

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 7 P.M., Hybrid

Attendees (in bold)

Full (voting) members: Bettina Abe, **Jon Campbell** (Vice-Chair), **Dale Chayes**, Aaron Moore, **Bruce Rachman**, **John Watlington**, **Joe Will** (Minutes), **Tom Wolf** (Chair)

Associate (nonvoting) members: Ken Appel, Josh Haines, **Jody Harris**, **Rebecca Harvey**, Mel Lima, Bob Mackin, Adam Nolde, **David Pinsky**, Jim Salem, Bill Smith, Jason Temple, Todd Tsakiris, **Bob Walton**

Others: **Ian Bergemann** (Community Conservation Specialist), **Amy Green** (Conservation Commission Member, Acton resident)

Tom opened the meeting at 7 p.m.

Review & acceptance of June 17 and July 15 Minutes

Both Minutes accepted as presented.

Concerns from the public

Amy Green, member of the Acton Conservation Commission, introduced herself.

Election of Officer for FY 26 – Chair, Vice Chair, & Clerk

By unanimous votes: Tom is Chair and Jon is Vice-Chair. Nomination and vote for Clerk was tabled until the October meeting. The retiring Clerk, Joe Will, had been for the past 12 years.

Jon C. had a question about the use of AI to assist with notetaking. Ian explained that the Zoom service provides an AI written summary that can be inaccurate due to the nature of being in-person and online and that in-person speakers are not correctly represented in the summary. The LSC concluded that using AI in addition to the Clerk reviewing and writing the minutes would be worth exploring.

LSC Roles & Membership

Joe W. asked if Aaron Moore had resigned given he has moved residence. Ian answered he had not received a resignation but will reach out. Joe W. also mentioned the website has incorrectly listed some associate members. Ian would work on fixing that. Another member was listed as Regular when they should be associate. Ian clarified we have 13/15 associates and 7/9 Regular/Full members.

Joe W. mentioned he is steward for Morrison Farm, but would be happy to give it up if somebody else wants it, and he would stay on as Associate. He brought up concern about the responsibility of at-large members and their roles. John W. suggested we reach out to at-large member Mel Lima to see if he would take on a Land Steward role.

Nik will be brought on as the Great Hill Land Steward. Bob W. suggested that Ken Alba would also make a good Great Hill Land Steward. Ian would get in contact with both. Ian mentioned a new potential Land Steward for Wills Hole/Town Forest – Brent Carter. Bob W. offered to walk with him.

LSC discussed Rebecca Harvey to be re-appointed to Full Member.

LSC also discussed getting more Associates. That may include creating new roles and subgroups like the LSC Sawyer group. Ian suggested he would look at other towns and see what they do for invasive species “task forces”. Bob W. suggested we could continue to hold the topic in LSC meetings until it takes up too much time. John W. mentioned the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail has an invasive species subcommittee.

Ian briefly mentioned the need for two more Land Stewards: 549 Main St & Stoneymeade Conservation Land.

Invasive plants, September 2025 – John W.

Asian Bittersweet — Good time of year to identify as its leaves have not turned yellow yet! John W. mentioned it is most likely the dominant invasive plant in Acton and comes from Asia.

Identification:

- Smooth bark
- Leaves have rough edge
- Distinct oval shape leaf
- No tendrils, only climbs by wrapping itself around host plant
- Green berries change to red with gold covering in Fall – Mostly spread by birds eating berries



Removal:

- Immediate relief to trees via cutting it high and low – cut as high as you can and also cut down about 1 foot – need a large gap in between
- Do not cut to ground level – want at least 1 foot above ground – it will focus its energy into that one stem rather than spread tubers if cut to ground level
- Hand pull smaller vines and remove all roots or it will regrow
- Orange roots and usually L shaped.
- Bob W. mentioned very easy to pull if ground is composed of leaf litter
- Rebecca mentioned an idea of having someone write an article to discourage people to use it as a decorative piece or at least disposing of it in the woods. Jody suggested talking to the Acton Garden Club.



For slides: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Qdc6kGhXJJt-Ysk2ur7vsB5nWtp61v2osP29GydaT28/edit?slide=id.gc802792aaa_0_51#slide=id.gc802792aaa_0_51

Bruce asked about handling growing populations of Buckthorn at Camp Acton. John W. suggested go in and cut it 4 ft high. Then go back and cut it 3 ft, 9 inches high. Then cut a third time – should die back after repeated cuttings. Too thick with a lopper to cut, then you need to gird it. Bob W. suggested getting a girding knife - Zenport GK03 Girdling Knife, 1/4-Inch, Cut

John W. asked about getting the battery powered hand-held brush cutter. Ian mentioned that the device has been on backorder for the past couple of weeks. All the accessories and batteries have been received.

Boardwalk Design Guide Project

This is Bob’s ongoing project. Monthly, Bob has led a technical discussion on the Design Guide contents. At this meeting the LSC commented on and then accepted component [13] through [16] with this meeting’s updates. The final version of the Guide can be found at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vqgZpeE5wAlpT0Fd2Fy7jKuWsIBtPjM1gZYLssWVOc/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.wzmt52hjqwbe> .

Bob plans to request the LSC’s formal acceptance of the guide at a future meeting, likely October.

Conservation Updates (Ian)

- Beaver Solutions

Ian updated the LSC on the site visits by Beaver Solutions. 2 were held – one at Heath Hen Meadow (HHM) and one at Guggins Brook. HHM has 2 beaver dams, upstream at bridge crossing and downstream. Beaver Solutions recommended 2x 15 inch diameter pond-leveler devices and another 2 at a future time for the downstream dam. Guggins Brook was assessed to need a new pond-leveler device at Troop 284 bridge and a decoy fence at the culvert. Ian explained the next steps would be to get permitting with the Conservation Commission and hire Beaver Solutions this Fall 2025.

- Sign at Great Hill

A new sign was installed at Great Hill Conservation Land at the School Street parking lot. The sign was required by the State since portions of Great Hill were purchased with a State grant in the 1980s. The LAND Grant for the Moritz Forest property led the State to ask if the Great Hill sign was ever installed.

- Moritz Forest Conservation Land

Progress on blazing the trail system continues and the kiosk will be installed in the next two weeks. We have been contacted by members of the public interested in a plaque to be installed that honors Clement Moritz's AM radio hobby and the land's former use (hosting 18 radio antennas). Joe W. asked about the link to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Ian and Jody answered that we will need to develop a better connection since it will navigate steep and wet portions in addition to stone walls. In addition we will work with an Scout to build the picnic area.

- 549 Main St – Next Steps

Trail map was developed and is currently being worked on to consolidate some of the trails in the meadow portion. Acton Water District (AWD) is the landowner and the Town of Acton and Sudbury Valley Trustees hold a Conservation Restriction. In addition, the Land Stewardship Committee maintains the trail system. Joe W. asked about linking the 549 trails to Morrison Farm through private property easements. Meadow mowing will change so the Town will do the annual mowing and AWD will mow the trails throughout the season. An updated Land Management Plan is being worked on.

- Meadow Management

Sam Bell will be mowing again this season, a little bit later than usual and will be contracted to mow the new 549 Main Street meadow.

- Morrison Farm Old Paddock Shed

Ian met with DPW about the removal of the old paddock shed. He plans to coordinate nearby trash (wheelbarrow and concrete block) removal at the same time.

- AB STEAM Hack-a-thon

Ian explained that this organization is hosting a student-driven hack-a-thon to help develop solutions to flooding in town. The Conservation Division offered up beaver-driven flooding as a local problem that the participants could solve.

CPA 2026 Proposals

Ian informed the LSC that the Friends of Acton Arboretum may potentially apply for CPA funds to improve 3 trails with accessible surfaces. Ian also mentioned that Guggins Brook and the flooded trails may be a good opportunity to pair CPA funds with a MassTrails Grant. John W. brought up the point that the more boardwalks built will require more maintenance, and current boardwalks need repairs. Bob W. suggested Robbins Mill East may be good for accessible trails.

Other parcel issues

Ian mentioned that we will need to finish the boardwalk railings at Heath Hen Meadow, working to purchase lumber and electric brush cutter.

Other updates (Blazes, Bridges, Boardwalks, Maps, Mowing, Sawyering, Shed Stuff, Website, Wetc.)
Ian is working on Sawyer training for the Spring. John W. mentioned the gas brush cutter is back in the shed and the trailer is working.

Next month's (10/21/25) agenda

Election of Clerk, The Boardwalk Design Guide (Bob), Trail Care App presentation (Rebecca)

Evaluate meeting.

Good and awesome pumpkin squares made by Ian.

Adjournment

At 8:50 pm.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 7 p.m.