

Minutes
Hogback Preservation Commission
Marlboro, Vermont

The November 9, 2015 Regular Meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission was called to order at 5:03 p.m. at the Marlboro Town Office by Mike Purcell, Chair.

Members Present: Mike Purcell, Hal Himmelstein, Phil Howe, Lauren MacArthur.

Others Attending: Diana Todd, HMCA President.

The minutes of the September 14, 2015 Regular Meeting were approved as distributed.

Officer and Committee Reports

Chair's Report

Items to be included in discussion of Old and New Business.

HMCA Report

1. The HMCA Board met in September and developed their budget request for 2016. See the attached budget proposal.
2. Five guided hikes were offered this fall: Pease Cellar Hole history, Mushrooms (co-hosted by BEEC), Bird Banding Demonstration, Early Ski Lift Technology, and Walk Like A Wolf (organized by SVNHM). Participation ranged from 10-40 people.
3. The Trail Committee re-opened the view from the Tower Trail where it intersects Ripperoo, and built a bench just off the trail for hikers to rest and enjoy the scenery.
4. Five volunteer work sessions for the Early Successional Habitat project were held. The first one was rained out. Participation varied from 5-10 people. The volunteers will have cleared about 2/3 of an acre, in addition to the 1/3 acre cleared in August by Conner Hamilton, who was hired to get the project started, for a total of about 1 acre. (This is an estimate because this report is being written prior to the final work day.) The entire area to be cleared is 3.3 acres. Because this phase of the 10-year project is too big to be completed using volunteer labor within the planned time frame, the HMCA Board is recommending that we hire the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps for one week next fall to assist with the project. The cost will be \$4,000 - \$6,000, depending on the size of the crew. HMCA is recommending that \$1,000 be budgeted for this work. We will be applying for grants to cover the rest of the cost.
5. Marlboro College Professor Jaime Tanner's Ecology class is using the mountain for field studies. In early October, Lyndon State College researcher Connor Hunt took the class on a tour of his mouse/tick/Lyme disease/elevation research project.

6. Hogback will be the focus of a presentation at “Community Conservation Summit: Celebrating 100 Years of Town Forests” held at Vermont Technical College on November 7.
7. Bob Anderson, Pieter Van Loon, Joan Weir and Diana Todd are on a panel on “Protecting Community Owned Land: Why and How.” VLT organized the session.
7. VLT received a grant from the Nature Conservancy to inventory invasive plants on conserved properties. Hogback was one of the properties that was inventoried. The field work is apparently complete, but the report hasn’t been finalized yet. It will include maps showing which types of invasives were found where, and recommendations on how to control the infestations.

SVNHM Report

No Report.

Old Business

The Deerfield Valley Stump Jumpers VAST Landowner Permission Form for the 2015-2016 snowmobile season has not yet been received. Mike will check with DVSJ’s Don Yanke and the Marlboro Town Clerk as to the status of the permission form.

The Deerfield Valley Stump Jumpers installed a large sign at the Grant Road Trail Head warning snowmobilers that “excessive noise, speed, or riding off designated trail will result in immediate trail closure.”

Status of the Biodiversity Inventory: the Commission is still awaiting names of professionals qualified to conduct such an inventory. Lauren will ask HMCA board member Patti Smith for her recommendations. Mike will pursue his contacts in the conservation biology community. Lauren suggested that HPC members compile a list of questions we should ask a conservation biologist to help us better understand the process, and to discuss these questions at the January 2016 HPC meeting. Members agreed to bring any pertinent studies in this sphere they possess.

New Business

2016 Conservation Area Budget: The Commission reviewed the line item requests submitted by both HMCA and HPC and unanimously recommended that the consolidated budget as vetted be submitted to the Marlboro Select Board for its approval at its November 19, 2015 meeting. HPC indicated that it would like to review specific plans for stabilizing the ski lift counterweights for aesthetic considerations prior to the work being done.

The Commission awaits the results of Vermont Land Trust’s Invasive Species Inventory of the Conservation Area (see HMCA Report, item 7, above).

The next HPC Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 11, 2016 at 5 p.m. at the Marlboro Town Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hal Himmelstein
Secretary pro tempore