

Dummerston Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes 1/11/18

Members attending: Mary Ellen Copeland, Ed Anthes, Betsy Whitaker, Bill Schmidt, Judy Fink, Bill Johnson

Others attending: Jon Binhammer, Carolyn Mayo-Brown

1. Jon Binhammer, of The Nature Conservancy, presented an update on Black Mountain Preserve, which presently consists of about 1,000 acres. This is one of the Conservancy's "jewels", a very special natural place.

There are two preferred access points to Black Mountain, both from Rice Farm Road. A loop hiking trail through the bowl is now open, in addition to the older access.

Hunting, fishing, and hiking are allowed. Mountain biking and motorized vehicles are not permitted.

The West River swimming hole near the quarry is part of the Black Mountain Preserve. The Nature Conservancy is working on improving and managing access and activities there. A community member suggested posting a sign reminding people to bring their trash home. Nature Conservancy is open to that, and would welcome help on keeping the area clean. Nature Conservancy will also look into having the Sheriff patrol in summer.

A discussion was held about recruiting more people to The Friends of Black Mountain, who help monitor and maintain conditions in the Preserve.

2. Minutes for the meeting of December 14, 2017, were approved as submitted. Moved by Judy Fink, seconded by Betsy Whitaker. Unanimous.
3. The financial report was reviewed.
4. Educational Programs

January 24, 10-12 am. "Ties to the Land". Mary Siscock will speak on "Land Ownership Succession Planning".

January 27 - "Trees and Tracking", in the woods with Lynn Levine

February Series-

4 Wednesday Mornings, 10-12 am at Dummerston Evening Star Grange, "Focus on Weather: What we need to know and do to protect our local environment in a time of climate change".

Feb 7, Mark Breen will speak on major weather events and changing weather patterns. Feb 14, Vern Grubinger will present on Changing Weather and Agriculture. Feb 21, Todd Menees will speak on how weather changes the land and waterways. Feb 28, Tom Rogers, state biologist will speak on the effects of weather and climate change on wildlife.

Bill Schmidt moved that the Commission contribute \$150 to the Grange in appreciation for use of their facilities. Judy Fink seconded, approved unanimously.

April

April 10- VT Fish and Wildlife will present on Creating Habitat for a variety of species, from butterflies to birds to brook trout.

Arbor Day program will be developed by Lynn Levine. Moved by Betsy Whitaker to allocate \$300 for the program, second by Bill Johnson. Approved, unanimous.

May- Wildflowers with John Anderson, Planting for Pollinators. With Tom Sullivan. Co-sponsored with Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC)

5. Town Meeting is March 6. We hope to have the short video to show about the effects of deer on our forests, and display materials.

6. Prospect- managing the stewardship of the summit was discussed. We would like to develop a volunteer day or crew to maintain the open pasture. Ed will contact Jonathan Royce about setting up and working with a crew.

7. First Detector Program- the state is looking for monitors for trees infected with Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, through the first half of the year. Mary Ellen will volunteer to recruit people from our previous work on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid to help with this.

8. Commission members will be reviewing the Biodiversity Inventory Report online, to determine what updates are needed.

9. Sightings: frozen bubbles, 40 turkeys, ruffed grouse, 75 juncos, black squirrel, cardinals, hairy and downy woodpeckers, house mice, snowy owl, barred owl

10. Next meeting: Thursday, February 8 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Anthes