

Minutes

Hogback Preservation Commission

Marlboro, Vermont

The September 8, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m. at the Marlboro Town Office by Hal Himmelstein, Chair.

Members Present: Christine Colella, Bob Engel, Hal Himmelstein, Lauren MacArthur, Ed Metcalfe, Mike Purcell.

Members Absent: Jim Tober.

Others Attending: Bob Anderson, President HMCA.

The minutes of the July 14, 2014 Regular Meeting were approved as distributed.

Officer and Committee Reports

Chair's Report

Status of endowment fund.

Hal contacted Windham County forester Bill Guenther, inviting him to attend a future HPC meeting to discuss possible ways forward in drafting a forest management plan for the Conservation Area. Members of the HPC expressed interest in cruising the property with Guenther to learn more about the precise character of the various timber stands in the Conservation Area.

Hal has emailed archaeologist-historic preservationist Elise Manning-Sterling who visited the Bishop Homestead two years ago and has asked her if she would meet with the Commission, HMCA board and others with an interest to discuss preservation strategies. He is waiting for a reply. It seems appropriate to now move forward to enlist the help of locals with expertise in this area. We hope to make a decision this Fall about what to preserve, clear, and perhaps mark with signage in Spring 2015.

HMCA Report

Jason Saltman's memorial plaque has been installed at the Saltman Overlook off White's Loop. HMCA will hold a gathering there at a date yet to be determined once a bench and

vernal pool interpretive sign are in place and the view to the vernal pool is opened. A vernal pools interpretive sign has been developed by Mike Clough.

HMCA has purchased a weed whipper that has been used around White's Loop to re-open overgrown sections of trail tread. Sections of the Bishop Trail also need some work.

There will be an HMCA meeting the week of September 15th to discuss creating a trails map that shows the locations of interpretive signs.

A recent ESH work day was held under Diana Todd's direction. Mike Purcell and Staley will meet about the Bishop Trail extension. HMCA is looking at state guidelines concerning placement of trails in relationship to vernal pools and other natural features. It seems that we have been conservative so far relative to state guidelines.

Southern Vermont Natural History Museum

The 2014 Vermont Wildlife Festival will take place on September 28, 2014.

Since the HMCA has been working with Mike Clough on the interpretive signs, Hal suggested that we move the \$400 in the HPC budget line dedicated to interpretive signs to the HMCA portion of the budget. Ed will clarify details about the interpretive signs grant at our next meeting and this may help inform this decision. Bob Engel offered to help brainstorm ideas for future interpretive signs because his head is full of these kinds of ideas already and he's happy to work with Mike Clough if Mike so desires.

Old Business

Bob Engel drafted of a statement, to be distributed to the region's graduate degree programs in conservation biology, land management, or natural areas, seeking candidates for independent study projects which include field work in the Conservation Area. HPC hopes that one or more of these projects will ultimately contribute to the development of a "biological map" of the Conservation Area. The independent study would be a component of the student's graduate degree requirements and would be supervised by a qualified member of either the HPC or HMCA and a professor from the student's college/university. Bob Engel will initially send out the statement to Antioch University New England, UMASS Amherst, and perhaps Marlboro College.

It was suggested that the paragraph describing the research opportunities be moved to the beginning of the statement before the description of the Conservation Area.

Mapping the property would help with a forest management plan as well. A map of harvestable stands of high-value timber could be overlaid with maps that show sensitive areas of high biological value, trails, scenic views, etc. Bob Engel recommended breaking up the Conservation Area into "pieces" in order to study different areas more thoroughly and avoid being overwhelmed by trying to deal with the entire property as one unit.

New Business

None

The next Regular Meeting of the Commission is Nov. 10, 2014. A major focus of the November meeting will be a discussion of the 2015 budget. HPC commissioners and the HMCA board should submit proposed budget items for discussion. Hal will email a copy of the 2014 budget as a reference. One possible new budgetary line item to consider is a stipend for a summer intern who would perform various assigned tasks and serve as a constant on-site presence in the Conservation Area from June through August (perhaps \$3000 over 2-3 years). Repairing the roof of the Warming Hut was budgeted for 2014 but the money has not been expended; this project may be carried over to 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m .

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren MacArthur
Secretary pro tempore