

Minutes of the Milton Frye Nature Area Committee for October 1, 2015

Present: George Clark, Neil Fulton, Phyllis Katz, Tracey Kawecki

Lindsay Putnam reported yesterday by email on the current status of the educational structure, and her report is summarized as follows. She had met on September 29 with Jennifer Newberry and Kevin Perron. Plans are to have no floor at least initially and a pitched rather than hipped roof. It is anticipated that at least some retailers may be willing to offer a discount on materials for the structure. It was concluded that site work should be done this fall. Lindsay Putnam is to contact Thad Goodwin about this. However, before work on the site can begin, formal approval is needed from the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT), and Neil Fulton is to advise the Selectboard about this work. The final design for the structure will need to be submitted for approval by both Neil Fulton and the UVLT. Grant funding for this project has been received from the Frye Fund and the Norwich Women's Club, with funds from the latter award terminating next May 1.

Lindsay Putnam also reported by email on efforts to control invasive plants, and her report is summarized as follows. Chemical treatment of invasive plants has been completed for this year and has met the targeted goal as confirmed by an inspection by a state forester. The treatment was very carefully done and will need to be followed by sessions of hand pulling which appear to be manageable. Recommendations from both the treatment applicator and state forester are to assess the property again in the spring and to do more follow-up work in the fall. Funds currently on hand for this project are only slightly less than the estimated cost of the prospective fall treatment. A hand pulling work session by a group of students and faculty is planned for October 7.

In the past, the Milton Frye Nature Area Committee (MFNAC) has had a private endowment account, but there is now agreement within the MFNAC that private monies for the MFNAC should become a part of the town budget with the Norwich Conservation Commission having oversight.

With respect to additional efforts for control of invasive plants this fall, specific dates will be need to be announced so that volunteers can be guided in hand pulling sessions over the next two months.

With respect to the proposed educational structure, the committee would like to know the total estimated cost and to see a breakdown of the costs. The MFNAC does not presently know whether funds on hand will be adequate to cover the cost of the structure.

The MFNAC would welcome having teachers who will be using the planned structure have a more direct role in oversight of all aspects of the project. The committee wishes to see this project moving forward more rapidly.

Presently, there are three trees leaning over trails in the nature area. Removal of one near the parking lot would be the highest priority. Phyllis Katz will inquire about the possibilities for removal.

The MFNAC annual report for fiscal year 2015 is due on November 6. Tracey Kawecki is setting up an online document to which MFNAC members can contribute in compiling this report.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark