

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 17, 2021, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.**

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: Dale Chayes, Bob Farra, **Zanna Gruber** (Vice-Chair), Joe Holmes, **Aaron Moore**, **Bruce Rachman**, Laurie Ullmann, **John Watlington** (Chair), **Joe Will** (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members: Jon Campbell, Josh Haines, Everett Kenerson, Philip Keyes, Gary Kilpatrick, Mel Lima, Jim Salem, Todd Tsakiris

Others:

**Bettina Abe** (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), **Jody Harris** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT)), **Bill Smith** (Acton citizen)

**Opening**

John opened the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

**Regular Business**

Review and approval of July 20 minutes

With a small correction re a picnic table, approval was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously.

Citizens' concerns

Jody is volunteering to help with trail blazing. Bill is in process of signing up to be a floating steward. There is one opening for a voting member, but Jon Campbell may seek it.

**New/Special Business**

"NOTICE TO DOG OWNERS" sign

The current version is shown here, as it also appeared in the July minutes. Situations (a hiker's encounters with dogs at Great Hill; two roaming German Shepherds at Spring Hill) were discussed. There should be this sign at the Morrison Farm kiosk and at each of the three Great Hill kiosks. This sign could be at every kiosk. Let's laminate it and get it out.

Blazing

It appears that there will be a blazing team of Jody (an ACT Board member), Todd Tsakiris, (Wetherbee steward), and Bill (in the process of joining the LSC) . . . plus

Jody's husband. A time needs to be set up for this team to meet. In the meantime, each steward is asked to walk their parcel and note its blazing needs. As things develop, this team should be in e-contact with each other to help keep track of what's going on.



### Personnel needs

- Peg Sestrich posted three “Seeking” bullets on the Acton Trails website, one for a steward for the Canoe Launch and Assabet River Blue and Green Trail, one for stewards to assist with Great Hill and Nashoba Brook, and one for a blazing volunteer. Peg will be told that she can now take down the latter.
- Bob Mackin is applying to be Bulette steward; Aaron and Jon Campbell are new sawyers.
- Jason Temple is reactivating his position (Pacy) and will be a sawyer as soon as he is sworn in.

### 2022 CPA proposals

Bettina will take the Mass Trails proposal for the Heath Hen Meadow (HHM) bridge (not funded by Mass Trails) and transform it into a CPA proposal, requesting \$29K. The proposal should be viewed favorably by the CPC as the bridge needs to be replaced before it becomes too much of a hazard. Joe listed other possible CPA requests, with one of direct interest to the LSC: a request by Bill Dickinson of the Acton Historical Commission for a second round of funding for a bridge at the Pencil Factory.

### Invasives (continued)

John described how to get rid of Asian bittersweet with the general goal of keeping it from killing trees. See his PowerPoint slide, shown at the right (<https://bit.ly/3sDRrMy>). Also, goats eat it — and everything else.

John’s main topic for this meeting was glossy buckthorn. John discussed the information shown in the second slide at the right. The edges (smooth) of glossy buckthorn leaves is one way to distinguish this invasive from similar native plants (small ridged edges).

It was noted that it is easy to “move” onto a native plant by accident. Bettina cited the app “Outsmart Invasive Species” from UMass/Amherst to be a useful tool in the field. (Clerk’s note: If you have an iPhone or Android phone, you can download the free “Outsmart Invasive Species” app through iTunes or Google Play).

John presented two more slides, one on “Girdling” and the other describing what to do with debris from invasives.

#### Asian Bittersweet ([Celastrus orbiculatis](#))

THE dominant invasive species

A ropy vine which can will grow up and over anything. It will bring down most trees.

Spreads mostly by seeds (birds)

Regrows from root fragments or buried stems. Root removal (by pulling) is critical.

“Cut low and high” around trees, in order to stop damage to tree and allow detection of regrowth. Not too low, as regrowth will happen!

Check: Orange root, smooth bark

May



#### Glossy Buckthorn ([Frangula alnus](#))

A small tree which can create thickets.

Spreads mostly by seeds (birds).

Regrows from root fragments.

Pull small saplings (< 3/4" stem diameter)

Cut larger saplings (< 3" diameter)

Gird trees (>3" diameter)

Check: Red root, smooth bark w. lenticels, pink center in older wood



#### Technique: Girdling a Tree or large Shrub

This is a useful technique for larger Glossy Buckthorn and Norway Maples. Great when the tree is covered w. Grapevine. This should never be used near a trail --- it creates a falling dead tree hazard.

But away from a trail, it adds to the standing dead wood --- BONUS!

Cut through the bark completely around the trunk in two circles, at least 6 inches apart. Then remove the bark between the cuts.

The tree will die over the next couple of years. You will need to cut off new shoots appearing below the gird for the first year or two.

#### Technique: Disposing of the debris from cutting invasives

The recommendation is to form brush piles, away from trails, in locations which don't have invasive plants already growing there. Create multiple brush piles instead of one large one.

A number of invasives will stay alive if their cut remnants are placed in water or muddy soil. But if kept out of water/soil, they can be left where removed.

Most piles will disappear in a couple of years.

**Garlic Mustard** is an exception, as it may still produce seed if placed in a brush pile. It should be disposed of in dark trash bags w. “Do not compost” stickers. Ask the town for those, or use masking tape and a permanent marker.

Next month John will talk about multiflora rose. Originally the LSC had identified seven species to discuss and since then, John has added two more, Japanese knotweed (big at the Canoe Launch) and Norway maple.

### **Additional Regular Business**

#### Parcel issues (with parcels in alphabetical order)

##### – Bulette

Bruce, Bettina, and Tom Tidman walked the 12-acre (PCRC) parcel at 180 Newtown Road. Bruce is designing a boardwalk (as well as a parking area) that the contractor for the development will build (to allow the residents of his development onto the Conservation Land). SVT is drafting a Conservation Restriction for the parcel. The parcel and the adjacent Town-owned Anderson land will become a part of Bulette. The LSC will have to approve trails. The trails will have to be blazed. Other boardwalks and bridges may have to be built, and a map eventually made. Jody showed where two trees are down at Bulette.

##### – Camp Acton:

The continued dumping in the parking lot prompted a discussion on using a surveillance camera as suggested by the Acton Police upon receiving a call from Bettina about the concern. Bettina described further research that she had done on this, including the fact that it is possible for municipalities to cut the red tape of purchasing by using some online services.

##### – Canoe Launch:

Checking today: The parking lot area has been mowed. No check of meadow or trail. Knotweed is crowding the Canoe Launch sign. Anyone can clear this with any of various tools. A grass whip or a brush cutter could be used.

##### – Great Hill

The Magoon house is gone from Piper Lane. There remains a lot of broken glass that John will try to clear. John flagged a proposed trail into Great Hill from a new parking lot at the site.

##### – Heath Hen Meadow:

Bruce will make temporary bridge repairs at HHM. He thinks he'll be able to work on it in September. Next summer the whole thing should be replaced using CPA funds. Bettina will pursue poles and pipes for Bruce to make repairs at both HHM and Nashoba Brook. She had gotten this hardware in the past from Debbi Leuteritz of Patriot Foundry in New Hampshire. Since the company was sold in March Bettina has tried to connect with the new owners but has received no response. Bruce led a discussion on the current bridge. The water height at the bridge was well below the stringers a few days ago. Raising the stringers 6 in. should allow us to keep the bridge for a while. Probably have to add a few boards onto each part. There is a lot of lumber at the Morrison Farm shed. There are also 25 4-by-4s at the River Street project that could be moved to the shed. Zanna described a tree down (8" diameter) that John or Bruce will take care of.

##### – Morrison Farm:

There is a tree down at the northeast corner on the unblazed trail. John suggested that the tree could help with a natural closure of the trail, but Joe has already cleared the debris (not the trunk). Joe and Bettina explained the change in the yellow trail that will result with the completion of the pond-side accessible walk from the Ice House Pond parking lot.

– News from the shed: There is one brush cutter that hasn't really been cared for. Bettina thinks it needs an engine tune-up. Bruce will have a look and perhaps try it at Camp Acton. A discussion of meadow-care devices and two gas-powered weed whackers ensued. Bettina also led a discussion on bog bridge structures and building of same. Also, there is no chainsaw training from the MIIA available right now.

#### Website issues

- Remove the request for blazers.

#### Maps update

Jon Campbell may step up on taking over from Joe Holmes. And IT (Aaron Green) will help too.

#### Next month's (September 21) agenda

- HHM bridge
- Notify Joe and John with any other items.

#### **Adjournment**

8:14 pm

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, at 7 p.m.

#### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Draft Meeting Minutes of July 20, 2021