions. The ZBA hearing is slated for May 15.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Variance Requests:**

**John Hutton, Coppal House Farm - Roof Runoff:** Currently, rain water runs from the roof of the sheep barn, runs across the sheep pen, and leaches across the sheep pasture. J. Hutton is working

with NRCS to create a gutter system to take care of water runoff and manure issues. NRCS has matching funds to do the gutter system. Gutters will direct rainwater into a downspout and into a water collection system where it can be used for irrigation. If the system is full, water will flow into an underground pipe and discharge to within 20-25' of a wet soils area. The discharge would be roof runoff and fairly clean. A site visit will be scheduled to coincide with the June 8th monitoring session on the property.

**Tom Hooper proposed project on Layne Drive on Wheelwright Pond:** Proposed new house on existing waterfront lot. Site visit is planned for May 10, at a time to be determined. C. Fisher, D. Genes, A. Tappan, and Mimi Winder will attend, and the site visit will be posted.

**Intent to Cut (ITC) Application Changes:** At a recent BOS meeting, Town Administrator Andy Robertson spoke about reducing the amount of private information that is put into the online application. To enable the LCC to protect conservation easements from accidental cutting by abutters, it is important that the LCC receives notification of intent to cut applications. S. Bugbee will inquire as to whether a copy of each ITC application can be sent to the LCC Chair; he suggested it may be possible to have ITC applications scanned by C. Rossi or Assistant Administrator Denise Duval and then emailed to the LCC.

**Planning Future Trails in the TF:** A. Tappan spoke briefly about NH Fish and Game's guide, Trails for People and Wildlife, and applying its recommendations, particularly keeping in mind each trail's "corridor of influence", before making any trail upgrades and reroutes. She suggested that the CC and LTC consider the TF as a whole and discuss its trails using the Trails for People and Wildlife assessment tool to decide whether trails should remain, be rerouted or decommissioned.

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 30, 2022**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Catherine Fisher