

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 16, 2017, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Farra (Vice Chair), Paula Goodwin, Bob Guba, Joe Holmes, Bruce Rachman (Chair), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann, John Watlington, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: None

Nonmembers: Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Janet Adachi (Acton Board of Selectmen LSC liaison), Julianne North (Acton Conservation Trust).

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

Review and approval of March and April minutes

March minutes: Joe H offered two corrections, that Pacy has no dog waste-bag stations, and a workdate fix. Approval of March minutes with corrections was moved and voted unanimously.

April minutes: The Committee postponed consideration of the April minutes to June due to the lateness of availability of the April minutes. Related discussion dealt with not having made a final decision at the April meeting re a Nagog Hill Conservation Land (CL) abutter mowing a portion of the CL. The LSC can continue this discussion at its next meeting and also make sure that related information is flowed to Tom Tidman as well.

Open general question: The LSC is an advisory committee to the Conservation Commission. Is there a mechanism for how an LSC recommendation (and any other significant LSC information) is to go to the Commission?

Is there such a thing as an “approved” trail map? Which trails should not be included on a map?

Joe H wanted the Committee’s opinions on this. Points/opinions offered:

- “Approved” refers to trails that we have blazed. These are trails that we tell the public are okay to hike on. We block off trails that don’t fit into the scheme of a parcel. If we find other trails that we feel are appropriate for the public, we should blaze them.
- The Arboretum has lots of unblazed trails.
- If a trail is blazed, then it is an “approved trail.” But being blazed is too strict a definition.
- A map should not include trails that go into private property.
- We should mark unmaintained trails as unmaintained trails.
- If we do have unmaintained trails, we probably shouldn’t include them on maps.

Examples of trails, blazed and unblazed, at Nashoba Brook, Robbins Mill, Great Hill, and Morrison Farm (not yet under LSC purview) were discussed.

Conclusion: This is a topic for the LSC map subgroup. The subgroup should come back next meeting or at a future meeting with a policy proposal on this.

Possible Scout (Cub and Eagle) projects for National Trails Day, 06/03, and for Camp Acton, 06/10
Linda McElroy has something if no one else is stepping up. Bruce has nothing for Camp Acton.

Re Camp Acton: There will be a proposal for CPA funding this coming year to help with development

of the handicapped campsite. Bettina provided a schedule for such a proposal. She and Bruce will welcome anyone's input on this. She will also get this on the LSC July or August agenda.

For National Trails Day, there is also the possibility of Scouts spreading some wood chips. This initiated a discussion on wood chips as a possible carrier of "bad things" such as invasive materials like Japanese knotweed. Bettina will research what possibly could go into wood chips that are used on CLs. This includes wood chips originating at the Town Transfer Station.

Anything to submit for the High School Summer Volunteer Fair 05/24?

Joe H may submit. Joe W will forward the High School contact information to Joe H and to anyone else who would express interest.

The idea of volunteer work prompted a discussion on the continuing need to remove some debris from Grassy Pond. Bruce volunteered to take a look with Bob G to decide how to proceed with the removal. Bettina will follow up with Gary Kilpatrick, Grassy Pond Steward.

Robbins Mill/Scoutland

There is nothing new from Bill Klauer, Scoutland Trustee, re trail accessibility. Bettina has discussed with Bill a desire for the ability to change trails, should trails ever happen on Scoutland. Apparently Scout Troop 1 is using part of Scoutland accessible from Canterbury Hill Road, but not the western end near Nashoba Brook.

Current state (with Conservation Commission) of the Conservation Land Naming Guidelines/Policy

Nothing has happened with the Conservation Commission, as this didn't make it onto the Commission agendas for the past two meetings.

B. High School Senior Community Service Day (04/28) report

Joe H and Laurie had crews do trash pickup at the Arboretum and Nashoba Brook (Davis Road), respectively. They did "great" and "thorough" jobs. The Davis Road crew found "shafts" that could be remnants from the pencil factory.

This prompted discussions on various trail situations, including:

- Bay Circuit Trail update: Friday a group from a private company and Saturday "half a group" of Appalachian Mountain Club volunteers worked the trail from Carlisle Road, doing a "pretty thorough" job. The trail is cut all the way to Wheeler Lane except for a huge blowdown. (There was no chainsaw work.) They also took out all the greenbrier down by the pond. Laurie will watch the greenbrier to see how its removal worked.
- Wet areas at Spring Hill: Some of the volunteers (see above) did quite a few stepping stones on the well-known wet area, leading to discussions on possibly relocating that and other portions of the Spring Hill yellow trail, and possibly having a couple more bog bridges built. Per Laurie, AMC is willing to have another project there sometime.
- A complaint of a visitor to Guggins Brook (but not to this meeting) of too many bog bridges at Guggins: The LSC wants to facilitate people visiting CLs and Guggins Brook is very wet.
- A need for a small boardwalk at Robbins Mill: A possible Scout project.

On merging 176 Central and Heath Hen Meadow

After a brief review of the situation, assigning the name “Heath Hen Meadow” to the parcel currently identified as “176 Central Street” was moved, seconded, and voted near-unanimously (Joe H abstained).

It was noted that this would be a recommendation to the Conservation Commission. Also noted: The number of stewards (if more than one) for an enlarged Heath Hen Meadow CL is not an issue.

Possible Names for Other Town-Owned Parcels

Joe H brings this to the LSC, aiming to get the names the same on different Town maps. After a brief discussion it was noted that this also could be addressed by the map subgroup.

Other Parcel Information

• Guggins Brook

Above Guggins’s most upstream culvert, where the most recent beaver deceiver was installed (but now has a collapsed cage), water backs onto Acton Water District (AWD) property and causes problems for the Applewood Village housing in Boxborough. The AWD is considering trapping and Jim has discussed trapping and other possible solutions with the AWD, including contacting the company, Beaver Solutions. Jim will let the LSC know what he hears from the AWD, particularly if it is willing (as Jim hopes) to purchase a water-leveling device, such as ones provided by Beaver Solutions. Jim noted that one can go to beaversolutions.com for plenty of pictures of how its devices work. Also, the LSC (Jim) has a DVD that will take one through the process.

More on Guggins: The LSC should consider more boardwalks or some sort of sign that suggests bike riders “walk your bikes” where Guggins’s trails are incredibly muddy, such as near the entrance from Route 111. Bikes ridden through the mud muck up the trails aesthetically. A suggestion of possible signage on the 111 Parking kiosk drew little support. Jim will try moving the bog bridges a little bit or trimming back the bushes to make it easier, and less messy, for bikers.

• Heath Hen Meadow

The recent vandalism to the bridge should be reported to the Acton Police. Bob G: We can fix the bridge.

Brainstorming WildAware stories

The *Beacon* is now limiting WildAware stories to 650 words. Most recent article was on the ecology of the NARA pond by Bettina. Paula is preparing the next article on the phenology of flowers blooming. Suggested basis for possible additional article: An apparent bald eagle sighting in Acton (with possible nesting in Indian Village).

Workdate Calendar

A posting on the website and on Facebook for volunteers to help build a bridge on the new Assabet River trail didn’t get too many volunteers (one, who didn’t show up). Bettina’s pursuit of volunteers had good results. There will be another workday (this Sunday) for the bridge, but it’s not yet posted.

Per Joe H: A group from the New England aquarium is interested in the knotweed problem and may be able to help take care of knotweed on a regular basis.

Per Laurie: From a conversation with someone at the BCT meeting last week, tomorrow night the Southborough Open Land Foundation (solf.org) is having a presentation of videos, including one of

Alan French, founder of the Bay Circuit Alliance, as part of its program. Perhaps it would be possible to learn more from Laurie's BCT acquaintance on creating a video of Acton CLs for local presentations, or for Acton TV. Laurie will send out info on the SOLF meeting.

June 20 agenda

- The LSC needs an official motion on mowing at Nagog Hill, and a decision of where to go from there, with Tom Tidman's input.
- The bridge at Nashoba Brook. Bob F has completed his work. The bridge probably could be built in Bob G's backyard. It's not something a work crew could do. A workday task would be to transport two trusses (about 350 lb each) to Wheeler Lane. Maybe 6 people could do the work of installing the bridge.

The LSC picks a Chair (and Vice Chair) for another year in July. Bruce will do another year, but someone (Bob F) has to do the June 20 meeting.

Evaluate meeting

"A great job tonight".

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 20, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.