

## **Lee Conservation Commission Minutes Tuesday, April 18, 2023**

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

**Alternate member:** Laurel Cox

**Emeritus:** Bill Humm

**Select Board Representative:** Scott Bugbee

**Motion: to approve the Minutes of March 21 Meeting:** D. Sugerman moved to accept, D. Shay seconded; the motion was unanimously approved by the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

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

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

- C. Fisher led 14 walks this past month!

**PB/ZBA/ Invasives projects:** A. Tappan submitted via email. Report attached.

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

**Easement Monitoring:** D. Shay submitted via email. Report attached report.

- D. Genes heard from Caren Rossi that NHDES was notified of possible encroachment on Misty Meadows/Fogg conservation easement from trailer park abutter property.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Town Forest Survey:** Survey work completed on the south property line. D. Genes suggested metal posts are needed along line to better identify boundary. It was noted that the abutting property owner's garage is over the line. A. Tappan suggested a property swap for the corner "triangle". S. Bugbee pointed out that a swap was not necessary as the town already has a right-of-way. A site walk was scheduled for May 2, 5pm, to explore options.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Lee Lands Conservation Easement Management and Town Trails:**

- **New Trail at LRP:** D. Sugerman presented a proposal for a new trail extension on the Ridge Trail at LRP. After much discussion, a site visit was scheduled for April 25, 5:00pm
- **Maude Jones Memorial Forest:** Check received for a bench to be placed in memory of Vohnny Weyrick. D. Sugerman received a request for an additional bench to be placed nearby so that flute players can gather and play. C. Fisher suggested the need for a bench policy on town lands.

**Motion:** To approve a second "flute players bench" in Maude Jones Memorial Forest. C. Fisher moved to accept, A. Tappan seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

- **Trail Committee work:** D. Sugerman reported on the Trails Committee work day activities, including a new kiosk placed at LRP, and presented a draft of a proposed Lee Trails logo. A. Tappan suggested that since the Trails Committee is a sub-committee of the Conservation Commission, that the plan proposed by the Trails committee for trails T-shirts instead be T-shirts that highlighted a broader scope of what the CC does, and would be suitable for Trails and CC members to wear while engaged in an activity on Town conserved lands. There seemed to be agreement about the idea of a single design suitable for both. A lively discussion by members about the logo followed. D. Sugerman reported work will begin on Town Forest Trails History document and start by interviewing C. Fisher and others. Propose posting document on TF kiosk

with other trails information. D. Genes reported that the NHACC will highlight the Lee trail improvements made by the Trails Committee.

- **Durgin Park:** D. Sugerman proposed an idea to manage the property and acknowledged that several town entities “manage” of the park with no clear lines of responsibility. D. Genes suggested forming a small group to talk to police, fire, and others in town to determine the best way to manage the property (e.g., restore ecology, trash issue, user control).
- **Town Forest:** D. Genes started a discussion asking what will the TF look like 50 years from now? Is there a consultant the LCC can hire to speculate what will change over time? A. Tappan suggested having a good forest management plan in place and finding a forester (Don Quigley, Steve Roberge) to help, as possibilities.
- **Old Mill Reserve:** D. Genes received an email from NRCS stating that a draft management plan (formally, a Wetland Reserve Plan of Operations) is in process. She will request from NRSC a copy of the draft for discussion at the May LCC meeting.
- **Joe Ford Property tree damage:** A. Tappan reported the Lee Selectboard approved having the town remove the winter storm damaged trees from the field, pending LCC approval. SELT also will need to approve. It was proposed that the Lee DPW work with Chuck Cox to cut and deposit trees into woods.

**Motion:** To approve removing storm damaged trees from Joe Ford field. A. Tappan moved to accept, D. Shay seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by LCC.

#### **Zoning and Planning Board:**

- A. Tappan reported she will attend the Planning Board Public Hearing on April 19<sup>th</sup> to repeal the existing 2017 Site Review Regulations and replace them with an entire rewrite. LCC comments include asking that vernal pools be classified as wetlands and control invasive plants in the town using Dept. of Agriculture methods.

#### **Invasive Species Work:**

- A. Tappan reported the Newmarket and Lee CC’s will be participating in the UNH Summer Stewardship Intern Program. The time frame is June 7-9 and June 12-16. Activities and locations TBD.
- A. Tappan reported the LCC will participate again this year in the New England Garlic Mustard Challenge. Volunteers from Extreme Networks (EN) have helped each year pull the non-native invasive plant from a slope on the Mills Reserve (LRP). EN will be helping with the buckthorn project this year. The window to do the work is the month of May, dates TBD.

#### **Natural Resources Inventory:**

D. Genes expressed a need to develop an NRI for the Town of Lee. She reported that the Strafford Regional Planning Commission will prepare a grant proposal to fund an NRI for the town, which will include a floodplain inventory.

**Adjourn: 6:40 pm**

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 16, 2023, 5pm**

Submitted by: David Shay

## **Lee Conservation Commission (LCC)**

### **Education/Outreach Report for Meeting of April 18, 2023**

**Submitted by:** Catherine Fisher

#### **Activity since meeting of March 21, 2023**

**Articles:** Four Nature Notes articles were written and posted on the LCC Facebook (FB) page and the NeighborLee FB page (Skunk Cabbage Part I; Skunk Cabbage Part II; Weasels Part III; Red Maples). Three of the articles have also appeared in the Lee E-Crier (the 4rd article will be in the E-Crier that will be published on April 21).

An Announcement giving information, dates and times of two vernal pool walks was written and appeared in the E-Crier on April 7 and again on April 14. The announcement was also posted on the Commission's FB page and on the NeighborLee FB page.

#### **Nature Walks:**

##### **Lee Library:**

April 13 Preschool Nature Walk: 9 adults and 8 children attended this walk - we had beautiful weather and were able to see both wood frog eggs and spotted salamander eggs as well as several red-backed salamanders, a brown creeper, tufted titmouse, blue jay, and white-throated sparrow.

April 13 After school Nature Walk: We had a good-sized group of children - 20+. All were extremely interested in vernal pool life. The children found wood frogs, their eggs and quite a few spotted salamander eggs. They were also interested in, and asked questions about, the types of insects they could see swimming in the pool and what kinds of trees and shrubs were growing nearby..

##### **Vernal Pool (Frog) Walks:**

These were very well attended! There was a wonderful generational mix with children aged 2 through 10 as well as adults including parents and grandparents.

Twilight Walk, April 14, 7:00 p.m.: About 40 people attended. Both wood frogs and spring peepers could be heard, and there was enough light for everyone to see both wood frog and spotted salamander eggs. Several children noticed a northern water snake hunting in the lagg of the small bog and one child (my grandson, Miles) used his flashlight to illuminate the snake so that all the participants were able to get a look. Everyone had a wonderful time and the children were especially thrilled to be out walking in the woods in the evening.

Sunday Morning Walk, April 16, 10:00 a.m.: Another multigenerational group of 28 people. About a third of the participants were children. Everyone was able to get good looks at the different egg masses in both the bog and the Mast Way vernal pool. We had a great time and folks asked lots of good questions!

#### **Upcoming Events:**

**Sunrise/Sunset Club, Town Forest Walk, April 19 9:30-11:30.** Destination tbd: We will be walking one of the longer loop trails or we may head down to Wheelwright.

**Earth Day Walk, Saturday, April 22, 9:30 pm.** This will be a walk on the Roundabout Trail to look at some of the different types of vernal pools found in the TF.

**Lee Library:** Preschool and afterschool walks are planned for May, date(s) to be decided.

**Bedrock Gardens (BG):** A visit to Bedrock Gardens is slated for sometime in May when we will meet with Roanne Robbins, BG educator. Mimi Winder has volunteered to participate as well, and will take part in this meeting. We will walk the grounds and plan event(s) for BG's Lee Day which will take place in August.

**Tadpole Stroll:** A walk with containers to look at some of the different tadpoles, nymphs, aquatic insects and other vernal pool invertebrates Lee Trails Committee Report

## Trails Committee Report 4.18.23

The Trails Committee plus volunteers spent 76 hours doing storm damage cleanup in LRP, TF, and MJMF (2.30.22, 2.5.23, 4.12.23)

Most of the month since the last Conservation Commission meeting was spent building kiosks:

- Three days (3.8.23, 3.18.23, 3.22.23) of building in Martin Thornton's garage
- Eight volunteers for a total of 49.5 hours
- Martin Thornton additional hours of work: 40 hours
- For pictures of the Committee building go to this [LINK](#)
- First placement at Little River Park 4.17.23, 9am - 12pm
  - This will give us a good idea of how to put the pieces together and how long it takes to complete one kiosk

Upcoming spring work days:

- 4.22.23, 9am to 12pm, LRP & MJMF, spring trail maintenance, Committee and Volunteers
- 5.6.23, 9am to 12pm, TF, spring trail maintenance, Committee and Volunteers

The Committee will look at dates for bridge and kiosk building at our April 26 meeting

Trails Committee logo

- The Trails Committee would like to have a logo to put on shirts so that when we are working, people know who we are
- For a picture of the current logo draft, go to this [LINK](#)
  - We are soliciting feedback from the LTC and the LCC on the draft
  - If you have feedback, please email Deb

Aldo Leopold bench from Charlotte Hitchcock

- Charlotte wrote to the Committee saying she would like to donate a second bench at MJMF
  - She wants to put it next to the first bench so that her group can play flutes by the stream
- The Trails Committee discussed this and decided to check in with the CC about their thoughts
- Dennis Regan mentioned the AMC had specific guidelines for these types of improvements. He agreed to put together a rough draft taking into consideration environmental impact, location, area, purpose, and which groups need to provide approval.
  - We will provide the CC with the first draft

Town Forest Trail History

- The Trails Committee discussed interviewing Catherine Fisher about who the Lee residents were who were involved in planning and building the trails in the Town Forest
  - A history exists for MJMF (written by Don Quigley)
  - Randy Stevens is currently writing the history of LRP
  - We have the history of the TF conservation easements, but not of the trails

## **April 18, 2023 – Treasurer/Social Media report/Monitoring Schedule**

### **Treasurer's Report**

David Allan Fund Account \$2,703.08

LCC Account \$13,593.27

Total \$16,296.35

We had three transactions since our last meeting...

Ricci Lumber - Lumber for Kiosks

\$801.57

Laurel Cox Reimbursement - NH Land Trust Event

\$20.00

Chuck Cox Mowing Ford Field November 2022

\$300.00

### **Social Media Report**

March 20th - April 16th

People Reached 7,943

Page Likes 10

Our most popular post was from April 10th, which was the weasels part 3 article from Catherine. It reached 4,300 people and had 110 reaches, 14 comments, and 12 shares. Great job, Catherine!

### **Monitoring Schedule**

Here is what we have done and what is left to be done -

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fpOkypCDK206zasKyCY15mbzje2eSd5WfND6QU0l84/edit?usp=sharing>

This week (April 19), we have the Aldag's. I sent that email out a little earlier today.

## **Monthly Report for 4/18/23 Lee CC Meeting**

Submitted by: Anne Tappan

### **Topic: ZBA Report**

Activity since last CC meeting: None

### **Topic: Planning Board Report**

Activity since last CC meeting:

Aubuchon Hardware store expansion final hearing 4/12/23. The project was cleared by the town engineer. The PB approved the project, with the addition of several conditions. Of interest to the LCC: debris clean-up will be done quarterly, records of the activity to be kept at the store and lighting must be Dark Sky compliant. The landscape plan is changed to White Spruce.

Action Required: None

Activity since last CC meeting:

**DRAFT 2023 Site Plan Review Regulations** now on town website

Public Hearing 19 April 2023 to adopt revised regulations.

To view plan go to [SITE PLAN REGULATIONS \(leenh.org\)](https://leenh.org)

Action Required: Any comments from the CC? Possible request to include vernal pools and invasive plants. Other concerns? A. Tappan will attend.

### **Topic: Glossy Buckthorn Removal at the Lamprey River Canoe Launch**

Activity since last CC meeting:

Volunteers from Extreme Networks, Day of Giving will assist with the buckthorn project this year. DPW will park a roll-off container at the site to collect brush. The brush will be taken to the Transfer Station for disposal. The project will take place in mid to late May. Specific date TBD, LCC and LRAC will be notified.

Action Required: The Invasives Working Group will continue work through the project to-do list.

### **Topic: Ford Field Winter Storm Damage**

Activity since last CC meeting:

A site visit with S. Bullek took place to assess the situation. DPW has equipment and operators to cut the storm damaged trees and move them into the adjoining woods. Work can be done in the next week or two.

An additional site visit, with two LCC members and Chuck Cox took place. Storm damaged trees need to be removed in order to allow unimpeded field mowing. Chuck can push smaller trees out of the field with his tractor. DPW would focus on larger areas of tree damage.



Action Required: Approvals needed: Project presented to the Select Board (4/17/23 meeting) and to the LCC (4/18/23 meeting) for approvals. The project description has been sent to SELT for review and approval.

**Topic: Ford South Access Lane Clearing**

Activity since last CC meeting:

See attachment for project description, "Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary, Vegetation Management Plan, Access Lane South of Homestead" submitted to and approved by SELT. DPW has equipment and operators to do the work.

Action Required: Approvals needed: Project presented to the Select Board (4/17/23 meeting). Previously approved (fall 2021) by LCC and SELT.

**Topic: UNH Summer Stewardship Interns**

Activity since last CC meeting:

Newmarket and Lee CC's will be participating in the UNH Summer Stewardship Intern Program. The time frame is June 7-9 and June 12-16. Lee was originally to have 2 days, we now have 4 days. June 15 and 16 are confirmed for Lee. Two additional days, TBD. Trails members will assist in a session on stewardship aspects of trails; a related activity may be planned.

Action Required: Details will be confirmed with Newmarket CC. Anne, Mimi, and Catherine will finalize activities and locations. Town Administration will be notified prior to the event.

**Topic: Garlic Mustard Challenge 2023**

Activity since last CC meeting:

LCC has participated in the New England Garlic Mustard Challenge for the past two years. Volunteers from Extreme Networks (EN) pulled 20 trash bags, each year, of the non-native invasive plant from a slope on the Mills Reserve (LRP). EN will be helping with the buckthorn project this year, so to keep up the pressure on the garlic mustard a different plan is needed. The window to do the work is the month of May, when the plant is in flower, but before it goes to seed. For more information see:

[The Garlic Mustard Challenge in New England | Nature Groupie](#)

Action Required: Volunteers are needed for one or two half day sessions to hand pull garlic mustard. Send out notices in the E-Crier, LCC Facebook and similar.

## **Monthly Report for April 18, 2023 Lee CC Meeting**

### **Topic: Easement Monitoring**

Activity since meeting of March 21, 2023

Easement properties monitored and by whom since last LCC meeting:

April 1 – Woodrow/Stone (D. Shay, A. Tappan; the property owners also attended)

April 5 – Misty Meadows/Fogg (C. Fisher, D. Shay)

April 12 – Riverside Farm (C. Fisher, D. Shay)

#### **Action Required:**

Garrity Reserve easement monitoring, originally scheduled for April 1, was not completed that day and will need to be rescheduled. Having an interest in invasive plants, the abutting property owners, Reuvin and Jenn (Woodrow/Stone), asked to accompany the group when the new monitoring date is scheduled. They were assured that their availability would be considered when deciding on a date.

Possible encroachment was found on the Misty Meadows easement along the boundary with the Jenkins Rd trailer park. Sediment runoff from an area showing recent construction activity at the park had flowed close to, or possibly into, the stream wetland on the Misty Meadows easement. The actual property line was not found during the monitoring. Caron Rossi was notified on 4/12 about the possible encroachment and said she would contact NHDES directly about the issue. No further action is required by the LCC at this time.

Submitted by: Dave Shay