



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Type:.....Regular Meeting
Date:.....November 23, 2021
Time:.....6:30 p.m.
Place:.....Community Room
Address:.....43 Bombardier Road, Milton
Contact:.....(802) 893-1186
Website:.....www.miltonvt.gov

MEETING MINUTES

Dan Gaherty, Chair

Laurie DiCesare, Clerk

Bonnie Pease, Member

William Pikul, Member

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by William Pikul at 6:51 p.m.

2. Attendance:

Members Present: Dan Gaherty (via Zoom), Laurie DiCesare, William Pikul; Bonnie Pease.

Members absent: None.

Staff Present: Jenna Tucker (Milton Recreation Director).

Public Present: Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester (via Zoom)

3. Agenda Review:

Delete Bonnie suggested we take a Milton Conservation Commission (MCC) group photo (which we did; the photo will be posted on our website.) She also wants to talk about creating an MCC archives. Dan added an update on County Forester Ethan Tapper and the Milton Town Forest (MTF) Forest Management Plan. Bonnie added "Interpretive Nature Trail" to the agenda and "Archives".

4. Business:

a. Town Forest Management Plan (Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester)

Ethan sent us his current draft of the MTF Management Plan. His goal is to focus on forest management and stewardship with information on invasive species management. Primary goals include protecting biodiversity and providing educational opportunities on the importance of forests. He is also providing a "story map", a condensed version with photos and maps and fewer details.

Major points of the plan: Next Spring he hopes we will offer public informational events before we send the Management plan to the Milton Select Board for approval.

Concerns: Invasive Plants: Some Buckthorn is present. Wall lettuce. Bush honeysuckle.

Deer Browse: Overpopulation of deer can make it difficult for some tree species to grow, lessening potential biodiversity.

Earthworms: Forest Stand Map (from MTF Management Plan draft) #4: Non-native, Eurasian night crawlers digest the leaf litter and leave the ground nearly bare. Sugar Maples need the duff for seedlings to sprout and grow.

Active Management: Access is a problem. Stand #4 (~90 acres) would do well with pre-commercial thinning to leave some gaps in the canopy and accelerate growth of other species. Chain-saw dropped trees would be left on the ground to decay naturally. We would need volunteers or would have to pay to have this work done.

Northeast Parcel Management: Ecological-forest management here would involve cutting some trees to generate income.

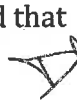
Reserve Zone: These ~170 reserved acres would include Milton Marsh, Westford Bog and Stand #7 buffer areas. Stand #2, which was logged in 1985-1986, contains older trees.

Discussion: Bonnie asked where the Wall lettuce was located. Ethan says he found the plants in the steep slopes of Stand #4 above Milton Marsh. A large Buckthorn was found near the main parking area.

Dan asked how to manage the deer. Ethan said that hunters are declining but new hunters are being recruited. He suggests having educational days with hunting mentors. Parks could be closed temporarily for hunting. We could also use time restrictions or designate certain parts of the forest for hunting. Twenty deer per square mile would be ideal. We need to be proactive.

Bonnie asked about coyotes. Ethan says coyotes now have more wolf DNA but there are not enough to reduce the deer population to desired levels.

Ethan is considering making short videos and wants to make an interactive map for visitors to map sightings of plants and animals. Laurie suggested adding iNaturalist.org to the references. Ethan suggested adding sites like eBird as well.

Bonnie noted that Stand #8, including the main parking lot entry trail, is very wet. Wetlands representative, Mr. Brock, cautioned us against removing any trees from that area. She also said that Westford will not even allow ~~walkers to access~~ the Westford Bog.
trail development at 

b. Lamoille Riverwalk Natural Resource Inventory Proposal (Remy Cretol)

Dan said that even after e-mailing Remy about our desire to accept Option #1, he has not heard any response. William said we sent him a notice on Oct. 27, 2021 about paying him for time he has already spent on the project but we have not heard back from him on that, either.

William MOVED that we vote to terminate Remy Cretol's services on the Lamoille Riverwalk Natural Resources Inventory project (proposal dated Sept. 28, 2021.) Laurie SECONDED. Motion PASSED. Dan will send Remy a notice about the termination.

c. Enhancement of Recreation Stewardship and Access (ERSA) Trail Grant:

Dan said Cymone Haiju will submit our application tomorrow. (It is due Monday, Nov. 29, 2021.) Dan will send our MCC letter of support to her tomorrow. Jenna said the Recreation Commission also sent a letter of support.


d. Milton Conservation Commission (MCC) Recruitment:

William agreed to be project manager on MCC recruitment. He will work with Jenna on Facebook and Town website announcements and A-frames. Bonnie has posted laminated copies of our recruitment letter on park kiosks. William is looking for MCC photos. Bonnie and Laurie will send him some to select from. Jenna will post a notice on our MCC Facebook group and Ben will help with updates.

e. Lamoille Riverwalk (LRW) Repair:

Dan says the wood for the pressure-treated decking has been delivered. William and Dan will work on completing the project. Bonnie said that Judy Kinner will send her MCC notes, including information on the LRW common land, to Dan.

f. Interpretive Nature Walk in the Milton Town Forest (MTF):

Bonnie says she would like to have some name tags for trees along the ADA Accessible trail to Milton Marsh and the planned viewing platform. She ^{said we could} ~~would also like us to~~ purchase VOS signs for nature interpretation in certain areas. We agreed this sounds like a good Spring project. Dan mentioned that Timber & Stone's recent estimate for the ADA trail work has increased from \$59,000 to \$68,000. 

g. Nature Notes:

Dan saw a Bald Eagle in Massachusetts. William said he saw a live opossum on Westford Road near the MTF.

5. Review of Minutes:

Oct. 26, 2021: Bonnie moved that we accept the amended minutes of Oct. 26, 2021. William SECONDED. All APPROVED. Motion PASSED.

Nov. 5, 2021: William MOVED that we accept the amended minutes of Nov. 5, 2021. Bonnie SECONDED. All APPROVED. MOTION PASSED.

6. Adjournment:

Laurie MOVED that we adjourn. William SECONDED. All APPROVED. MOTION PASSED. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie DiCesare, Clerk

APPROVED MINUTES:

 _____ Date: 12-28-2021
Dan Gaherty, Chair

Filed with the Milton Town Clerk's Office on this 29th day of Dec., 2021.

ATTEST: , Milton Town Clerk

