

## Conservation Commission Meeting

September 19, 2023

Norwich Historical Society, 7PM

Members present

Craig Layne, Suzanne Leiter, Alex Gottlieb, Lindsay Putnam, Lynnwood Andrews, Cody Williams

Public comment

No public present

### Milton Frye Nature Area

Biodiversity project - Lynnwood outlined plan to sow native wildflower and grass seed on area of field smothered with black plastic, and areas at edge of vernal pool and in woods adjacent to pool. Lynnwood is working with Chrissy Morley, the newly hired experiential learning teacher at Marion Cross on having first graders establish a milkweed patch in smothered area. The plan is to sow the seed after the field is mowed. Craig made a motion to approve purchase of seeds for mfna. Lindsay seconded. Unanimously - approved. Craig will check mfna mowing schedule with Brie Swenson and Chris Kaufman. Craig asked if we need a mfna committee meeting? It would be beneficial to have Chrissy Morley come to hear what is planned. Lynnwood added that we want to hear what the NCC can do to support her program in the future.

Lynnwood will plant 9 Smooth Alder she has grown from seed near the stream and protect them with fencing.

Craig will approach Redstart about chervil control this fall in the field

Lynnwood reported on need to resecure vernal pool fencing. Some of the posts are leaning and the fence line should be altered to protect more of the plants that the deer are ravaging.

### Big Tree Quest

Lindsay asked if NCC would be willing to pay for supplies - notebooks, gluesticks, apples - for the September 23 tree ID class being given by Lindsay and Lynnwood. In brief discussion, members felt this fell within the educational mission of the NCC. Cody motion to spend up to \$100 on educational supplies for Big Tree Quest. Suzanne seconded. Unanimous vote to approve.

NCC table at BTQ launch. NCC does not have ready materials available for a table. Craig will look for a tree slice. Cody can cut one from a tamarack recently cut on his property. . Lynnwood will look for previous PO display materials and hand-outs. Given limited time to get this ready by Saturday, it may not be possible to have a table. If so, Lindsay will inform NPL.

### Bat house

We will proceed with installation at Huntley. Lynnwood will complete the hole Saturday afternoon and suggest dates for erecting the post. Still waiting to hear back about permission for the location at Barrett Park and Brookmead Conservation area for gate access.

### Deer exclusion plots

Alex reported that we are waiting to hear back with permissions from remaining locations. Cody suggested signs should be more explicit about damage deer do and what to expect from plot. Lynnwood suggested taking pictures and taking plant inventory.

#### Trails Committee

Cody described Aug 20<sup>th</sup> workday at the Woody Adams Conservation Forest working on wet sections installing stepping stones.

##### Trails Committee Meeting

Cody asked about status of request to the Select Board to address road damage on Burton Woods Rd. Craig reported that they haven't discussed it yet. Cody explained the need for a weight limit to mitigate damage to roadbed from larger vehicles. Craig will talk to the Town Manager to see if this can be put on the selectboard agenda.

Condition of treads on Gile tower. Cody reported that some members of the Trails Committee expressed concern that some of the treads on the Gile Mountain tower steps may need replacement in coming years. It was unclear whose responsibility this is and who should do the work. Craig will ask the Town Manager.

Lower Ballard trail - Cody reviewed the concerns about the area of the Lower Ballard trail that was washed out by this summer's excessive rains. Options include relocating trail around the area subject to erosion, or build 2 bridges. Questions were raised about securing permission from the Fire District and a private landowner, who could do the work, and liability issues. It is possible that the Upper Valley Trails Alliance could do some of the work.

David Hubbard's resignation has left only 2 members of the NCC attending Trails Committee meetings. The Trails Committee is concerned about the time delay in having NCC approval on projects if they have to wait until the next NCC meeting. Craig suggested the Trails committee could move their meeting date to the second Wed of the month, and then it would only be a week's delay.

Brookmead parking lot relocation - Cody reported great frustration expressed to Trails Committee members by the public about communication with UVLT about why trail and parking lot were moved. As the Trails committee was not a party to the relocation, they feel frustrated by bearing the brunt of the discontent. Cody reported that a statement on the UVLT website that the Trails committee helped with the project is incorrect. Craig will ask the UVLT to correct this. Cody also reported that bikers were upset that the access trail from the new parking lot was too difficult to bike on. The Trails committee has noted an increase in the use of trails on Parcel 5 as a result. The advisability of the UVLT creating a forum for public dialog about the parking lot and trail relocation was discussed.

##### Melendy parcel

Willing Hands uses this property, an UVLT conserved town-owned parcel, to grow food. They requested a delivery of hardpack to maintain the pullout parking and vehicle access to the field. There could be reluctance to the town providing the hardpack, if it is seen as a site improvement. Craig stated this request is not an improvement but rather maintenance of the

pre-existing access in support of the parcel's conservation status. NCC agrees unanimously that it is maintenance, not improvement, and advises that the town cover the cost of the hardpack and its delivery to the site. Willing hands will cover the cost of spreading the hardpack.

August minutes

Lynnwood moved to approve August minutes. Craig seconded. Lindsay, Alex, Suzanne, Craig and Lynnwood voted to approve. Cody abstained.

Submitted by  
Lynnwood Andrews