

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 5, 2002, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Andy Gatesman, Bob Guba, Gigi Hopkins, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Cyril Murphy, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant, Tom Tidman, Paul Wasserboehr

- Correction to last month's minutes: Bob made several corrections to the information about his recent activities at Grassy Pond: he alone removed the graffiti and the three birdhouse posts at the Nagog Hill Rd. entrance, and the item that was straightened (with Laurie's help) was not a boulder at that same entrance but the engraved "Conservation Area" granite slab at the Newtown Rd. entrance, which had been leaning for years.
- Vernal pools: After finishing taking photos of the Wetherbee vernal pool, Gigi and Nan will be submitting the certification information (which includes maps, photos, and audiotapes) for the two pools at Pratt's Brook and one at Wetherbee.
- BCT lecture: Linda reported that Phil has finalized plans for the BCT lecture on Wednesday, June 19, although it is unclear whether the speaker will be Alan French, the Bay Circuit Alliance's director, or someone else. The event will be held at the library at 7:00 PM in the same room as the vernal pool lecture. If anyone has additional names of people who should be invited, contact Phil.
- Invasives lecture-workshop: Based on feedback he has received about the possible dates for this event, Jim has settled on Saturday, October 26, with the time still to be determined. The focus will be on management strategies for large areas, and some of the time will be spent in the field. Because the New View community has a good meeting space that is close to the Guggins property, which has a variety of invasive species, Jim suggested that this be the site, and there were no objections to this.
- Publicity: The Jenks/birding article has been published, and Paul is now working on the one about Camp Acton for June; in July he will cover the BCT and perhaps other intertown connections (rail trail, Assabet River trail). In August, for which he presently does not have a topic, it was suggested that he might do something with a historical focus, such as old stonework or something about Heath Hen (or heath hens); Paul will contact the Acton Historical Society to see what he leads he might get. Jim, however, noted that readership is probably lowest in August, so it might be a month that could be skipped.

Paul observed that although he would like to include photos with his articles, it has been difficult to keep the word count down as much as the editor wants, so there has been little room for photos. He also added that he's always interested in feedback on articles he's written or ideas for future ones.

- Website: Rich has added more *Beacon* articles, fixed some of the link information (with Bob's help), and added the almost completed maps for Nashoba Brook, Spring Hill, Camp Acton, and the Arboretum. Only Wetherbee remains to be added.
- Signs and signposts: Bob, with various helpers (Andy, Jim, Phil, Laurie), has begun installing posts and signs, or repositioning existing ones, at Bulette, Camp Acton (including new campsite numbers), Nashoba Brook, Spring Hill, Guggins, and Town Forest. Still to be done are Great Hill and Wetherbee.
- Blazing: Cyril has finishing blazing Bulette (with Andy's help) and Stoneymeade and has fixed the incorrect blazes at Town Forest. Wetherbee still needs to be done, and there are a few spots that need to be fixed at Nashoba Brook.

Linda asked about the status of the blazing of the winter trail at Heath Hen. Cyril confirmed that the small horseshoe portion at the beginning of that trail is blazed blue, as shown on the map, but the rest of it is unblazed; he thought it should probably be blue but will check with Dave.

- Wills Hole educational kiosk: Linda reported that Dave has made initial inquiries about the possibility of getting funding from the Environmental Institute at Tufts for preparing a kiosk or plaque for the information about the bog

ecosystem. The person who handles the applications is away until sometime late in the summer, but Dave thinks our request has a reasonable chance of being accepted.

- New trail at Bulette: Linda suggested adding a new trail along the esker at Bulette before the guidebook is published. Bob said it would be a fairly short trail. He and Andy agreed to check out this possibility.
- Grassy Pond boardwalk: The part of the boardwalk access trail from Newtown Rd. that Bob plans to repair this summer is an approximately 32-foot section that dips under water when the pond is high. The work will involve replacing the old supporting pipes with new, longer ones. As always, beavers remain a problem; Bob has recently been removing debris from the pond's outlet stream near Hammond Street.

Bob noted also that the outlet stream from Wills Hole is probably being blocked by beavers, since the water level is reported to be up to the boardwalk stringers.

- Possibility of grant for Heath Hen-Stow connection: Linda raised the question of whether we should apply again this year for an Educational Trails Grants Program grant, this time for the proposed Heath Hen Meadow-Capt. Sargent Farm boardwalk connection, since we have learned that this fund is more likely to support intertown projects. Dave has spoken with people in Stow, and Linda now is in contact with SuAsCo and knows that ACT is interested in acquiring the Acton parcel that would be needed. The grant request filing date is the end of July, and Phil has indicated he would be willing to write it.

Bob responded that he thinks we should acquire the land before applying for the grant and that we should explore whether other routes for this connection might be possible, since a boardwalk would be very difficult to build in this location. He also feels that we still have other things to do on our own properties, such as a complete rebuilding of the Grassy Pond boardwalk and doing a better job of fixing up the Camp Acton campsites.

Linda said that during the rest of this month she will explore the various aspects of the idea and the problem of timing with Dave, Tom, ACT, the people in Stow, and Peter Whitcomb (owner of the Acton parcel).

- Biodiversity Day: Jim reported that this year's Biodiversity Days, June 1-2, sponsored locally by ACT and the Acton Conservation Commission, focused on counting the number of plant and animal species in just two conservation areas, Guggins and Jenks. He reported that the event was well attended.
- Next meeting: Although we will not have a formal meeting in either July or August, Bob suggested having an informal meeting/get-together at someone's home. Linda offered to host it and a tentative date was set for the second weekend in July (the 13th or 14th).