

## **Lee Conservation Commission Minutes**

### **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**

**Present:** Dawn Genes (Chair), Mimi Winder (Secretary), Catherine Fisher, Mark Nelson, Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman

**Alternate Member:** Laurel Cox

**Emeritus Member:** Anne Tappan

**Others Present:** Kalika Bower, Jordan Stinson (Lee residents), Chris Regan, Lee Trails Committee; Don Quigley and Caren Rossi, joined briefly

**Select Board Representative:** Scott Bugbee (joined 5pm)

**Motion:** To approve the Minutes of the January 16 Meeting. D. Sugerman moved to accept; D. Shay seconded; the motion was approved by the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

#### **Monthly Reports**

**NRI Project:** D. Genes submitted via email. Report attached.

- Discussion included the public session scheduled for April 9. This will be advertised to the community through the E-Crier and FB. The LCC will also provide separate outreach to folks with expertise in Natural Resources. D. Sugerman offered to compile the names suggested by LCC members. It was noted that this project will provide valuable information to contribute to the master plan.

**Treasurer's/Social Media:** Amanda Gourgue submitted via email. Report attached.

**Education and Outreach:** C. Fisher submitted via email. Report attached.

- C. Fisher is hoping to conduct community walks (woodcock, frog). Since these are nature dependent, dates are TBD and will be advertised and announced close to the event date.

**Trails:** D. Sugerman submitted via email. Report attached.

- D. Sugerman shared the results of the proposed new trail evaluations. Various options for next steps were discussed. They may start some of the work this year.

**Monitoring:** No monitoring this month.

- D. Shay is researching drone services to help with monitoring easements that are difficult to access. They will be performing a trial survey at the Kelsey easement.

**Stewardship:** M. Winder submitted via email. Report attached.

- LCC is in favor of moving forward with a Forest Health workshop and hosting a workshop series with Greg Jordan. May 1 or 2 are proposed dates for the workshop.
- M. Winder shared plans for documenting and tracking stewardship activities.
  - Stewardship monitoring report to be completed and filed in the easement folder for each stewardship activity performed on town lands.
  - Spreadsheet will be maintained to record each activity, date and location.

It is hoped that these measures will provide a more comprehensive and transparent approach towards work being performed on town lands.

- M. Winder hopes to plan a project work day(s) at WFCL in March (weather and time permitting) to continue the invasive mitigation at this site.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Old Mill Project:** This project is in process and contractors to perform this work are currently being considered. The plan is for work to begin this fall. D. Genes reported that there is a lot of interest in this project in the Natural Resources community.

**Barry Conservation Camp Scholarship:** Scholarship(s) will be awarded when applications are received and students have been accepted to the camp.

**MJMF Timber Harvest:** Don Quigley joined the meeting to report on the status of this project. The work is expected to be completed this week. A full report will be submitted when all accounting is complete. The project has been a great success. D. Quigley and A. Tappan will update the management plan for 2024.

Any profits from this project will initially go into the general fund. The LCC will need to request a warrant article to move these funds into the Conservation Land Stewardship Trust Fund. This would normally take place in November 2024.

**Motion:** To provide a \$500 honorarium to Don Quigley from the LCC account in appreciation for his work on the MJMF Timber Harvest project. D. Genes moved to accept, D. Sugerman seconded; the motion was approved by the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**41 Lee Hill Road, Wolfe Property:** Caren Rossi joined the meeting to discuss the issues of the current right of way at this location. The LCC is disappointed that this right of way will be eliminated, but it appears we have no alternative to pursue this further. However, the LCC has an interest in the entire parcel should it become available in the future.

**Next meeting:** March 19, 2024

Adjourn at 6:43pm

Respectfully submitted: Mimi Winder, Secretary

## Update on Lee's Natural Resource Inventory Project

February 19, 2024

A **survey** has been created that will be conducted via Survey Monkey. Distribution of the link will happen using articles for the E-Crier and flyers will be created by SRPC that include a QR code and will be posted widely around town and be available as a handout after voting March 12. Anyone age 5 and older is encouraged to participate. The questions ask the participants to rank various natural resources, land uses, short-term priorities, favorite outdoor places, how you enjoy Lee's natural resources, and age group.

There will be a **public session** to encourage discussion in small groups. Registration will be requested, and snacks provided. The event will take place on April 9 at 6:30 pm and last until 8 pm. The flyer for this will be as widely distributed as above. There will be an effort to reach out to many professionals who work in Lee or live in Lee and invite them. We are collecting names and email addresses so that they can be invited. Any suggestions with contact information are appreciated and can be sent to Dawn.

A component of this SRPC contract is to utilize an **outside consultant** to drill down on a particular topic for more in depth information. Forest Bell is the likely consultant. SRPC does the hiring, but we need to be as clear as possible on **WHAT** we want more information on.

Laurel, Mimi and Deb offered to assist with a review of the **maps** that SRPC will generate. The first meeting is March 6 with Jackson Rand. More meetings to come until we have completed this map generation phase to the Lee CC satisfaction.

We have applied for assistance from **Connect to Protect** through UNH Cooperative Extension. They can assist with helping us define our conservation priorities and how to turn them into actionable items for the town. We should know in a month if we have been accepted.

The ultimate goal with the NRI is to **define our conservation priorities and priority areas** as well as communicate with the other boards and commissions in town what those priorities are. Collectively then, perhaps we can get actions or ordinances that work towards those goals.

## February 2024 Monthly Report

By Amanda Gourgue

### **Treasurer's Report**

David Allan Fund Account \$2,703.08

LCC Account \$12,949.56

Total \$15,652.64

The only transaction that we had over the past month was a reimbursement to Mimi for wire fencing to protect trees from beaver damage at Wadleigh Falls Canoe Launch. It was submitted on 2/1 for \$27.99.

### **Social Media Report**

January 22nd - February 18th

People Reached 6,800

Page Visits 318

Page Likes 5

Our most popular post was Keep an Eye Out for Siskins posted on January 30th. It reached 3,259 people with 80 reactions, 30 comments, and 3 shares. YAY!

**Lee Conservation Commission (LCC)**  
**Education/Outreach Report for Meeting of February 20, 2024**  
**Submitted by:** Catherine Fisher

**Activity since meeting of January 16, 2024**

**Articles Written:** The following eight articles were written and posted on the LCC's Facebook page and in the E-Crier:

Nature Notes: "The Unlikely Life of the Umbilical Oak; Part III: Endurance" (Jan. 22); "Beautiful Snow" (Jan. 29); "The Unlikely Life of the Umbilical Oak; Part IV: Requiem and Redux" (Feb. 5); "Chipmunks in Winter; Part I: Preparing" (Feb. 19)

Random Conservation Notes: "Fresh Snow: Tracks" (Jan 17); "Sun Halo" (Jan. 24); "Keep an Eye Out for Siskins!" (Jan. 31); "Audubon Backyard Birdcount" (Feb. 7); "For Valentine's Day: Mr. Crestless Sexual Dichromatism and Sexual Selection" (Feb. 14)

**Events since December 19:**

Lee Library: Two walks were held on Thursday, January 25.

PreSchool Walk: a small turnout with 5 adults and three children, but conditions were perfect for a fun, snowy walk.

After-school Walk: Well-attended (@ 15+ children, but I never had a chance to count). Wonderful sticky snow for a walk that involved outdoor creative play. Some beautiful snowy tree faces and sculptures were created. Folks, who happened to be walking along the Roundabout Trail, enjoyed them very much!

**Upcoming Events:**

There is a lot on tap, and fitting things in will be interesting. Some events, such as the Geology Walk may well be pushed back a bit. We'll see.

Thursday, Feb. 29, Lee Library, 2:00-3:00: Leap Day Walk. This will be a family walk in the Town Forest. We'll meet at the Library; celebrate Leap Day with a pre-spring woods walk, then return to the Library for cookies and cocoa.

Maud Jones Geology Walk: A ReCon walk with Wally Bothner and Don Quigley will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 28. Wally has already prepared handouts for us (LiDAR map of SE NH and a map of planned stops on our geowalkabout). During this pre-walk, we'll talk about what other, non-geological, features we'll be including and figure out how soon (or late) we want to hold this walk.

Woodcock Walk: Pre-COVID, this was pretty much an annual event. Anne Tappan asked if I was interested in resurrecting it, and because it's such a fun event, I am. Lee has several excellent Town-Owned locations where woodcock perform their sky dance. As the land begins to warm and the woodcocks return, we will scout out possible locations (TF, Old Mill Reserve, LRP, Lee 5 Corners, and Joe Ford are all prime woodcock locations, though the latter is my personal fav for ease of parking, access and viewing opportunities. When this walk occurs, is of course, dependent upon when the woodcocks return, but once things thaw, they don't mess around.

Frog Walks: Again, this walk hinges on when the wood frogs and spotted salamanders emerge. Thawed ground, nighttime temps of at least 40° and some good, rainy nights are what trigger early spring amphibian migrations. The earliest they've emerged is March 1, but I've held frog walks as late as mid-April. When conditions start to look promising, I'll post a "Coming Soon!" announcement in the E-Crier and on our FB page.

**Trails Committee Report to Conservation Commission**  
**Submitted by Deb Sugerman**  
**February 20, 2024**

The habitat management project in Maud Jones Memorial Forest is completed.

- The work was done quickly and effectively.
- The trails had little impact and people are walking on them again.
- Dawn wrote a great article for last week's E-Crier.

The educational QR codes are getting done!

- Completed: MJMF Eskers, Kettle Hole, Glacial Erratic
- In Process: TF Lee Bog
- Next in Line: TF Stone Walls and Vernal Pool
- Thanks to the CC for your comments and suggestions

The Trails Committee has been working on assessing the possible new trails.

- Initial walks were done with interested CC members and abutters.
- Additional walks with TC members were done so that committee members are familiar with the project areas.
- A report was completed that outlines positives, challenges, and next steps for each project area (attached to email).
- The Trails Committee concluded that James Farm, Durgin Preserve, and Garrity Reserve would be the easiest projects to complete and Ellis Oyster River and Thompson Mill would be more complex.
- If approved by the CC, the TC will put together a multi-year timeline at their next meeting on Feb. 28.

## Monthly Report - February 2024

Mimi Winder

### Workshops/Outreach

- EAB/Forest Health: Lindsay Watkins, Strafford County Extension Forester, can do a presentation/workshop for the community. The proposed dates are April 24 or 25, May 1 or 2. We discussed a late afternoon, early evening time to include both inside and outside components.
- Lindsay is working with Greg Jordan, Rockingham County Forester on a series (3 or 4 sessions) of tree and shrub ID and ecology workshops. They are interested in having some of them take place in Lee. I will let her know if the CC is interested in partnering with them to host this.

### Stewardship

I have been trying to figure out ways to keep track of our stewardship efforts with particular focus on invasive mitigation. To this end here is what I'm working on.

- Project/work days: I have created a 2024 stewardship activity plan and timeline to help organize the ongoing and proposed stewardship activities.
- Tracking Activities: In order to keep track of stewardship activities,
  - **Worksheet** to use when planning a project day that will help keep track of these activities. This is similar to the monitoring worksheet and would be filed in the folder for the property where the work is performed.
  - **Spreadsheet** of invasive activities to track what is done each year. This will be on the shared drive so that it can be updated as activities are planned. This will provide a snapshot of activities so that we know what we have done and what follow-up is suggested.