

Blood Hill Management Committee Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2001

Meeting opened at 7:05 with Roberta, Paula, Bob, Denis, Matt and Cathy; Cedwyn arrived a little later.

Roberta reported that the Town Clerk came to the conclusion that the Open Space Committee does not have its members appointed and so is in fact a sub-committee of the Conservation Commission meaning that the appointment of Roberta by the Conservation Commission is official though she has not yet been sworn in.

Denis was filled in as to what the Management Committee is charged with and why it was thought the Fitchburg Water Dept. would want a seat. The decision to accept the seat or not will be up to them.

- Review of current activities at the Wiita Conservation Area (Blood Hill)

ATV activity noted at the summit and back trails. Pickup truck activity was reported this summer. There is no longer a gate down at the parking area.

Maple sugaring is being done by Dave Pillsbury approved annually by the ConCom. Part of the agreement is light maintenance of the trees, along with donating maple syrup for the Grange Sugar Supper and the Boy Scouts Pancake Breakfast.

Should the Management Committee empower the ConCom to give that annual approval? Not currently enough sworn in members to take a vote.

- Reports of work done in the last year

The Land Trust did NOT monitor this year. They did the year before. No baseline yet. No monitoring reports sent out.

Roberta had contacted the abutting Wiita to verify the bound in the field on Luke Road following citizen issue with where the conservation land began.

Ernie Pappas reports there are 3 No Trespassing signs. 2 on abutting property, 1 on the Blood Hill property. The Land Trust found the iron rod bound for the end of the property in the field along Luke Road. In the spring we should put some sort of visible marker. The Land Trust will do it.

- Reports of conditions of trails

Trail continues to degrade at the failed culvert. Otherwise fine.

- Ice Storm damage and clean up

Just one tree left across the trail, up high so no issue for hikers.

- Discussion of possible trail work in conjunction with members of TrailWrights to repair/cleanout the stone culvert on the main trail

Roberta had spoken with Ray Jackson to see if they would be willing to help with the repair. TrailWrights has never done a culvert. Ray and Ollie Mutch went to look and determined that it is just clogged. Something with long handles could be used to dredge. ConCom is happy to do the paperwork to get the proper permitting to work in the resource area/stream bed. Unknown if anything inhabits the new stream created by overflow. Do we want to set a workday so that the Commission can get the paperwork in place? Set for April 23rd 10am. Matt will look into borrowing a long hook from the State Park.

- Discussion of increasing vehicle traffic and possible measure to prevent/curtail this activity

There is currently no sign restricting wheeled vehicles since it went away with the gate. Can we put boulders, or 4x4s set in cement? Maybe part of the April workday – cement and pressure treated or pipes? Check ConCom's budget – probably about \$50. We have the No Wheeled Vehicle signs.

Paula will look into the cost of a farm gate for 20-24'.

- Discussion of possibility of creating new trails using the suggestion from the Forest Management Plan

The trail from the FMP is not that practical as it goes through slash piles and mountain laurel, also too close to the vernal pools. Concern was raised that a loop trail would attract mountain biking and then ATVs. New trail plan set aside.

- Discussion of possibility of contracting for a follow-up bird survey to the one done in 2004(?)

The last one was done by Brad Blodgett - \$500? Paula mentions she could check with Dave Small if Brad was too expensive. The ConCom does not have a spare \$500. Dave may be cheaper but the consistency and reporting of Brad would be best.

- Funding Options : grants, fund raising, other

What do we want to fund? 20' Gate, bird survey,???. Maybe NRWA knows of a grant opportunity. We can consider applying for the annual DCR trails grant (Oct-Nov timeframe).

- Distribution of responsibilities: monitoring with Land Trust, grant writing, working on trails, publicity/events, record keeping, other.

Land Trust is still working on the baseline and Bob will bring up at their next meeting.

- Haying?

Paula reports that the Rossbacks have retired. The Wiitas required that the Rossbacks do the haying. Paula will check with them to see if they will still be haying (post-retirement). No maintenance had been done so some of the field area has been lost. If we have to get someone new maybe ask for them to do some field maintenance.

- Does the Fitchburg Water Department want to be on the Committee? Denis feels not. We will vote at the next meeting once a quorum of members has been sworn in.
- Next meeting will be the work day in April. Cathy will post.
 - Agenda: culvert, gate, action item reports
- Meeting adjourned 8:47pm