

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 8, 2002, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Gigi Hopkins, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Nan Millett, Cyril Murphy, Rich Rhode, Jim Snyder-Grant

- SuAsCo meeting: After attending a meeting of this organization, Linda has been invited to join its Executive Council, composed of representatives from the towns served by SuAsCo, for a three-year term. The council's primary purpose is to determine policy concerning water quality management and regulations. Since Linda is more interested in pursuing concrete projects (for example, Tom's idea of creating a river walk along the Assabet through Maynard, Acton, and Concord), she has accepted with qualifications.

As the SuAsCo Council does not meet until fall, Linda feels that the assumption of this new responsibility will dovetail nicely with her plan to withdraw from active leadership responsibility of LSCoM. In conjunction with her announcement of this new involvement with SuAsCo, she has also explained her intention to withdraw from most of her duties as LSCoM chair once the guidebook has been published. She hopes to lead the efforts toward intertown connections, leaving intratown activities, general coordination, and running of meetings to others on the committee.

- OSRP report: This report, now in the final-draft stage, is interesting despite some repetitiveness (due to the state's required format), according to Linda, Nan, and Gigi. Land conservation interests, including those of this Committee, have received good support, although there is also a strong focus on the town's recreation space and water needs. This was in part due to the strong interest in open space acquisition for trails indicated by the 1,400 town residents who responded to last year's survey.
- Update from Bob about current and summer projects: The Grassy Pond observation deck has been completed (thank you, Bob!). Also at Grassy Pond, he and Laurie have removed the posts in the meadow, scrubbed off the graffiti from the big rock in the main parking lot, and straightened a boulder in the same location. At Nashoba Brook they did some clearing after a large pine toppled along the trail near the pencil factory site. Bob has also mowed a number of paths at Grassy Pond, Davis Lane, and Wheeler Lane, and, with Jim, reclaimed two sections of boardwalk from Ian's house and placed them at Guggins.

This summer, Bob plans to work on repairs to the main boardwalk across the wetland on the Newtown Road access trail to Grassy Pond. This will have to wait until after the beginning of the new fiscal year since there are no funds left for this year.

- Community Service Day (May 3): Stewards who supervised this year's Community Service Day teams were pleased with the work that was accomplished. With four different crews participating, the following tasks were completed: spreading wood chips at the entrance to the new trail at Pratt's Brook and consolidating brush piles in the barrens area; spreading wood chips along the Rt. 111 access trail at Guggins; spreading wood chips along the access trail from the Nagog Hill parking lot to the meadow behind the horse corral; and grading a portion of trail along the side of a steep slope on the new section of trail skirting the water tower at Great Hill. Both Nan and Ann put in requests after last month's meeting for help with trash and branch pick-up/removal and wood chips, but in the end no teams were available. However, Gigi noted that the trash at Stoneymeade has been picked up by someone else.

Bob has sent a thank-you note to the captain of his team; Linda will ask Ann to draft letters to the others.

- Blazing: Cyril reported that he has finished blazing the BCT. He has also done the new blue trail at Pratt's Brook and Jenks' blue trails except for the short one on the far side of the railroad tracks. He is aware that there are some unfinished areas at Wills Hole/Town Forest as well as one section of trail that is incorrectly blazed yellow (should be blue). He plans to blaze Bulette (with Andy) and still has to do Wetherbee.

The subject was raised of the possible need for posts in meadow areas where no trees are available for blazing.

Cyril said that at Jenks, he thinks posts might be needed to designate the blue trail that crosses the meadow. It was noted, however, that there is currently no money available for posts until the new fiscal year. The wooden signs prepared by Dave Lee this winter will be installed as soon as posts for them are available. It was noted that Dave Cochrane has a supply of arrow signs.

- Maps: Tom has almost completed the Nashoba Brook-Spring Hill-Camp Acton trio of maps; Wetherbee is still to be finished. Regarding the Arboretum, Rich now has the Friends of the Arboretum's map, which he will leave largely unchanged except for adding background color similar to that on Tom's maps, but he also noted that a new parcel has recently been added to the Arboretum's wetlands. He will check with the Engineering Department to see if he can incorporate this change. At Nagog Hill there has been a swap of a small amount of property with the adjacent Quail Ridge Golf Course development now underway, and Rich will make these changes as well. At Wetherbee, Gigi and Bob agreed to look for a route for a trail (or trails) and flag it so that it can be added to the map; it can be cut later. It was suggested that Phil and/or Tom might also help with this.
- Vernal pools: The Merriam School students have gathered the information required to certify one vernal pool at Heath Hen, and Gigi and Nan have collected the same for two pools at Pratt's Brook and one at Wetherbee. They plan to create a file that includes the kit describing the certification procedure (which has been simplified from what it was a few years ago) as well as the information that has been submitted for these four pools. Dave also noted that they found a blue-spotted salamander at a large vernal pool in the Mt. Hope Cemetery woods, but it was decided that it wouldn't be politically feasible to proceed with the certification at this time; this information will be put in the file.

Gigi, Nan, and Dave agreed to study the legal issues involved in certifying vernal pools on private property.

- Wetherbee Land's status: Gigi reported that, because of the sale of the dairy herd at MCI Concord, the future of the corn field is uncertain. She thinks it will remain conservation land but said that ACT plans to contact Pam Resor and Bob Durand to check on this; she is also in touch with the Concord Conservation Trust. Dave said he would be willing to help draft a letter if one needs to be written.
- Boundary markers: Jim and Bob have put up the first of these markers at Guggins. It was decided that Cyril will compile a list from the information he has received from stewards, Bob will buy the lag screws and washers that are needed, and Cyril, Bob, and Jim will install the markers.
- Invasives lecture: In response to the e-mail Jim sent to request input about the proposed workshop on invasives, he received two that suggested inviting Chris Mattrick of the New England Wild Flower Society. No one objected to this, so Jim will contact Mr. Mattrick to see if he can arrange a September date. Regarding the proposed June workshop, no one has heard from Phil, so Linda will check with him.
- Publicity: Linda read an update by Paul, who was absent from the meeting, on the progress of the articles he is preparing for the Beacon. He has been working on the Jenks/bird article, for which he has spoken with Gigi and Bill Kalms. Dave will speak with Paul about the problem he has had with submitting photos to the paper.
- Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 5, at 4:00.