

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Present: Dawn Genes (Chair), Mimi Winder (Secretary), Catherine Fisher, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan

Alternate member: Laurel Cox

Emeritus: Bill Humm

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee (arrived at the close of the meeting)

Others Present: Keelan Wachman, White Pine Program, Sherrie Trefry, VHB, Eversource

Motion: to approve the Minutes of January 17 Meeting: D. Genes moved to accept, D. Sugerman seconded; the motion was approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members present with 1 member opposing.

Motion: to approve the minutes of the January 26 Meeting concerning the Aubuchon Hardware proposal: A. Tappan moved to accept, C. Fisher seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

Motion: LCC will authorize \$400 scholarship to Gibson Griffith to attend Barry Conservation Camp summer 2023 for 1 week. D. Genes moved to accept, C. Fisher seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

Motion: To reimburse C. Fisher \$64.55 for supplies for Easement Monitoring thank you notes and save the date cards. D. Genes moved to accept, D. Sugerman seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

Motion: To reimburse Laurel Cox \$20 to attend NH Land Trust Alliance workshop. D. Genes moved to accept, C. Fisher seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

Motion: Eversource Special Exception Request: LCC does not have concerns as long as work is carried out according to submitted plans.

Motion: LCC is in favor of working with a donor to create a bench in MJMF. C. Fisher moved to accept, D. Sugerman seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

REPORTS

Treasurers/Social Media/Monitoring: A. Gourgue submitted via email. Report attached.

Education and Outreach: C. Fisher submitted via email. Report attached.

- There was a brief discussion on communication concerning easement monitoring thank you notes.

PB/ZBA/ Invasives projects: A. Tappan submitted 2 reports via email. Reports attached.

- A. Tappan discussed her activities concerning the Lamprey River Canoe Launch buckthorn invasive issue. The LCC supports participating in this activity.
- A. Tappan presented information on the UNH Summer Stewardship Program. The LCC supports participating in this program.

Lee Trails Committee: D. Sugerman submitted via email. Report attached.

NEW BUSINESS

Keelan Wachman presented information on the White Pines outdoor programs, which include:

- Programming for schools
- Nature outreach programs for adults and children
- Partnerships with organization and families

At times, WP collaborates with communities to host events and is always looking for organizations to partner with. It was suggested that Lee could be a possible collaborator for a future event.

Sherrie Trefry presented plans for the Eversource 307 Transmission Line maintenance project. This project will require a special Exception Request to perform work which will take place in the wet soils buffer. The access for the work in the Eversource ROW are: off Pinkham Road near the Barrington town line and off Turtle Pond Road (Rte. 155) towards Durham. LCC noted that Eversource has been very cooperative and careful with their work and has no objection to this request. (see motion above)

OLD BUSINESS

Camperships for Lee Youth:

The LCC received 1 application for the scholarship from Gibson Griffith to attend Barry Conservation Camp. It was decided that LCC will provide a \$400 scholarship for Gibson Griffith and reserve \$200 for any additional scholarship applications.

Town Forest Management:

D. Sugerman presented data from Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) on trail use by bikes and pedestrians. There was an interest in identifying routes appropriate for bikes which might connect trails in Lee to surrounding paths that are already being used. LCC and LTC will continue to monitor trail activity to determine how to appropriately address LCC and community concerns and objectives. Bids for the proposed survey work were discussed and considered to be too expensive (see LTC report).

NEW BUSINESS

Maud Jones Memorial Forest:

A request to donate funds for materials to construct a bench in MJMF has been received. LCC discussed this request and is in support of this project. (see motion above)

Wheelwright Pond

The LCC has concerns over activities at the boat launch at Wheelwright Pond. The LCC feels that this problem is beyond the purview of the LCC and recommends that a board-based committee of town entities be formed to evaluate this issue. D. Genes will bring this suggestion to the appropriate town officials.

Planning Board: A. Tappan shared concerns about future projects in Lee that may affect wet soils areas and recommends that LCC continue to monitor and follow up on future PB discussions that could impact wet soils.

Adjourn: 6:07pm

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Submitted by: _____

MimiWinder

Monthly Report for 2/21/23 Lee CC Meeting (Also see the two attachments)

Submitted by: Anne Tappan

Topic: ZBAReport

Activity since last CC meeting:

Aubuchon Hardware Expansion Site Walk, 1/19/23: CC members, the project engineer, and two Aubuchon employees were present. A stream, just beyond the service road slope and not shown on any site plan, was noted. The stream flows toward Rte.4 and into a wet area, so that area is not an option for store expansion. Considerable trash has collected behind the store and in the surrounding wetland. Fencing to catch trash for easier collection was discussed. Project boundaries and location of the storm water handling system were pointed out.

Special Meeting, 1/26/23: The variance and special exception needed for the project were discussed. A quorum was present. A letter to the ZBA was drafted, listing concerns about the project and recommended conditions: replace non-native Norway Spruce with native evergreen species and install fencing to collect trash for easier pick-up.

Aubuchon Hardware Expansion, ZBA Hearing: Both Variances and the Special Exception were approved. Recommendations, with modifications, presented by the CC in the letter to the ZBA were included as conditions:

The Norway Spruce in the landscape plan is to be replaced by White Spruce or another native evergreen.

ZBA members commented that the fencing may cause problems for fire truck access and snow removal. The condition in the motion gives the applicant a choice to install a fence or agree to a twice per year clean-up of the area.

Action Required:

The project goes back to the Planning Board, next meeting 8 March 2023. A. Tappan will attend.

Topic: Planning BoardReport

Activity since last CC meeting:

I attended the recent PB meeting to be on hand for a possible discussion of the Aubuchon Hardware project (rescheduled) and to find about a major commercial project proposed next to Friendly Pets. Due to its past history this development is unlikely to require CC input.

A representative from Invest NH, Work Force Housing Coalition of Greater Seacoast NH came to discuss grants available for a regulatory audit of planning and zoning regulations in light of impediments to housing. The state has a big push for moderate/low

income/work force housing. The PB is interested in pursuing the grants and considers that the wet soils regulations are a significant impediment to increasing housing in Lee.

Action Required: The PB discussion will resume at their next meeting 8 March 2023. The CC needs to pay attention as this process proceeds.

Topic: Glossy Buckhorn Removal at the Lamprey River Canoe Launch

Activity since last CC meeting:

Please see the attached project plan.

Action Required:

Briefly discuss the project and request approval by LCC. The project will be presented to LRAC for consent at their 21 Feb. meeting. It then goes to the Select Board for approval, next meeting 6 March. The Invasives Working Group will continue put together and work through the project to-do list.

Topic: UNH Summer Stewardship Intern Program

Activity since last CC meeting:

LCC has an opportunity to collaborate with the Newmarket CC to share student interns from the UNH Summer Stewardship Intern Program. Please see the attached draft proposal by Ellen Snyder (Chair, Newmarket CC), with input from A. Tappan.

A small group of UNH students (2 to 3), from natural resources disciplines, will work on stewardship projects for 3 days in Newmarket, two days in Lee. June has been suggested. Projects provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that focus on stewardship topics such as invasives control and trails. This project was discussed at a recent Invasives Working Group meeting.

Action Required:

Briefly describe the project to the CC and request approval. Invite participation by Trails volunteers, to give students an opportunity to learn about trails stewardship (placement, maintenance, bridges, etc.) Work with Ellen Snyder to finalize the joint Newmarket/Lee plan and submit it to program coordinator Malin Clyde.

Glossy Buckthorn Removal at the Lamprey River Canoe Launch 2/18/23

Introduction

Glossy buckthorn, a non-native invasive plant, is well established at the Lamprey River canoe launch (town owned, 0.651 acres, tax map # 26-06-101). The goal is to remove glossy buckthorn and other non-native invasives in order to prevent the spread of invasives in the river corridor and to promote the growth of native plants, including trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, and ferns, which provide wildlife habitat, shade, and erosion control in the shore land zone. (Plant list on page 2)

The Wildlife Habitat and Land Stewardship Plan for the Rothwell Reserve, prepared in 2014 by Ellen Snyder, notes that invasive plants are present at the Rothwell Reserve, located across the road from the canoe launch. The likely source of the buckthorn is from around the canoe launch. The plan recommends removal of the buckthorn plants “growing along this road/river corridor (which) are serving as a large seed source” for the area.

Methods

Control of glossy buckthorn and other invasives will be by manual methods only. Initial removal will concentrate on larger, berry producing, or donor plants. It will take multiple years to bring the invasives on this site under control. No herbicides will be used.

- Donor buckthorns (mature seed producing plants) will be cut and prevented from sprouting by covering the stumps with “Buckthorn Baggies” or a homemade version. Work will be done when berries are not present. The covers remain in place for year or two, until the stump rots. Covers are then removed.
- Seedlings and small plants can be pulled by hand. Stubborn plants can be lifted using hand tools. Minimal soil disturbance will occur using these methods.
- Cut or pulled invasives will be removed from the site or chipped and spread onsite. Chipping and spreading is only an option when no berries are present.
- Work is planned to begin spring of 2023, in late March or early April depending on site conditions. Removal of buckthorn, and other invasives, can be done anytime berries are not present.
- Work will be conducted by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members and volunteers under the direction of the LCC. “Nature Groupie” is a source of volunteers.

Keeping the Public Informed

The public will be informed about the project through on-site signs such as “Habitat Restoration Work in Progress”, articles in the Lee E-Crier, and the LCC Face Book page. Information will be provided to Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) to post.

Project approved by the Lee Conservation Commission _____ date
Project consent by the LRAC (advisory only) _____ date

Native plants and non-native invasives at the Lamprey River canoe launch site Baseline list, summer 2021

Trees: silver maple, red maple, black cherry, elm, shagbark hickory, black gum, basswood, white ash, sugar maple, white oak, red oak, beech, hemlock, white pine, juniper. Numerous snags are present.

Shrubs & Vines: winterberry, silky dogwood, hazelnut, elderberry, arrowwood, clethra, blueberry, grape vine (sp.), Virginia creeper, groundnut, catbrier, poison ivy

Flowers: aster (sp.), goldenrod (sp.), skunk cabbage, meadow sweet, meadow rue (sp.), purple false foxglove, wintergreen, yarrow, Joe Pye weed, native rose (sp.)

Ferns and related families: sensitive fern, royal fern, cinnamon fern, New York fern, ground pine, equisetum (sp.).

Grasses: deer tongue grass, little bluestem, sedges (sp.)

Invasives: glossy buckthorn, oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, autumn olive. No Japanese knotweed observed on site.

Shoreland Permits or Approvals, Town and NH DES

Town of Lee Zoning Ordinance, Article XIV Shoreland Conservation District

An inquiry was made to the Lee Zoning Administrator, C. Rossi, to determine if town shoreland restrictions apply. C. Rossi visited the site with LCC members, reviewed the regulations, and determined "that what you are doing is an allowed use". (Email 9/24/21).

NH DES, Shoreland Protection

A NH DES Shoreland permit is not required. A DES Shoreland Section Supervisor advises that an exemption is allowed as long as the work is done according to the restriction shown below (Emails 2/7/2023 – 2/9/2023)

What activities DO NOT require a shoreland permit?

Many activities within the protected shoreland have been identified as not requiring a shoreland permit because they do not constitute construction, excavation, or fill, or are exempt by statute or rule.

- Using hand tools to remove invasive species or other noxious or harmful plants, such as poison ivy, including the root systems, provided that any area exceeding ten square feet without vegetation is replanted with non-invasive, non-harmful species.

Amanda Gourgue – LCC monthly report Feb, 2023

Treasurer's Report

David Allan Fund Account \$2,703.08

LCC Account \$12,525.76

Total of \$15,216.84

We had three expenses from our last meeting...

1/30/2023 Deb Sugerman Reimbursement - Voss Signs - Trail signs 34.00

2/6/2023 Ricci Lumber - Trail supplies 649.82

2/20/2023 Deb Sugerman Reimbursement - Lost Treasures Laser 12.00

Social Media Report

January 23rd - February 19th

People Reached 3,200

Post Engagements 1,386

Page Likes 3

Page Followers 7

The post with the most reach was from January 26th with the bark photos. It reached 642 people with 64 post clicks, reactions, comments, and shares. But our post with the most engagement was from February 7th and was the new trail maps. That reached 374 people with 129 post clicks, reactions, comments, and shares. Great job, Deb!

Monitoring Schedule

First monitoring starts 4/1. However, with the majority of the snow melted, depending upon Thursday's weather, we might be able to start early. Keep me posted if the group wants to do that.

Lee Conservation Commission
Education/Outreach Report for Meeting of February 21, 2023
Submitted by: Catherine Fisher

Activity since meeting of January 17, 2023

Articles: No articles were written in the past month. Due to a busier than usual schedule, I simply have not had the free time required to put together weekly articles. While I hope to get back to doing these, it may be time for me to cut back on the number of hours I'm putting in. If and when I resume writing, I am considering writing articles every two weeks rather than weekly.

CE Thank you Notes: I've been waiting on supplies to begin making these, and they arrived yesterday. This year's notes will feature American chestnut. As is the case with everything lately, stationary prices have gone up considerably. At the February meeting I will submit, for reimbursement, a copy of the invoice from PaperSource in the amount of \$64.55 for the purchase of 40 envelopes, 40 fold over cards and 40 sheets of backing paper. Once postage has been purchased, I will submit that invoice.

Nature Walks:

Lee Library: Four afternoon walks in the Town Forest (TF) are scheduled, with dates tbd - two in March and two in April.

Sunrise/Sunset Club: An April 19 walk is scheduled. The group will meet at 9:30 at one of the TF trailheads and finish at 11:30

ORPP Earth Day Walk: This multi-generational walk is an annual event but day and time have yet to be determined.

Frog Walks:

In the past I've done three of these - two daytime and an evening. I may limit it to two walks, one in the evening and one on a weekend morning. The time is dependent on when the frogs emerge, but an article will be submitted to the Lee E-Crier and our FB page, letting folks know that frog walks are coming.

Bedrock Gardens: Have had an inquiry about leading a walk or other community activity for their Lee Day open house in August.