

**Acton  
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 7 P.M., Hybrid**

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: **Jon Campbell**, **Dale Chayes**, Zanna Gruber (Vice-Chair), **Aaron Moore** (Chair), **Bruce Rachman**, **John Watlington**, **Joe Will** (Minutes), **Tom Wolf**

Associate (nonvoting) members: **Ken Appel**, Josh Haines, **Rebecca Harvey**, Everett Kenerson, Gary Kilpatrick, **Mel Lima**, Bob Mackin, Adam Nolde, **Hilary Reid**, Jim Salem, Bill Smith, Jason Temple, Steve Trimble, Todd Tsakiris

Others: **Bettina Abe** (Acton Conservation), **Mike Gendron** (Acton Conservation Agent), **Jody Harris** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT)), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (ACT), **Laurie Ullman** (Acton resident), **Bob Walton** (Acton resident)

Aaron opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Review and approval of February 21 and March 21 minutes

Approved as presented.

Concerns from the public

Laurie reminded the Committee that the Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) is rerouting a small section away from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and Main Street and onto the Valentine property (at Acton's northern tip) and Carlisle Road down to the Robbins Mill entrance on Carlisle Road. He told of a BCT zoom meeting scheduled for April 27 (7 pm) at which there should be an Acton representative, ideally a land steward. The BCT passes through the Robbins Mill, Nashoba Brook, Spring Hill and Stoneymeade parcels in Acton. Bettina will be in touch with stewards Hilary (Robbins Mill), Tom (Nashoba Brook), and Rebecca (Spring Hill) about representing Acton at that meeting.

Mike has been contacted by a resident of Tenney Circle (abutting Pratts Brook) who is concerned about some activities in Pratts Brook that are occurring close to their property and whether the LSC could do anything related to same. Activities have included building of structures from available forest debris (e.g., teepee-type, plus one more "serious" structure that has been there for a few years), something that the LSC has tolerated if no "outside" materials are used and nothing dangerous is created. Also discussed was the possibility of blocking an informal trail leading to the area, but the barren landscape makes any such blockage impractical. Otherwise, there seems to be no LSC policy related to the resident's concerns.

Invasive plants 2023, Part 3

This month it's rambler rose, perhaps referred to more often as multiflora rose — one of the "Acton

**Rambler Rose ([Rosa multiflora](#))**

Both a bush and a vine which will grow up and over anything.

Spreads mostly by root, but also by seed.

Regrows from root fragments or buried stems.

Repeated cuttings at ground level and/or pulling of roots required to kill.



Check: curved thorns, hairs on leaf stems

Trifecta” along with Asian bittersweet and glossy buckthorn. A story is that it was encouraged and distributed in the 1940s by the Department of Agriculture to stop erosion. The stems can get relatively thick so it’s quite a versatile plant. It’s a rose plant, so it will be blooming in about a month. Two characteristics help distinguish it from native roses. One is the hairs at the bases of the petioles (where the stem of the leaf attaches to the main stem), something that native roses do not have. The other is that it has a curved thorn. When pulling out roots, any root fragments left behind tend to regrow. Ends of cut stems can root if left on the ground. If you can dig the root out, that’s great, but if you cut it at the base it will tend to die after 2-3 years.

#### LSC membership, Town Coordinator

There will be a new hire by the Town to succeed Bettina when she retires at the end of August. Per Mike, there have been interviews, the position has been offered and verbally accepted, but nothing has been signed. There should be more information at the next meeting. The position will be filled around the end of July so there will be a one-month overlap with Bettina still on staff.

#### Trail arrows and signs

Jody and husband have been testing a plastic for arrows and signs used on the LSC parcels. The plastic is better than current material at not decomposing in UV light. They have also been working with signs that have recessed letters that look like they’ve been carved by a dremel and then painted. Jody raised the possibility of making such signs for the Camp Acton campsites 1 through 7. John is concerned about the UV resistance as it would relate to a sign’s longevity compared to a wooden sign. Jody wasn’t sure but knows that it would be better than “straight-up” ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene). Another concern would be the need to back off the bolts or nails holding a sign to a tree, but that concern would be the same for both plastic and wood. Jody will follow up on the UV concern.

Bob points out that the BCT signs are mounted with aluminum nails that are not pounded into the tree so there is a long stretch of nail that should help avoid the tree-growth problem.

Bettina will put up one of the new plastic signs on the little water-pump shed at the Arboretum.

#### Board/Bogwalks: B&G Trail observation platform, Arboretum bogwalk

On or about May 11, Bettina and Ken are going to jack up the observation platform and make it level. There are no plans yet for the Arboretum bogwalk.

#### Other Parcel issues

##### Morrison Farm

– Today Jody blazed the reroute of the red trail that enters the Woodlawn Cemetery woods at the northwest corner of the Concord Road soccer field. Scraping the old red blazes “wasn’t enough” to remove them so she will return with brown paint to finish that task. She also dragged some sticks at two places on the former trail to suggest that it was closed. John will take care of closing it off with piles of brush that he stacked there expressly for that purpose.

Also, there are two trees down in the Morrison Farm woods. They are across unblazed trails. Joe will notify the sawyers as to their locations.

##### Spring Hill

– Jody blazed the recent reroute and Bettina has been working on signage for the closed portion of the trail. Jon should be revising the Spring Hill map for that reroute.

##### Stonefield Farm

– With Jon’s input Jody found one “really easy” entrance from the Assabet River Rail Trail to the new Stonefield Farm trail that the ACT will be laying out. Jody blazed a loop that is obvious if anyone wants to

take a look. There are 5 or 6 trees that absolutely should come down and a few more that should be checked out. Jody has 55 people signed up for a workday to officially build the trail. Only one corner has a heavy invasive growth. The rest of the planned trail is in reasonably good shape. Jody is welcome to forage around in the LSC shed at Morrison Farm for whatever tools she could use, particularly loppers or bypass pruners. John may have a look at the Stonefield Farm trail to see if there's any cutting he can do.

To access the trail site on May 6, Jody has permission to use the Paper Store parking lot. If folks, particularly sawyers, want to visit the site on another day, they can park at the end of Sylvia Road for quick access to the trail site. There's a map showing the proposed trail in the March LSC minutes. Bettina will send a message to the sawyers' list explaining the needs at this site. Bettina and Jody are both willing to accompany a sawyer at the site.

### Guggins Brook

– For Jon: The agenda at tonight's Board of Health meeting included a request by the Acton Water District (AWD) for a permit for emergency beaver trapping at Guggins Brook, but the agenda item has been withdrawn. (Clerk's note: Not cited at this LSC meeting was the AWD reason for this request, "Beaver damming is backing up water at our 693 Mass Ave location. We have a well site on this property.")

### Heath Hen Meadow

– There is a large tree down in the meadow closest to the bridge. It is not across any trail, but it is intrusive on the meadow. John knows of it, is entering it into the sawyers' spreadsheet, and says that it should be removed by next Fall.

### Robbins Mill

– Bob and Hilary flagged a reroute (purple in picture) of a trail just north of the Scoutland crossing. They would like stewards to review the reroute. It would take the place of a downhill route (going north) that is very eroded with exposed roots and somewhat difficult passage. The flagging occurred some time ago, so summer annuals have made the reroute more difficult (only in summer) than it would be if the reroute is approved.



### Updates

– Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

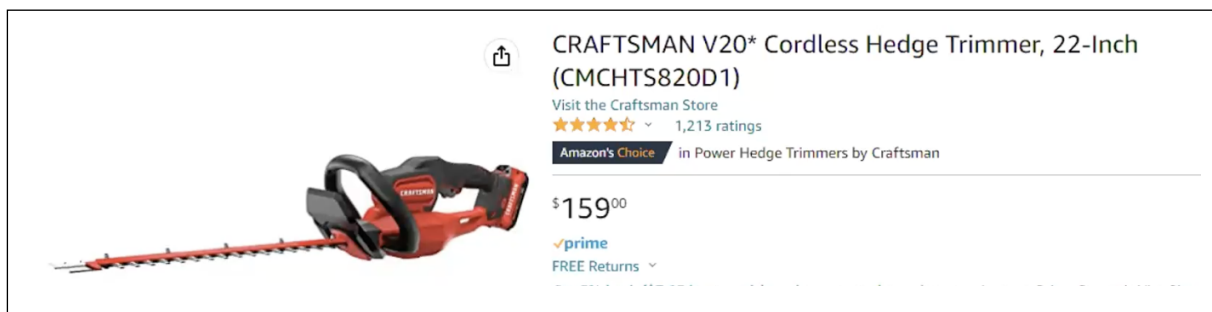
No substantial updates. There will be a final Public Forum (date yet to be set) re some of the information being developed.

– Morrison Farm Conservation Restriction

Nothing new.

– Bridges, Maps, Mowing, Chain sawing, Website

Equipment: Bob Walton has a new hedge cutter that he would like to try out on LSC parcels, and if it's effective, he would give it to the land stewards to use. Bob's targets would include multiflora rose at Carlisle Road, "standing up" mugwort, bush honeysuckle, and a small patch of bittersweet vines at Nashoba Brook, with the effectiveness on bittersweet vines his greatest concern.



Question: LSC members have permission to use power tools for parcel maintenance. The general public does not. Bob is not a member of the LSC. How does the LSC view Bob's use of the hedge cutter in LSC parcels? Given that Bob is so heavily involved with LSC activities and that this is not a tool that is particularly dangerous, such as a chain saw, the LSC is okay with Bob trying it out and appreciates Bob's generosity.

Bridges: Any movement on the Pencil Factory bridge? Per the Historical Commission meeting minutes through February: No. Any significant movement in the months to come may have to involve CPA funding, so that will be something to watch.

Website: Per Bruce: It would be extremely helpful to the sawyers if someone who wants to report, say, a fallen tree at their location in a parcel, would go to the website via their phone and open the parcel's map. The site will show a dot at their location. The person could then drag the arrow shown with the map to point at the dot, copy the map's URL, and send it in an email to the sawyers. Sending the link is far preferable to sending a screenshot of the map. The link is then put into the sawyers' spreadsheet where the sawyer can simply click on it. Bruce gave a demonstration.

### Phil Keyes Memorial

The New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) will be having a celebration of life to remember Phil Keyes some time in May. It will also pursue a legacy project to memorialize Phil. Should Acton and the LSC also memorialize Phil — a long-time steward — in some way? One possibility is something like a kiosk or bench at the pump track, a facility that Phil would identify with. Bettina will research the cost of a memorial bench, possibly to be covered by a Go Fund Me site.

### Town Events

Acton Town Meeting begins May 1. Acton Water District hosts an open house at its facility behind 8 Post Office Square, with tours of 549 Main Street.

### Next month's (05/16/23) agenda

Trail maintenance; a repeat demo by Bruce of how to use a phone to provide a parcel-issue location, a method that is easy and efficient for sawyers to use.

### Evaluate meeting

Amazing!

### **Adjournment**

At 8:05 pm.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, at 7 p.m.