

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 13, 2021
IN PERSON AT OLD MILL PARK

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Dean Locke, Noel Dodge, Carrie Watson, Denise Ashman, Jared Jasinski, Peter Hammond
Absent: Jackie Stanton

The April minutes were approved, with the correction of adding Denise' name to the list of those present. (Note: it's been done)

Sue added discussion of a Recreation Management Plan to the agenda.

GOMO TOWN FOREST

It's spring: the beavers are active and Gomo's roads are a muddy mess.

Dean and Peter offered to call for pricing on the lumber needed to erect the kiosk. Dean has the roof at his house; he and Noel will take it to Norm Larow's, who has offered to carry it and the rest of the lumber to the site with his tractor. We'll coordinate a day, probably a Sunday, to build it. Just keep fingers crossed that there's no ledge where the holes have to be dug.

We agreed to hang signage saying that Gomo is under the JCC's stewardship, along with rules for ATVs, and cultural and historical material. They'll be laminated on our trusty new laminator.

KNOTWEED AND HONEYSUCKLE

Redstart's Markus Bradley let us know that they will follow the same schedule as 2019 at Journey's End and Beard's but they expect to spend far less time on site as there are so many fewer plants to spray. We'll cut it in mid-August and they'll spray in September. Sue will contact them to get a firm date and cost when the time comes.

Lois suggested compiling a list of ways to handle honeysuckle and knotweed, and include planting native plants in their place. In a chocolate-overloaded moment, Dean offered to do it and Sue offered to help.

SITE STEWARDS

The VRC wants them. Dean volunteered for Beard's and Jackie does Journey's End.

McCUIN'S ISLAND

Noel has tried to get an update on the state's coming out to survey. Apparently they don't communicate; Kimberly Jenson, of the Lakes and Ponds Program, knew nothing about Eric Sorenson's letter. She planned to come out to see it "this spring".

FINDING THE MOTHER TREE

Jackie emailed an article to us about the new book 'Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest' by Suzanne Simard. She wonders if we can do an article on it and post it on our facebook page. Perhaps she'll take it on; Lois will ask her.

ARBORETUM

It opens on Saturday, May 22, and the Tree Board (Sue, Noel, and Lois are members or volunteers) is deliriously happy about it. Everybody is invited. Four new trees will be planted. It starts at 11:00.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Sue brought up the fact that conserved land's use is increasingly weighted in favor of economics and peoples' whims. For example, proposals for trails and other recreational uses often subserve the natural value of the Talc property, which has a significant deeryard. Money, or the idea of it, wins out every time. Ditto for the present campsite and toilet on McCuin's; consider how it got there. The answer may be a recreational management plan that could set parameters on town owned lands. A rousing discussion was had that explored the ins and outs of conservation, which includes a human use balanced with the wilderness aspect, and preservation, which leaves land alone. Finding the balance is the key and is not an easy task, as every stakeholder has the right to be involved. Should the Recreation Committee require JCC approval for certain activities, such as cutting trees? Education is the answer, along with a decision to do something before all of our land is a network of trails and who knows what else. Noel will find the state files about how land is used before the next meeting.

FUTURE PROJECTS SUGGESTED:

- Apple tree release at Gomo
- New signage at Journey's End
- Survey Gomo and Prindle for invasives

TO DO LIST:

- Dean and Peter will price lumber for the Gomo kiosk.
- Noel and Dean will deliver the kiosk roof and other lumber to Norm Larow.
- Dean and Sue will compile a list of ways to handle honeysuckle and knotweed.
- Noel will follow up with McCuin's and state regs for land use.

MISC, BUT NOT UNIMPORTANT:

- Great chocolate cookies, Dean!

Adjourned at 8:45

Next meeting at Old Mill Park on Thursday, June 10, at 6:30. Bring a chair.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary