

Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge Oversight Committee
Committee Meeting
October 23, 2018

Members present: *Jenny Cole, Sue Smith, Greg Smith, Mark Dillenbeck, Andrew Milliken, Dorothy Hill, Jessie Bradley* representing full committee membership and a quorum.

Discussion prior to beginning with items on the agenda

Greg noted that it was hard to know whether maps and information on the refuge webpages were up to date. Group discussed looking at the web pages for the refuge that are part of the town website. Andrew offered to take a look and explore options for updating webpages to bring back to the committee for feedback.

Jessie mentioned that we have had great help in the past from students from CVU and UVM on the website and other things. Could potentially be a good project for them to identify and map ash trees on the refuge. Jessie will follow up with her contacts at CVU and UVM.

Dorothy mentioned that she has maps and nature guides printed. Jessie and Andrew mentioned that they could keep some in their cars to replenish the Greenbush Road trailhead kiosk as they often access the refuge from that parking lot. Jessie will bring some maps and guides to next meeting.

Agenda items

Approval of minutes: Minutes from the following past meetings were reviewed by all committee members: March 19, 2018, April 16, 2018, April 30, 2018, August 13, 2018, and August 28, 2018. Motion to approve minutes from those dates proposed by Andrew, seconded by Mark, unanimous approval by committee

Project updates and approval of expenditures:

Bog bridges: Jessie reviewed the status. James Bell may bring lumber down to site by first full week of November and brush hog access to get there. Estimate of \$4,500 not including lumber. Annual budget for the year for signage, benches and bridges is \$6,000 so should be OK. Also solicited bids from Chris Mack and Peter Denton but they had no interest. Jessie discussed the budget with Christine and Mary. James can remove shingles from old bridges and dispose of the wood. On a related note, it would be good to clear around bridges on work trails so mower can get around and not have to move them (and not put them back).

Ahead of the Storm site 1 project: Jenny reviewed status of this project. Junior Lewis was the only contractor that responded. He can do remaining work on this project including excavator, stone and logs for \$1,516. Check dams and trail crossing locations have been flagged. We have a grant for \$2,500, need \$500 for Brian Cote's engineering oversight. Greg proposed a motion to approve selection and funding of Junior Lewis, Mark seconded, approved unanimously.

Brush-hogging: Jenny led discussion of brush-hogging options and locations. James Bell and Adam Dantzcher are two possible contractors. It may be good to consult with Mark LaBarr on locations for

early successional habitat locations and configurations. Some locations discussed by committee members included Section N east side, by the Byington Trail. Sue mentioned ripping out big honeysuckles in the northeast section of refuge. Could contract with Chris Fortin. Sue and Jen will look at areas. Claudia offered to help out with Overlook area.

Tree removal: There is a \$1,000 budget. Gary Small is cutting small ash trees by the parking lot.

Mark talked about having an arborist look at the ash tree by the parking lot and ones by the bridge for emerald ash borer treatment. He led a brief discussion on timing, treatment process and ongoing costs that could potentially be built into the refuge annual budget to save several ash trees.

Volunteer work: Sue and others discussed completed work and projects that volunteers could do. Great turnout for clearing invasive species on the trail by the Greenbush parking lot and area near the bog bridges to be replaced. A volunteer group has been working on Mondays. Sue mentioned that they have been working on controlling the wild chervil patch behind the Thorp Barn that is now about 17 feet by 75 feet. It is tough to control and important to keep it from spreading further. She has been looking at how others in New York and other places are controlling it mostly through foliar herbicide application in the spring. Other projects have included hedgerow by Dorothy's, putting up birdhouse, planting Serviceberry trees, moving Joe Pye weed.

Park budget and report for Town Report: Jenny provided the budget from 2018-2019 and led discussion of budget items and recommended amounts for next year. Mark discussed amount to put toward emerald ash borer control and committee agreed on \$1,200 for 4-6 trees. With the completion of the bog bridges, the *Maintenance of signage, benches and bridges* category was reduced significantly. Sue moved to approve the budget, Dorothy seconded, approved unanimously. The resulting approved budget is attached.

Other: Discussion of a community event in the early fall including the land trust, could include a scavenger hunt; could include horse-drawn wagons.

Follow up needed on the Evan Metropoulis easement for access to the refuge from Route 7. Sue and Jen will set up a meeting with select board member, Matt Krasnow, Dean Bloch and interested members of the Park and Wildlife Refuge Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Attachment

Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge Budget for 2019-20

Mowing/maintenance: Includes regular mowing by a contractor selected through the Town's land maintenance bid process, and other maintenance as needed.

2017-18 budget \$6000 2018-19 budget \$6000 **2019-20 proposed budget \$6000**

Gravel trail work: Money in the budget is for repair, if necessary, of erosion due to spring thaw or heavy rains.

2017-18 budget \$500 2018-19 budget \$500 **2019-20 proposed budget \$500**

Brush-hogging: This is for early summer mowing (around July 1) to control wild parsnip and other invasive plants, and late season brush-hogging of wildlife meadows, field edges, etc.

2017-18 budget \$2500 2018-19 budget \$2500 **2019-20 proposed budget \$2500**

Maintenance of signage, benches and bridges: The replacement of the old walkways/bog bridges will be completed this fall. Resolving the problem of stream bank erosion under two bridges will be done in 2019-20.

2017-18 budget \$2250 2018-19 budget \$6000 **2019-20 proposed budget \$2250**

Hedgerow and brush-clearing projects: Each year the Park Committee selects a contractor for late fall or winter brush and tree clearing. The work is done to remove invasive plants, enhance views and improve trail conditions.

2017-18 budget \$2500 2018-19 budget \$2000 **2019-20 proposed budget \$2000**

Misc:

2017-18 budget \$200 2018-19 budget \$200 **2019-20 proposed budget \$200**

Ahead of the Storm projects will be completed in 2018. The projects were funded by grants from the State of Vermont and the Lewis Creek Association.

2017-18 budget \$3202 2018-19 budget \$2500-----

Tree cutting: This is for cutting dead and diseased trees along trails and in hedgerows.

2018-19 budget \$1000 **2019-20 proposed budget \$1000**

Treatment of ash trees for emerald ash borer: **2019-20 proposed budget \$1200**

Get to Know Your Park Day – community event:

2018-19 proposed \$1000 **2019-20 proposed budget \$1000**

2017-2018: \$17,152 2018-19: \$21,700 2019-20 proposed: \$16,650