

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 17, 2018, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Guba, Joe Holmes, Bruce Rachman (Chair), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Sherman Smith

Others:

Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Janet Adachi (Acton Board of Selectmen LSC liaison), Dale Chayes (Acton resident)

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

Review and approval of February and March minutes

In the March minutes, include Joe H and Joe W with Jim as those who will propose the blazing at Morrison Farm. Approval of the February and amended March minutes was moved and voted unanimously.

“Acton Trail Map” — latest features

Jim reviewed the most likely procedure of integrating the Acton Trail map with the Acton Trails website, suggesting that he is on the threshold of making these available on the website. He used the Guggins Brook Conservation Land (CL) page to illustrate. Jim replaced a low-resolution photo with the Acton Trail map of Guggins Brook. Click on it and it takes you to the Acton Trail map of Guggins Brook. Click on the “i” in the upper left corner of the screen and you are taken back to the Acton Trails website. Below the map on the website, and at the bottom of that page, there are links to the (old) pdf map of the CL.

So, should he make the change (old photos replaced w/links to Acton Trail map) for every CL? The Committee said “Go for it.” Jim will, and in the meantime, he continues to ask for any general feedback on the Acton Trail map, and points out that he is considering a “ton” of future improvements.

The Committee had talked earlier about a press release on the Acton Trail Map. The Acton Trails Facebook page has 500-600 people watching it, so there would be interest. The Committee could contact the Beacon . . . but it won’t do an article. The Committee itself could write an article.

The Acton Police don’t have maps of the Acton Trails. Dale, a guest at this meeting, is a Search and Rescue dog trainer. He explained that a search and rescue team uses any map it can find.

Volunteer list

In the past the LSC had a “general purpose” email that would get zero volunteers. For two years now, there has been a different system. People sign up through the Acton Trails website and they are surveyed. Bettina gets notified of each new volunteer. She explained her subsequent process. In particular, if a volunteer lists a particular CL, Bettina copies that parcel’s steward on her reply to the volunteer. Now we have 35 or so volunteers on the list. How to get to the list? Bettina described the

process for when there is a project needing volunteers. There is a link to a spreadsheet that lists all volunteers. Bettina will send out the link on request. Or tell Bettina your work day and she will send out a request for you. Otherwise, Jim has to put you on the list for access to the volunteers. Jim is willing to send out the link, say, every three months. He points out that you'll see there is an email column for volunteers.

When Joe H or Bob has need for volunteers, they prefer to email the whole group. (Joe recently got 4 volunteers for each of 2 workdays.) Is it possible for a steward to log onto the list and send a volunteer request only to selected people? The would not be worth the effort it would take to program. Could we do volunteers like we do sawyers? Not a good idea. A discussion on sending out information ensued.

Post an upcoming event on the Acton Trails website and it automatically goes to the Facebook page.

Robbins Mill/Nashoba Brook clean-up in advance of Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) May 6 Event
Dale and Bruce took care of Nashoba Brook in good fashion. They didn't get into Robbins Mill. Has Robbins Mill been cleared? Yes.

Bettina noted that the Town will pay for sawyers' chainsaw tune-up and oil. Send receipts to her. Bob recommends "Sea Foam," a commercial treatment for gas engines.

Nagog Hill burn

Joe H was seeking help. There were no takers, so he is not going to do it. A discussion ensued on the ability to put out such a fire. You have to demonstrate to the Town that you know how to stop the burn. Should the LSC ask the Fire Department how to do a controlled burn, or would the Fire Department want to do the burn? A discussion on burning ensued.

Other parcels clean-ups

At Camp Acton, every campsite has to be "debranchified". It would be good to have volunteers to do this. The wood could be cut up for firewood. Dale says that Campsite 5 is not usable. The trails are clear. At Nashoba Brook, there was a huge elm down on the yellow trail downhill from the Davis Road kiosk. Who took it out? No one knows, but it looks like a professional crew did it. A general discussion on tree cutting ensued.

Meadow management, trees and meadow mowings

This item was suggested by Paula Goodwin. It was noted that Paula will be leaving the LSC at the end of June, so there will be need for a replacement steward for Heath Hen Meadow. A general discussion on stewards ensued. It was noted that there is also need for a new steward for Nagog Hill. Bruce will walk Dale around Nagog Hill with the aim of getting him to be its steward. (Dale has interest in the outdoors, is also a (chain)sawyer, lives on Pope Road, and visits parcels with his search dogs.)

Parcel Business (non-storm related)

Wright Hill-Guggins Brook easement trail (connecting Wright Hill to Guggins Brook)

There is nothing new to report although there has been some maintenance done on the trail.

Camp Acton CPA grant

The \$10,012 grant was approved at Town Meeting. Per Bettina, the Town has to push along some other projects before it can get to this one.

Other parcels

- Nashoba Brook:

- The old gears and shafts near the pencil factory could be moved so they could be seen by users of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

- Bruce will remove the Davis Road kiosk roof that is on the ground.

- When can Bob submit for \$800 from the Town for his Wheeler Lane bridge? Bettina will check with Tom Tidman.

- Bob described the storm aftermath work that he did at the Stone Chamber and what still needs to be done.

- Nagog Hill:

- Anyone want to join Bruce and Dale on a walk in Nagog Hill?

- On the access trail from Hazelnut Street, the house closest to the 20-ft right-of-way has a bird feeder post right in the middle of the trail. It should be moved a couple feet onto the house owner's property.

- Camp Acton:

- Is it possible to get a pile of gravel at camp Acton? Bruce described an area that's muddy and slushy due to the spring flow. If it's wetlands, you cannot dump gravel. The location is not on the Town's wetland map. A discussion on town wetlands ensued.

- Wright Hill:

The post directing people to the new access trail from Central Street has to be more observable from the sidewalk. Red lettering on dark brown wood does not show up. Show "TRAIL" on two sides with white letters on black background. Show a black arrow and a red blaze mark. Jim was grateful for the ideas on how to repaint it.

- General:

Some boardwalks and bridges are deteriorating, e.g., the bridges at Nashoba Brook. Does anyone see this? Maybe the Committee should do an annual or biannual bridge inspection; also, a spreadsheet of all bridges with observations and comments. Maybe boardwalks too. A general discussion on boardwalks ensued. Bruce and Bob agreed that they would go out and look at every single structure and provide the Committee with documentation on what needs to be done.

Blazing at Morrison Farm Update

Jim: We are working on it.

New Business

- When is the next chainsaw training? Dale wants to sign up. He has to be a member of this Committee first.

- Thanks to all the sawyers for their recent help with the storm cleanup.

- Workdays should be scheduled a few weeks in advance so they can be placed on the Acton Trails' "Upcoming Events".

Brainstorming WildAware stories

There seems to be a backlog. Take this off the agenda.

May 15 agenda

- Retain "Blazing at Morrison Farm" and "Acton Trail Map".

- The Committee should take some time as to who might be the next LSC Chair and Vice-Chair.

Evaluate meeting

It was a good meeting. It felt like the wonderful babble of happy people

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 15, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.