

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 2, 2003, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Nan Millett, Cyril Murphy, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant, Tom Tidman, Paul Wasserbohr

* Vernal pools: Gigi reported that the pools are just now starting to come to life. She plans to gather the required information at Stoneymeade and Grassy Pond (perhaps with Ann's help at GP). Although she has discovered that the vernal pool at Stoneymeade is technically uncertifiable because of nearby culverts, it may still be functional as a vernal pool, so she plans to monitor it anyway. She also handed information to Cyril so that he can decide whether to try to certify the two pools at Jenks, perhaps with her help.

* Guidebook: Two weeks ago Linda sent Lynn Horsky the first round of corrections, based on comments and suggestions made by Ann, Bob, and Peggy and incorporated by Linda. The hope was that the next round of proofs would arrive at Tom's office by April 1, but they had not been received by the time of the meeting. When they do arrive, the same four people, plus Tom, will read them over a final time. Rich indicated that a few small map issues also need to be corrected. Although it is by no means certain, we still hope to have the books ready for Acton's Earth Day (May 3).

Nan reported that she has raised \$2,345 from 23 sponsors. Linda will be meeting soon with Morene Bodner to try to work out a mutually acceptable wording to acknowledge ACT's donation of \$2,000, plus an additional \$500 if such an acknowledgement is added. Linda said that this would have to fit on the same page as the rest of the sponsors; Jim clarified that ACT did not stipulate that the acknowledgement had to be on a separate page.

Since the last meeting Paul has tried unsuccessfully to get a short request for donations into the Beacon; it was decided that we are now at a point where there is no use in pursuing this further.

* Invasives plan: Since the last meeting, Jim's priority in this area has changed from identifying the worst invasives sites in town to focusing on the specific problem of Norway maples in a portion of the Arboretum (an area of concern identified in the Arboretum's Master Plan). He has met with Tom and Dean Charter to discuss the situation and will be working on a plan for how to proceed. This will include a preliminary survey of the area, for which Jim expects to send out a request for volunteers sometime soon. Control strategies for Norway maple include yanking the smallest plants, cutting down trees and painting the stumps with Round-up, and girdling tree trunks. If an herbicide is used, it will be applied by town employees who have herbicide applicator licenses.

* Marking Arboretum trails: Linda reported that Cathy Hatfield has requested LSCom representation for the Friends of the Acton Arboretum's BOD meeting on April 24. In addition to the Norway maple control project, they plan to discuss marking the Arboretum's trails. Linda is not sure whether they have already decided to adopt the blazing technique or whether that is still to be decided. Jim, who has offered to attend the meeting, will report about this decision. If they do go forward with the blazing, Linda and Cyril will be available to advise on how to apply the colors appropriately.

* Beaver lecture: Phil was not at the meeting, but the upcoming lecture that he has arranged was briefly noted. As indicated in his recent e-mails, the program featuring Erik Amati of the Massachusetts Division of Fish & Wildlife is entitled "Beavers in Massachusetts: Natural History, Problems and Solutions." It will be held on Wednesday, April 23, at 7:00 PM at the Acton library; RSVP (to Phil) requested.

* Senior community service day: Friday morning, May 2, is the date of this annual high school event. Jim will submit requests for helpers (including one parent as a supervisor) on the following projects: (1) spreading wood chips on access trails from Nagog Hill Road (Bob plus a parent); (2) spreading wood chips from pile off Willis Holden Drive to areas along yellow trail (Ann); (3) moving and stacking brush at Pratt's Brook (Jim; Linda will help if she can); (4) smoothing out and seeding tire tracks at Davis Road entrance to Nashoba Brook (Laurie). Jim requested that supervisors provide a beverage or two for their workers (water would be sufficient) but doesn't think snacks are necessary.

* Earth Day: Dave has received a call from the Earth Day committee inquiring whether we want to participate this year (Saturday, May 3, 12:00-4:00 at the Conant School). It was agreed that we should. Dave will find the map we have used in previous years (probably in Tom's office), and Jim will put together an informational poster about invasives. If we're lucky, we will have copies of the guidebook to sell. Nan commented that publicity for the event will be better than it was last year.

* Installation of picnic tables: Bob reported that he and Dave Lee's crew installed seven new picnic tables at the Camp Acton campsites and one at the Senior Park at Pratt's Brook.

* Maintenance work: Bob reported that he and Dave cut down a dead tree alongside the Heath Hen Meadow bridge to remove the danger of its blowing down and damaging the bridge. He also took care of a blowdown at Great Hill. He is planning to get wood for four more kiosks and build them at his home.

* Possible boardwalks at Nagog Hill and Great Hill: Rather than put in a short boardwalk over a wet stretch at Bulette, Tom has suggested constructing one along the access trail to Nagog Hill by Hi Bid Farm. In response to questions about horse traffic along that path, Bob suggested widening the path enough to accommodate a horse track alongside the boardwalk, and Gigi and Linda suggested a stile without steps that would block horses from the boardwalk.

Paul also mentioned an unofficial access trail to Great Hill from behind several businesses on Route 111 and wondered whether it should be blazed and included on our maps, as well as whether we might put in a boardwalk in the future. Tom confirmed that the area where this boardwalk would be needed is on conservation land property and suggested that we check with people in the small business complex to see what their interest would be in having this trail improved. Paul agreed to look into this.

* Water channel at Pratt's Brook: Linda reported that the stone-lined trench that an Eagle Scout constructed two years ago along the bed of a periodic stream near the yellow trail just east of the Brewster Lane kiosk is now filled with water and is channeling it effectively away from the trail.

* Intertown liaison subcommittee: Linda would like to begin organizing a subcommittee of stewards to act as liaisons with contiguous towns' conservation/trail committees, with the eventual hope of creating intertown trail systems. She proposes to serve as overall facilitator for the subcommittee, which might be called the intertown trail committee. Initially she would like to concentrate on Boxboro, Stow, Littleton, and Maynard, with a particular focus on the connection between Heath Hen Meadow and Stow's Capt. Sargent land and its possible further tie-in with Flagg Hill in Boxboro. Jim agreed to help with Boxboro, Dave with Stow, Bob with Littleton, and Paul with Maynard. Prior to the meeting, Laurie told Linda that he would be willing to help wherever he might be needed.

* E-mail address lists: Bob noted that e-mail address lists that individual stewards are using to communicate with the full committee have various differences, both from lists used by other stewards and from the LSCOM e-mail address list maintained for the town by Mark Hald. Several stewards stated that they would prefer to continue using their own self-maintained group lists, but it was agreed that there needs to be uniformity as to the people listed on our individual LSCOM lists and that we should be sure we all have up-to-date addresses. Jim agreed to see what names are on the town list, determine if any need to be added or deleted, and be sure that the addresses are correct. We will also need to outline a procedure for keeping our lists updated in the future.

* Correction to last month's minutes: Bob noted to Peggy that the statement that he had built the boardwalk in the photo that has been chosen for the guidebook cover is incorrect; he says that this boardwalk (on the Jay Lane access trail at Spring Hill) predates the formation of LSCOM and was probably built by Scouts.

* Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 7, at 4:00 at Town Hall.