

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting
February 7, 2023
Via teleconference - 7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Judy Asarkof, Tom Brownrigg, Dwight DeMay, Debby Geltner, Julie Durrell, Warren Lyman, and Rhonda Michaud. Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard was present.

This meeting was conducted by Zoom teleconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with all participants at home. The meeting was opened at 7:05 PM by Chair Lyman.

Guests: Prospective new LSC members Claudia Talland and Shane Usher

The January 10, 2023, minutes were approved as amended.

1. Prospective new members: Shane Usher and Claudia Talland

Usher and Tolland joined the meeting and Lyman asked LSC members to introduce themselves and explain why they joined the committee. Afterward Usher and Talland explained their interest in the committee. Usher said that he moved to Carlisle two years ago and said that he enjoys hiking. Talland said that she has lived in Carlisle since 1991 and has recently retired from internal medicine. She now has more time for other activities and enjoys walking on conservation lands. Later, LSC members voted unanimously to recommend to ConsCom that they be appointed to LSC. Willard said that they should write a brief letter of interest and send this to the Select Board.

2. Towle Field

a. Suggested signs describing field management

Geltner has been working on a sign but was still in the process of modifying it. She asked members for their comments on content. Asarkof suggested mentioning the new mowing protocol and why it was adopted, namely to encourage native plants and wildlife habitats. Talland suggested showing a map with the three mowing areas, and members thought this was a good suggestion. Lyman thought that this information should also be in the kiosk. Asarkof suggested a diorama on the knoll with pictures of different habitats: meadow, wetlands, and forest.

Geltner will continue working a sign with inputs from Asarkof and Durrell. Regarding locations, the signs should be near the field entrances, although Talland suggested placing a sign near the trail entrance from Bingham Road.

b. Kiosk signs

Michaud has been working on kiosk signs and will send these to LSC members before the next meeting. Willard can laminate the signs if necessary.

c. Adding native plants

Asarkof mentioned that retired Harvard botanist Walter Kittredge has visited Towle Field on several occasions and has been preparing a list of plants. Asarkof asked LSC members to consider planting native plants, and mentioned that there is, for example, very little milkweed in the field. No further discussion occurred, and the topic will be considered at the next meeting.

3. Foss Farm – Protection of Sandplain-Grassland Habitat

Lyman, Michaud, and Asarkof attended the ConsCom 1/26/23 meeting for a discussion of the proposal to protect grassland habitat by installing barrier posts at various locations. Lyman gave a summary of the discussion. He said that farmer Mark Duffy stated that the proposed roadway width was not adequate, and that his farm vehicles needed 20 ft. He also thought that the proposed t-posts posed a danger of impalement to animals. A ConsCom member suggested a larger pull-over at the middle of the staked area so vehicles could get by each other more easily.

After hearing comments, the chair decided to postpone discussion to a later date. Willard noted that she has received comments from the Pony Club, which she will forward to LSC members. Asarkof asked members to read the proposal again with the goal of accommodating other concerns. Michaud suggested a site visit before the next meeting with ConsCom. Asarkof thought that this should happen when the weather is warmer.

4. Cranberry Bog Working Group

Lyman said that the next meeting is February 13 at 7 PM, and that he is not able to attend. Geltner volunteered to attend the meeting and take notes.

5. Plans for Invasive Plants on Major Conservation Lands

At a previous meeting Asarkof raised the question of LSC starting a program to remove invasive plants on other conservation lands. She said that Steve Tobin (Trails Committee) and Sally Ishizaka are “weed warriors” who have been trained by Sudbury Valley Trustees. Asarkof suggested that LSC develop a protocol for removing invasives and specify the types of methods that could be used. Matty Kiszewski could help with training volunteers. Brownrigg said that many invasives start along trails, where there is soil disturbance. It would be helpful to remove these before they spread into areas off the trail. Asarkof suggested having a small team that would target specific areas. Durrell noted that they have used Roundup (glyphosate) to remove

Japanese Knotweed on their property, and that Knotweed removal without herbicides is very difficult.

6. Stewardship Program

Lyman described the Stewardship program to ConsCom at their January 26, 2023 meeting, and there were no negative comments made. Lyman encouraged people to try the “app” OnX Hunt recommended by Asarkof as a means of locating property borders. There are 35 conservation properties, and Lyman would like checklists completed by the end of 2023.

7. Earth Day 2023 Program: “Route to Sustainability”

Durrell prepared a Google Slide presentation for use at the Earth Day celebration, April 22, 2023. She also prepared single page document “How to Improve Wildlife Habitat on Your Property”. Lyman prepared a page with general information about LSC. Lyman showed two maps of Carlisle from the Open Space & Recreation Plan (OS&RP) and asked members to decide which one to use at Earth Day.

Members discussed these documents, starting with Durrell’s Google slide presentation. Geltner said that the presentation focused mainly on pollinators, and it would be better to include mention of wildlife habitat for other animals, such as shrubs that birds would use. Durrell and Lyman have sent a request to the author of a book by H. Holm (see below) referenced by Durrell requesting permission to reproduce material. After discussion, LSC members voted to use map 10 of the OS&RP showing conservation lands with names.

Durrell suggested having candy at the Earth Day table; it must be individually wrapped and a container provided for disposal. Willard commented that the candy wrapping should not be plastic. Presentation materials will be reviewed again at the March meeting.

7. Review of Annual Report

Michaud circulated a draft prior to the meeting, and there was discussion of proposed revisions. Willard had not received the report, and Michaud will send her a copy. The report is due March 10.

8. Other

Willard said that ConsCom has approved a Notice of Intent for the removal of the Greenough barn. ConsCom is still awaiting a response from the Office of Dam Safety regarding the proposal to repair Cranberry Bog Dam #1.

Documents discussed at meeting:

- J. Durrell, “How You Can Improve Wildlife Habitat on Your Property”, a Google slide presentation for Earth Day 2023, based on the book Pollinators of Native Plants, by Heather Holm, Pollinator Press, LLC, 2014.
- J. Durrell, “How to Improve Wildlife Habitat on Your Property”, prepared for Earth Day 2023, based on the book by Holm above.
- W. Lyman, “Land Stewardship Committee”, a summary of LSC activities prepared for Earth Day 2023.

Next Meetings:

March 14, 2023 @ 7 PM

April 11, 2023 @ 7 PM

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 3/14/23