

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 5, 2004, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy (Chair), Nan Millett, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Tom Tidman, Laurie Ullmann; guests: Charlie Carlson, Hart Millett, Peter Waksman

* New steward for Pratt's Brook: Linda welcomed Charlie Carlson, a Pratt's Brook walker who has expressed interest in replacing her as that property's new steward.

* Bluebird lecture: Gigi gave a brief reminder of next week's talk and slide show by Gail Hansche, who will be speaking about bluebirds and related avian topics on Wednesday, May 12, at 7:30 PM in the library meeting room. Before the formal program, between 7:00 and 7:30, there will be time to socialize and look at display materials.

* Wills Hole bog kiosk dedication ceremony: Dave gave a brief update on this weekend's kiosk dedication ceremony (Saturday, May 8, 10:00 AM). Bob reported that he, Rich, Laurie, and Jim dug the post holes and that he and Dave installed the panels.

* High school senior Community Service Day (April 30): Ann's crew continued with the ongoing wood chipping of the Grassy Pond trails. Although she had hoped they would work on the yellow loop trail, most of what was accomplished was along the red access trail from the end of Samuel Parlin Drive. Bob's crew at Nagog Hill continued working on the red access trail beside the horse farm (putting down additional wood chips on the side of the trail intended for walkers rather than horses) and removed an old barrel from the meadow behind the barn.

* Other cleanup and trail work: (1) Gigi reported that she and Laurie cleaned up the vernal pool at Wetherbee that is right next to Rt. 2 and removed 12 large bags of trash. (2) At Great Hill, Bob put down wood chips on a wet section of the red trail leading east out of the field behind the South Acton fire station.

* Acton rock piles: Following up on her comments at the April meeting, Linda introduced Peter Waksman, a Concord resident, NEARA member, and member of the Concord Historical Commission who has extensively explored and mapped many rock-pile sites in Acton and several surrounding towns (with Acton having some of the best sites). Peter proceeded to describe several different kinds of piles, which he believes are of Native American origin (or inspiration) but not ancient, and which he differentiated from rock piles that would have been created by field clearing by colonial farmers. He has found the largest number of piles at Spring Hill (more than a thousand piles at 10 separate sites), as well as at Nagog Hill (approximately 500 piles), Grassy Pond (100), Great Hill (70), and the Newtown Road end of Arlington Street near the Episcopal Church (60); many are located by springs or other bodies of water and are aligned northwest or southeast, and some form a grid. He noted that the Narragansett Indian Tribal Preservation Office and the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) are involved in efforts to preserve and protect these sites and that Curtis Hoffman, an archaeologist from Bridgewater State College, and his students are studying them. Peter would like to see greater public awareness of these artifacts (and of other structures such as the chamber at Nashoba Brook), with the end of preserving as many as possible; some, such as the chamber, are well known and are good candidates for being made more public (with signage, a protection plan, site documentation).

In response to stewards' interest, Peter offered to lead a walk to visit some of the best of the Acton sites; he and Linda will decide on a weekend date.

* Acton chamber: Linda summarized the current state of the chamber project: Sue Carlson, the architect she knows through NEARA, plans to survey the chamber sometime this spring or summer; if we decide on the basis of her findings to proceed with reconstruction work requiring a mason, we should apply for a CPA grant in November, with the expectation that the work would begin next spring or summer. In the meantime, Linda recommended that this summer we close down the access trail she says runs directly beside the chamber and reopen the one along a right-of-way corridor from the end of Milldam Road to the yellow trail. There was disagreement, however, about whether the trail beside the chamber is still being used, as well as about the exact location of the right-of-way corridor from Milldam and its usability as an access trail. Bob, Philip, and Laurie agreed to check this out and report back next month.

* Dumping at Spring Hill's Jay Lane parking lot: Philip reported that he has taken photographs of the dumping and burning of debris at the Jay Lane parking lot, which he reported last month, and said that he has tried to contact the

owners of 97 Strawberry Hill Road, whom he has identified as those responsible. He will continue to monitor the situation and will initiate a ConsCom letter if necessary.

* Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 2.