

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2008, 4:00 PM

Acton Town Hall

Present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Bob Guba, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Nan Towle Millett, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman, Laurie Ullmann

Minutes: The October minutes were approved.

Construction at Town Forest: Jim reported that, after seeing some dug-up ground surrounded by yellow tape near Yin Peat's property at Town Forest, he checked in with Tom and was told that the Town is putting in pipes to drain water from the quarry.

Canoe launch: (1) Bettina reported that Eagle Scout Andrew Ossman has finished the steps on the riverbank, and she thinks he has done a good job. He still needs to make a presentation to the Conservation Commission, and Tom still needs to sign off on the project. (2) Jim and Nan are considering dripping vinegar into knotweed stems to try to kill them. They will need to determine whether there is a best time of year to do this.

Camp Acton kiosk: Rich, Jim, and Philip repaired the kiosk at Camp Acton, under Bob's supervision.

Blazing: (1) Bettina and Peggy have installed some new arrows at Guggins and touched up some of the blazes. (2) Philip noted that a sign pointing to Jay Lane from the Spring Hill loop trail would be a helpful addition. (3) It was decided that, when the weather permits, we should reblaze the trail leading to the top of Great Hill, changing it from red to blue. This trail was deliberately blazed red to distinguish it from the other blue trails within the yellow loop, but it was decided that it would be better to stick with our conventions that define red as access trails and blue as secondary trails within the main loop that connect with that loop. (4) It was noted that one of the property owners whose land is crossed by the red-blazed trail leading out of the playing field at Great Hill has marked their portion of the trail with No Trespassing signs. Although the red blazes have been removed from the part of the trail crossing private property, the rest of the trail is blazed. After some discussion it was decided that all of the blazes should be removed from this trail and that signs reading "Not a Through Trail" should be posted at each end of the trail.

Trail on Pacy Land: Philip suggested that we consider cutting a trail on the Pacy Land. In response to Jim's recollection that we had decided earlier to leave this as a trailless property, Philip noted that people are using the parcel anyway and an official trail (or trails) might be preferable to having them use a variety of informal trails. It was decided that Philip and Bob will flag a trail.

Mowing update: (1) Jim has started mowing the Nagog Hill meadow behind the Youngs, but the job was interrupted by a mower breakdown; the work will need to be finished after the machine is repaired. (2) Whit McConnon has mowed the meadow behind Hybrid Farm. (3) The Town, using its new mower, mowed the Jenks meadow, but it will need to be redone because it wasn't mowed low enough.

Quail Ridge easement update: Jim and Philip have flagged a corridor for the easement trail, but a question remains of what to do about the section that would have to go through a vernal pool if we stay entirely on our land. Tom stated that he prefers the idea of asking the Concord Water District for permission to route the trail on their land for a short distance to avoid the sensitive area on our land; the alternative is to build a boardwalk over that area.

Jim also stated that in talking with the QR people he has found that, rather than building sidewalks, they want to designate pedestrian pathways on streets with painted walking lanes. There will be a status update on Quail Ridge at tonight's Conservation Commission meeting. Finally, Joan stated that we need to check the recording of the Quail Ridge easement; Jim said he would do this.

Jenks boardwalk segments: Ed Russell, a Boxborough resident whose property abuts Guggins and who has helped with some of our boardwalk building efforts, has approached Jim with a proposal to build a few boardwalk segments to cover a muddy stretch of trail at Jenks (between the Idylwilde fields and the RR tracks). Ed has estimated that the materials would cost him around \$250. A motion to authorize this expenditure was approved, with the stipulation that Bob oversee the work.

Jenks connection with Boxboro: Through Liz Markiewicz of Boxborough, Jim has found that Boxborough has cut a trail along an easement from the cul-de-sac at the end of Reed Farm Rd. (off Liberty Square Rd.) to the AT&T right of way, very close to the Jenks trail where Ed Russell will be putting in his new boardwalk segments. Jim noted that it will require only a small amount of cutting to make the connection from our existing trail to the end of the easement trail. From the cul-de-sac it is a short walk down Reed Farm Rd. to one end of Boxborough's Half Moon Meadow trail, which goes between Reed Farm Rd. and Sargent Rd.

Buckthorn pulling at Guggins: Jim, Peggy, and a few others recently spent several hours pulling buckthorn saplings and trees at Guggins. In addition, a Cub Scout pack is planning to do some more of this work this weekend.

Website: Rich has added a link to a large selection of Philip's photographs of our conservation properties, under the heading "Photo Tour." Also, it was suggested that a link be added to the maps of Boxborough's conservation properties.

Possible Ft. Pond Brook access near Jones Field: At a recent meeting of the CPC, Jim made the suggestion that their open-space committee consider again the idea of acquiring, through a tax taking or some other means, a property along Ft. Pond Brook, across the street from Jones field; this property has been proposed as a good canoe launch site.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 17, at 4:00 PM.