

Meeting Minutes: Dummerston Conservation Commission

August 11, 2016, 7:00pm

Dummerston Town Office

Members Present: John Anderson, Lynn Levine, Ed Anthes, Mary Ellen Copeland, Bill Schmidt,

Guest: Deborah Ayer took today's minutes, as a volunteer.

Minutes Review/Financial Report: Minutes accepted. Rotary Club donated \$100 to the DCC.

(Invasives, soils, Prospect Hill and other hikes, educational series):

Review of Goals/Planning: Coordinate with other commissions; help the public understand Dummerston's natural resources; instill a sense of wonder and love for those resources; provide public education.

Proposed Educational Programs for 2016-2017

September Educational Event: Invasives. Native wildflower loss. New England Wildflower, Bob Engle (wildflowers and pollinators). Limit presentation to one or two invasive species, including new strategies for removal. Invite resident Cliff Adler to talk for 15 minutes about success clearing bittersweet, buckthorn, barberry from park. Provide a hand-out with consultants' names and references, as well as financial underwriting resources.

October Educational Event: Soils. Invite Roger Haydock to do a presentation on Vermont soils, with possible contributors Lynn Levine, Drew Adam; also invite Jack Manix to present on Walker Farm soils.

November Educational Event: Wolves program. Also, Patti Smith at BEEC will co-sponsor a presentation with us on porcupines.

January Educational Event: Attracting and feeding winter birds.

February Educational Event: 4 weekly presentations: possible presenters Tom Wessels, Roger Haydock, Richard Little, Bob Engel, Patti Smith

Spring program: Invasives – Invite town resident Andrew Morrison as a possible presenter (he is an Antioch graduate).

Bill Schmidt as Presenter – vernal pools on land-owners' private properties. Antioch intern to update wetlands maps, with possible funding through VT Community Foundation.

Lynn Levine as Presenter - Art of Seeing program (already in place at Dummerston School).

Introduction of Resources and Initiatives as inspiration for potential programs:

Monarchs and Big Data study; Firefly Watch Program; The Vermont Atlas of Life, Dummerston town forest (Prospect Hill); information on forests near housing developments; Living in Harmony with Streams; Our Working Landscapes.

Conservation Commissions Summit

Save the Date: Oct. 22, in Randolph. All DCC members encouraged to attend.

Regional Commissions Meeting upcoming in November:

Coordination with select board and other town committees:

John Anderson found 2 rare plants in a forest remnant between 2 houses (this plant hadn't been seen in 12 years).

Mary Ellen talked to Select Board about invasives. She was encouraged to check-in at Select Board meetings more often. Think about a Dummerston Conservation Committee member doing a brief (5 minute maximum) check-in with them every-other month.

Trails: John Anderson met with the West River Trail (WRT) subcommittee. John introduced them to rare plants along the trail. Items were marked and mapped. They said they would use Nature Conservancy standards to protect rare plants. John proposes the Dummerston Conservation Committee write a letter regarding WRT stewardship of rare plants, offering our support as consultants.

Prospect Mountain: Just one person showed up for bid meeting regarding proposed trail-clearing work, though this attendee did not place a bid. Only one bid was put-in, and the cost was over what was expected. Considering proposing a multi-year maintenance contract to encourage more bids. Initial estimate of 40 hours of work. At this point it is better to wait until spring to do this work, after winter dormancy, to ensure there is an impact on present invasive species.

Dutton Pines: On Aug 26, 2016, Transition Dummerston is having a pot-luck sing honoring Susal Stebbins-Collins.

Rain Garden: Needs weed whacking now, and a load of mulch next year.

Inventorying and Biodiversity Update: Orange Grass (also called Pine Weed) is present in Townshend and West Townshend.

Tiny grant program: Lynn Levine is communicating with JoCarol Ratti at Dummerston School regarding the "Art of Seeing" program.

Email outreach: Deb Ayer will write an article for e-mail outreach, in preparation for educational programs, on the importance of soils.

Sightings: John Anderson and Deb Ayer (at different times) saw a porcupine on East-West Road; Lynn saw a Red Tailed Hawk at her house; video posted of Bald Eagle on CT river, VT side, near Brattleboro; about 30 Turkeys spotted by Ed on Camp Arden Road; Deb Ayer spotted multiple mothers and baby turkeys on East Orchard Road; John spotted heavy Cadis Fly larva congregation near iron bridge over West River; Deb Ayer, Mary Ellen Copeland, John Anderson spotting various beautiful moth species.