

**Land Stewardship Committee Meeting**  
**July 12, 2022**  
**Via teleconference - 7:00 PM**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Judy Asarkof, Tom Brownrigg, Dwight DeMay, Warren Lyman, and Rhonda Michaud. Debby Geltner and Nick Ognibene were absent. Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard was present for the start of the meeting but left at 7:20 PM for another appointment.

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: Wanda Avril (?), Julie Durrell, and Chris Spinney

The June 14, 2022, minutes were approved as amended.

**New Business**

1. LSC reappointments and potential new members

Julie Durrell of Fiske St. has expressed an interest in joining the LSC. She is an artist who taught art in the Lexington school system and is now retired. She is also a cellist and plays in the Carlisle Orchestra. She is interested in nature, and often visits the Cranberry Bog; she reported seeing a Killdeer nest there recently.

LSC members introduced themselves and stated why they joined the LSC and their specific interests. Lyman ended with a description of LSC activities, including baseline reports, signage, and monitoring for invasive plants. He encourages members to find projects that interest them.

After discussion, LSC members unanimously voted to support Durrell's appointment to LSC. Lyman suggested that she send a statement of interest and a resume to Willard, who will schedule a discussion with ConsCom at their next meeting. Lyman thanked Durrell for her interest in joining the committee and suggested that she visit the Town's website for information on baseline reports and other documents.

2. Notes from the July 11, 2022, Cranberry Bog Working Group meeting: Lyman said that the working group did not have a quorum, and the meeting was cancelled.

3. Towle Field

a. Herbicide treatment of invasive plants

Lyman said that John Bakewell, who has been treating poison ivy and glossy buckthorn this year, has completed treatment. On a recent visit, Lyman found only one flag (used to mark locations) and saw very little poison ivy except in the west field. Bakewell is willing to return to Towle again this season, and there is funding for treatment. The question arose as to whether Bakewell should return this season or wait until next season.

Brownrigg said that in his opinion it might not be possible to determine the effectiveness of treatment until next year. Michaud suggested that the poison ivy in the west field be treated this year. She also said that not much buckthorn has been treated. Asarkof said that there is healthy-looking buckthorn in the south part of the main field and that more attention should be given to buckthorn. She mentioned a person who removes buckthorn using mechanical methods (not herbicides) and suggested that this person be asked to remove buckthorn as an experiment. A small area at Towle Field could be treated in this way and checked again next year to determine effectiveness.

Asarkof was concerned that the triclopyr herbicide used by Bakewell can cause eye damage (especially to dogs) while it is still wet. She thought that Bakewell should post signs warning the public and include the date of the treatment. Lyman will contact Willard and request proper signage.

There was discussion as to how to determine the effectiveness of herbicide treatment. Brownrigg said that in 2015-2018 (when Bakewell was funded using a CPA grant) he established several small test areas that he could monitor and estimate the number of plants killed. He used wooden dowels to mark these places, but some were removed during mowing. He was able to return to the approximate locations using GPS, which in open areas was accurate to +/- 10-15 ft. Metal markers could be used but might require the use of a metal detector; Michaud said she has one that could be used. Lyman suggested that LSC decide upon a method that could be used next year.

#### b. Towle Field mowing

Lyman said that ConsCom has funding for mowing Towle this year. However, it is currently not possible to cover the cost of mowing for more than one year; the proposed mowing protocol states that 1/3 of the field be mowed every year. Willard plans to send out requests for bids on mowing 1/3 of the field after this year's first frost. Lyman asked Asarkof to send him a map showing the three sections of Towle Field. LSC will need to decide which section will be mowed this year.

#### 4. Foss Farm – wildlife & habitat protection

At the last meeting Asarkof expressed concern that a special grassland habitat at Foss Farm is being damaged by vehicles, either by people driving to and from the community gardens,

agricultural workers, and possibly others. She returned from Maine in early July and saw evidence of possible dirt bikes in sensitive areas.

Willard said that garden manager Jack O'Connor has alerted Foss Farm gardeners to slow down and look for turtles crossing the access road. She also recommended using stakes along the road, so people do not enter sensitive areas. Guest Chris Spinney suggested using a rope between signposts, with small signs saying "sensitive area" along the access road. Asarkof said the Pony Club should be aware of the problem and will contact them.

Several members thought that public education and marking important areas were needed. Lyman asked Asarkof to write a preliminary plan for discussion at the next meeting.

## 5. Benfield Baseline Assessment

Lyman said that ConsCom has received the report, and there will be a joint LSC/ConsCom for discussion, probably August 18. He said that there might also be an article about Benfield Land in an upcoming *Carlisle Mosquito*. Lyman might start work on the Russell Conservation Land baseline assessment this winter and encouraged others to work on assessments for other properties.

## 6. Signs – Update on orders & needed work

Lyman has the new signs, and 5 or 6 need to be assembled and attached to posts. The new signs are 2 inches wider than the old signs, so the posts will have to be moved farther apart. The DPW is short-handed due to a loss of one of their workers, so Lyman will be asking LSC members for help with the signs.

## 7. Wildflower Planting – Adjustment for Cranberry Bog?

Lyman was expecting to plant New England Blazing Star in the sand-covered bog, but recently discovered that the bog was mowed. He asked members whether he should wait before planting them in the sand-covered bog, or plant them in an area west of the Bog House where sand was removed for use on the cranberry bog fields. After discussion, Lyman decided to wait until he better understands the mowing schedule.

## **Other Business**

### 1. Benfield mowing and the rocky road to Benfield

Willard told Lyman that the Benfield Land has not been mowed, but that Jack O'Connor will mow it. Brownrigg suggested that LSC consider a mowing schedule which would include a spring mowing of a portion of the field that is being overrun with garlic mustard and oriental

bittersweet. He also asked about the possibility of making a more walker-friendly path along the side of the cart path, which has large stones. Lyman said he would contact Willard regarding possible DPW assistance.

## 2. Request for DPW brush/grass cutting at Towle & Greenough parking lots

Lyman said that brush needs to be cut back at both parking lots, especially the north (main) parking lot at Greenough. He will request that Willard contact the DPW.

## 3. Cranberry Bog questions from Chris Spinney

Spinney, an abutter to the Cranberry Bog, would like to raise the water level of the west reservoir so that kayaks could be used more easily. He noted that there is a public trail easement from Fiske St. which would allow people to launch a canoe or kayak once a platform has been constructed. He wanted to know which committee would be responsible for management of the Cranberry Bog after the Cranberry Bog Working Group (CBWG) has finished their study. Lyman said that no decision has been made, but that this would be part of a final report prepared by the CBWG to ConsCom. Spinney offered his help for future work at the bog.

### **Next Meetings:**

August 9, 2022 @ 7 PM

September 6 or 13, 2022 (TBD) @ 7 PM

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 8/09/22