

Minutes of the Thetford Conservation Commission – October 28, 2015

Present: Jason Berard, Jeff Smith, Bob Pulaski, Libby Chapin, Skip Sturman, Ann Lavanway

Absent: Steve Lehman, Li Shen, Connie Snyder

Guest: Jim McCracken, Ehrhard Frost

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as amended.
2. Sara Zahendra of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies will give a talk about bees at the Westshire School in West Fairlee at 7PM on November 12.
3. Ehrhard Frost gave an update on the Hughes Forest management. He talked about marking boundaries, access via Susan Miller's driveway, use of land by a neighbor and invasive treatment before any timber harvest along Sawnee Bean. He will evaluate the areas where invasive plant treatment was done before last winter's timber harvest.
4. Ann asked if a new management plan needs to be prepared. Ehrhard and Jeff recommended waiting until 2023 to prepare new management plans.
5. Jeff asked if there are other timber cuts planned for the Hughes Forest in the next five to six years.
6. Ehrhard will prepare a annual summary for the Commission for each town property on which he is working.
7. Ehrhard talked about PMNA. Ellis Paige has put the stone in the brook at the site of the washed out culvert and he did some mowing of the fields. During the years of the WHIP program, the parcel was divided into three mowing areas. Ehrhard suggests that we even out the size of those areas. He would like to get the rest of the boundaries on PMNA marked.
8. Jeff talked about burning the fields at PMNA to deal with invasive plants such as bedstraw. Ehrhard is not sure how well burning would work. Jeff suggested that we do a test area to start. Ehrhard also suggested mowing early and often to get the grasses back. He said that we might consider having someone hay it for a few years.
9. Jason suggested talking with Sara Zahendra about managing habitat at PMNA.
10. Bob said we should try to maximize species on PMNA.
11. Ehrhard said that sixty-five acres of the Town Forest has been treated for invasive plants. The treated area will be evaluated again next year.
12. There will be some timber harvest this year on the Town Forest. The harvest is likely to begin around the last week of 2015.
13. Ehrhard talked about the idea of selling a twenty-five acre reserve area on the Town Forest to an abutter for conservation.
14. Ehrhard is trying to get a pile of asphalt and gravel at the Town Forest crushed and removed. The material may be used in the Treasure Island parking area.
15. Ehrhard reported that there is ATV use at the Town Forest. He has asked the Select Board to remind town's people that written permission is required for using ATVs on other's properties.

16. Jason reported that Jeanie McIntyre of the Upper Valley Land Trust will attend the November 11 meeting.
17. Jason reported that the Palmer Farm will be sold to Vaughan Farms.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Reminder that Commission members should let Li know ahead of time if they cannot attend the next Conservation Commission meeting, so that she may plan accordingly.

Our next meeting is November 11, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Lavanway