

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting
June 14, 2022
Via teleconference - 7:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Present: Judy Asarkof, Tom Brownrigg, Dwight DeMay, Debby Geltner, Warren Lyman, Rhonda Michaud, and Nick Ognibene. 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 7:10 PM by Chair Lyman.

The May 17, 2022, minutes were approved as amended. Discussion of election of LSC officers was postponed until later in the meeting (New Business, Item 2), so that DeMay and Ognibene could attend.

New Business

1. Notes from June 6, 2022, Cranberry Bog Working Group (CBWG) meeting

Lyman attended the meeting and provided his notes prior to the LSC meeting. He said that the CBWG recommended that ConsCom ask Mark Duffy to remove the pump house and irrigation system. Geltner noted that a researcher at the Tufts Veterinary School is conducting a survey of bat vocalizations at the bog and uses the pump house to stabilize a tower used for monitoring equipment. Willard said that there will be similar towers installed at Foss Farm and Towle Field.

Regarding the bog restoration plan, Lyman said that at their next meeting on July 11 the CBWG would discuss a draft document by Belitz (incorporating some material by consultant MaryAnn DiPinto) describing goals, objectives, methods to achieve the objectives, and regulatory requirements of any plan. Lyman expressed disappointment that the CBWG did not have a member with expertise in wildlife habitat management. He suggested that LSC members review the future restoration plan when submitted with the Notice of Intent (NOI) and provide comments.

At Town Meeting, funds were approved to prepare a NOI for Cranberry Bog Dam #1. Willard said that ConsCom is waiting for David Crossman of B&C Associates to flag the wetlands, after which there will be an inspection of the dam and recommendations for repair as required by the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety. Willard recently counted 42 cuts into the dam presumably made by beavers, muskrats, and dogs.

Abutter Chris Spinney submitted a proposal to CBWG to install flash boards at the west impoundment (near Fiske St.) to raise the water level about 8 inches. This would make it easier to use kayaks in the reservoir. Willard expressed reservations about this proposal, saying that it did not consider a possible flooding event, in which case the water level could rise above the flash boards. She said that proper management of water levels is difficult and requires more

careful study. The CBWG voted to request that ConsCom take up the issue of the requested raising of the water level. Lyman said that three ConsCom members, all of whom are also CBWG members, voted in favor of Spinney's proposal.

The CBWG also recommended the removal of trees such as white pine and red maple, that are growing within the "in-renovation" bog. Lyman said that continued growth of trees would spoil the bog vista. Geltner suggested some native shrubs such as speckled alder and blueberry be retained since they are used by wildlife.

2. Election of LSC officers for next Fiscal Year

After discussion, Geltner nominated Lyman and Michaud to continue as co-chairs. Ognibene seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Brownrigg said that he could continue as Secretary, and all voted in favor (except Brownrigg, who abstained).

3. New LSC members?

Lyman noted that some members are elderly and might retire. He asked if LSC should publish an announcement in the *Carlisle Mosquito* for new members. Geltner thought there should be an announcement soon. Willard thought July and August were probably not a good time to advertise since many people are on vacation. Asarkof mentioned that Dawn Erickson, who is doing a Mass Audubon-related research project at the Woodward Land, might be interested in joining.

4. Towle Field

Michaud organized a group of people (mostly LSC members) to flag poison ivy and glossy buckthorn at Towle Field prior to the arrival of John Bakewell. Bakewell will continue herbicide treatments at Towle and needs to complete the task by the end of June. People flagged plants at Towle for three days in late May, using approximately 1100 flags.

Bakewell treated Towle during the first two weeks of June. Prior to Bakewell's arrival, Willard asked LSC members if the flags should be left in place to determine whether the plants had been treated. However, Bakewell removed the flags after he treated, since otherwise he would not know if he had treated the plants. Lyman visited Towle after Bakewell and said that he saw at least 100 flags. Willard thought that Bakewell had not finished treating all the plants; he will return later to treat at Towle Field and at the Cranberry Bog.

Ognibene asked if Bakewell used glyphosate to treat poison ivy. Brownrigg said that in the past he has used triclopyr. Asarkof said that triclopyr, when wet, can cause blindness. She thought that there should be signs posted regarding herbicide treatment so that people will not let dogs run through field while the herbicide was wet. Ognibene said that ConsCom members are

concerned about the reduced mowing protocol encouraging more invasive plants at Towle Field and said that LSC needs to monitor invasives.

Regarding mowing, Lyman said that if there is no fall Town Meeting, there would not be a contract for the new three-year mowing protocol this year, in which case only 1/3 of the field could be mowed. He offered to help Willard draft a mowing proposal. Asarkof said that she would send Willard contact information for the two other mowers that she had spoken with this spring.

Willard expressed disappointment that Jack O'Connor has not been properly thanked for his many years of service mowing Towle Field. O'Connor also helped pro-bono with an earlier sheep project and worked with the DPW to clear trees along field edges. Lyman suggested that ConsCom and LSC write a letter of appreciation, signed by all members.

5. Foss Farm: Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Asarkof sent members a memorandum regarding habitat damage caused by motorists and others at Foss Farm. Foss Farm has uncommon "sandplain grassland" habitat favored by several species of tiger beetles, ground-nesting wasps, and plants such as New England Blazing Star. Motorists going to the community gardens drive too fast and sometimes go off the road onto sensitive habitats. Agricultural operations by Great Brook Farm have also caused damage. There have been recent reports of several turtles being killed on the access road while nesting. Asarkof also found a small patch of oil-soaked sand on the entrance road to the gardens.

Asarkof suggested adding speed bumps and turn-offs at certain places so cars can get around without driving off the road. Ognibene suggested that people with garden plots be contacted, since these people are likely the main source of the problem, although people with horses who use Foss Farm should also be contacted. Brownrigg suggested that Asarkof write an article for the *Carlisle Mosquito* describing the unusual plants and animals at Foss Farm. Lyman said he would draft a note to be sent to Foss gardeners.

5. Habitat/Pollinator Project

Lyman asked that members read the "Eco Zone" articles in the *Carlisle Mosquito* and think about possible projects or other ways for LSC to contribute. He will not include the Habitat/Pollinator Project on the next meeting agenda unless there is something new to discuss. In response to Lyman's question about Eco Zone, Asarkof explained that Kay Hurley has assembled a group of contributors, and there is a publication schedule in place. People who are interested in contributing should contact Kay Hurley. Articles of ecological interest could also be published outside of Eco Zone or as a letter to the editor.

Other Business

1. Memorial bench at Cranberry Bog

Lyman said that ConsCom has not decided whether to support this project.

2. Rocky Road to Benfield

Brownrigg said that his wife D'Ann had difficulty walking on the large stones placed in the Benfield cart path. He suggested asking DPW to put finely crushed stone along one side of the path. Geltner said that sand is being used to fill gaps between rocks at the Cranberry Bog and might be also used at Benfield.

Next Meetings:

July 12, 2022 @ 7 PM

August 9, 2022 @ 7 PM

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 7/12/22