

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 15, 2012
Acton Town Hall

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Ann Shubert (minute taker), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Josh Haines, Bruce Rachman,
Nonmembers present: Richard Doherty (Orchard Drive resident)

Meeting minutes: The January minutes were approved.

Forest management walk: Bettina organized a forest management walk on Brewster Conant's land. Three state-employed foresters with different areas of expertise led the walk. One of the three, Laura Dooley, is our local forester. Among other things she talked about the Asian long-horned beetle and finding local uses for the wood. With the Wetlands Protection Act the foresters try to be careful of sensitive areas. There are different ways to make a forest management plan. Under Chapter 61, if you have a forest management plan you get some tax breaks. You need to mark the property boundaries and the plan can be as simple as having a tree farm. Jim was on the walk and he learned that mature forests still sequester carbon. One to two tons of carbon per acre per year get absorbed into a New England forest. If downed trees are burned they release the captured carbon whereas if the lumber is used the carbon is captured. It is good to vary the height of a forest because it makes for different habitats.

Trail information cards for guidebook: Bettina brought in some trail information cards for distribution. Several Committee members took some of these cards for distribution to EMS, Town Hall, the library, Pedal Power, the Senior Center, and so forth. The guidebook will be sold only at Town Hall as we have only about 50 copies left.

Guggins: Jim and Bob Guba walked the Guggins parcel with a Scout and they came up with the following: Guggins continues to be very muddy and the Scout, David Quantrille, Troop 32, is going to build some more boardwalks in the area of the blue trail near the Reed Farm Road development in Boxboro. This area is near where Ed Russell lives. Ed has been making small boardwalks for muddy spots on the trail near his house through the years. He offered his driveway and electricity for use by the Scouts when needed. Bob indicated that the old boardwalks to be replaced should be moved to other wet areas near where Scout Walter Malchodi built a boardwalk at the end of 2011. David is going to replace some boardwalks and make 25' walks to put on either side of the remaining walk making for a 75' boardwalk.

“You Are Here” signs: Philip is going to check out ways to make the “You Are Here” signs UV proof so they won’t fade so quickly. Supposedly there is a UV protective laminate one can get. Philip plans to get the signs up soon.

ConsCom issues: No significant progress is reported from the ConsCom on bench policy issues and on Hybird farm discussions.

Spring Hill-Robbins Mill crossing: A wetlands has to be crossed to get from Spring Hill to the Robbins Mill land. There is a stone wall that provides a natural way to get across the wetland. It cuts through and if you walk near the wall you can get across without much trouble. The Spring Hill, Robbins Mill, Camp Acton, and Nashoba Brook lands together form the largest parcel in Acton, and the center of this area is fairly remote; Jim will send out details of this from maps that detail the Audubon Index of Ecological Integrity. Large wild areas such as this are usually found only in the western part of the

state. Coming up with a name for this area was briefly discussed.

Spring Hill: Philip said that the 230' loop trail boardwalk needs replacing. Briar Lane is the nearest entrance to this boardwalk. There was general agreement that this project needs to be a priority this year. Help may be needed from the town for transporting materials.

Interested volunteer in attendance: Richard Doherty (Orchard Drive resident) indicated an interest in exploring ways to help out with the committee's work. Jim will find a time to talk with him some more about this.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 21.