

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, April 21, 2015, Town Hall, Room 126, 7 P.M.**

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Bob Farra, Bob Guba, Jim Snyder-Grant (Chair), Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Joe Holmes, Sherman Smith, Nan Towle Millett, John Watlington

Nonmembers present: Janet Adachi (LSC's Board of Selectmen liaison),

Jim called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. Sherman volunteered as timekeeper.

Review and approval of March 17 minutes

- Approval of minutes moved and voted unanimously.

Chair duties (continued)

Jim referred to his revised list.

- Jim, Bruce, and Bettina met with Tom on the list of LSC issues that Jim maintains.
- Jim would like to move the mapping project along. We need someone who is interested in this from an organizational point of view. Jim would help such a person. There was one non-member who has computer skills and designs websites, and had voiced an interest in the project. Jim will check the volunteer list to try to recall who that person might be. Jim would also like to move the new website along. It's now sitting on Bruce's server. A problem is that changing it is difficult and slow. Jim thinks there should be a permanent subcommittee dedicated to this. Joe H (and someone else) expressed some interest. Bob F suggested that the website might be a good project for a high school student. Jim will check with a couple committee members not present and the volunteer list, and think about the high school student suggestion.
- Jim pointed out that the LSC used to have educational events and wondered if they should be resumed. One person could create an event and Phil Keyes could handle publicity. Does anyone have an idea for such an event, such as a speaker, a workshop, a wildlife topic? Silence, so "we won't do that for awhile."
- It was noted that Tom Tidman still hosts walks on Conservation Land through Community Ed and the Recreation Department.
- Bettina is updating Conservation Land rules. She is watching Conservation Commission events and will involve that Commission on the rules situation "when the time is ripe."

Review (High School) Senior Community Service Day plans

This will be Friday, May 1. In the early a.m., faculty members provide the ABRHS senior volunteers with a breakfast and then the seniors proceed to work for 2-3 hours. Nan is using volunteers at Ironwork Farm. For the Arboretum, Bettina has two, Karen Mackin has a set, and Jim will have a crew (on Mary Donald's land). Linda McElroy will have a crew at the end of Wheeler Lane with Laurie supervising, and ready to propose a couple of his own ideas for volunteer tasks.

Trail "You are Here" holders: Whether and how to use them (Bruce)

Bruce was absent, so we'll talk about this at the May meeting. The Committee was reminded that the maps in the holders have to be laminated to avoid water damage.

#### Invasives priorities (John, Bettina)

Bettina, Jim, John, and Sherm met to whittle down the invasives list to 7: garlic mustard, Asian bittersweet, glossy buckthorn, bush honeysuckle, multiflora rose, mile-a-minute, and Japanese barberry (because this contributes to the tick problem). Wetland and aquatic invasives were intentionally not considered.

The first two, everyone should recognize. Glossy buckthorn is everywhere. We don't know of any mile-a-minute spots in Acton but it's around us and easily transmitted by birds. Japanese barberry is yellow, European barberry is red, or vice versa. Most of the 7 are removable by volunteer labor. Most require uprooting, but don't require herbicides. Most on-line recommendations are herbicidal. There was further discussion about locations and appearances.

John will send out a link to website we have now and will fix the website so we can identify the 7. Bettina has website/app information. Jim has maps from 2006 that show all infestation sites so we all can deal with them by ourselves or direct a group to do some work. There will be a signup sheet at [actoninvasives.org](http://actoninvasives.org).

On May 19, Jim is talking to the Horticulture Study Group of the Acton Garden Club at the Acton TV studio on removing invasives. The program begins at 9:15 a.m.

Bettina and John are planning to create a fairly simple display at Great Hill (on the left as you walk in from the fire-station parking) to teach what invasives are. The display will identify several species of invasives for the public.

#### Wright Hill Steward (Jim)

Jim Salem, Jim's neighbor, lives right next to Wright Hill and is interested in being the Wright Hill Steward. Jim will get him going through the VCC process and have conversations and walks with him like we did with Bob F at Robbins Mill.

#### Pratt's Brook Wetherbee Steward (Jim)

John and Jim walked Wetherbee with Todd Tsakiris who has lived for many years on Alcott Street next to Wetherbee. Todd is willing to be Wetherbee Steward as an Associate member of the LSC. (Note: There will be more Associate spots available when the LSC Charter is approved.) Todd has an informal trail into Wetherbee from his home, knows a lot about the parcel, and picked up things quickly. Todd, like others, thinks we should change the yellow loop trail to include the eastern-most blue trail.

#### First look at June transitions (Jim)

Jim suggested that we could have revolving Chair, with someone being Chair one year at a time. Jim thinks that Ann Shubert will be leaving, so Grassy Pond becomes available for a Steward. Bettina will make up a sign for Grassy Pond, like she did for Wetherbee. Jim will contact Dave Wilson who has shown some interest in Grassy Pond. Everybody at this meeting is planning to continue with the LSC. Also, all associates, except Ann, will renew for 2015. As for regulars members, Bob F is on for another 3 years; Jim will continue, but not as chair, and Laurie will stay on.

Also, Joe W has expressed interest in being Morrison Farm Steward. Were that to happen, we would need a new Steward for Wills Hole/Town Forest. Right now Morrison Farm is a Municipal Property. So far there have been no real conversations about Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk. As of now, Dave

Cochrane (current Vice Chair) will stay on as a member.

### April Town Meeting & LSC

Re the Discovery Museums (DM) and Great Hill (GH): The CPC has given the DM a \$150K CPA grant in support of a \$1.3M DM project for an outdoors “Playscape” that will include enhancement of the DM entrance to GH. Per John, the entrance trail from the museum currently is impassable. There are drainage issues and a stream to cross. Jim will get a DM contact for John and John will be in touch with the DM about the GH connection.

Town Meeting Warrant Article 26 authorized a land exchange to help the Town acquire the Fish and Wildlife property on Harris Street. Conceivably the site could become storage space for LSC tools and equipment, like the stuff Bob G has in his garage. The Town is giving up 6 acres of Municipal Land that will extend the State-owned Whittier land slightly.

Tom Tidman has not mentioned how space on the Harris Street site could be used by the LSC. The small garage on the property is likely to be torn down, but there are carports in the main building. We will talk about this again if and when this moves forward.

### Parcel reports

- Great Hill: There are some bad trail conditions at GH. In addition to the DM trail, there is a problem at the southern entrance trail from Piper Road. Two culverts drain into the low spot for drainage and nothing drains out. Maybe there would be a way to span the wet portion.
- Canoe Launch: It is not clear where the parking is. Originally, there was gravel aggregate parking and a nice meadow. We used to post a sign for where to park, and that users should not park on the grass. Now the distinction is not as clear and users are parking on the grass. The concern is that the grassy area will turn to mud if we allow parking on the grass. Some felt that we should put up a fence or posts to control the parking. Some felt that this might block access to the river. How would some parking control happen? Tom Tidman, probably with a Town crew doing the work. Joe H will talk to Tom about this.
- General: How to educate the public with dogs on picking up dog poop on trails? Instead of plastic bags, a dog-phile could scoop poop off the trail and throw it into the woods. This is a problem for conservation lands all over the state. The problem appears to be greatest near parking lots. It may have been particularly bad this winter, as dogs could not get too far off the trails due to deep snow. Ironically, there seems to be more poop at NARA than most any place. There were a couple suggestions that we encourage dog people to not use bags (to prevent bags from ending up in the woods). We could have high school students buttonhole people as they enter a parcel to encourage them to pick up their and other dogs’ poop. There are people who actually pick up other dogs’ poop. Sherm noted that he watched what appeared to be a commercial dog walker with several dogs at Pratt’s Brook.
- Wills Hole/Town Forest: The kiosk at the Nagog Park entrance is tipped.

### May agenda

Bettina and Joe H: Fishing as an agenda item — sometime in the future.

John: Great Hill trail routes, once considered for May, to move to June.

Bruce: “You are Here” signs.

Joe W: Morrison Farm if the Morrison Farm Committee meets before our May meeting.

Bruce and Bettina: A field mower — what’s on the State Bid List and maintenance information (pickup truck w/hitch, trailers, etc.).

Jim: More on transitioning (which happens in June).

Future agenda: Reroute yellow trail at Wetherbee, invasives, new blazing tasks for Peggy Liversidge. (Peggy will be proposing what needs blazing. Stewards could send her ideas.)

Evaluate this meeting

Good! It didn't go until 9 o'clock. John's cookies were good. Bettina will bring snacks for the May meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 19 at 7 P.M. in Room 126.