

Minutes for the meeting on January 21, 2015

Members present: Joe Oslander, Bruce Wilson, Andrea Hopkins, Lori Lodge, Heather Crawford
Also in attendance: Jason Engelhardt

Meeting was called to order at 8:16PM.

Minutes: The October minutes were reviewed. Lodge moved to approve, Hopkins seconded. All were in favor; motion passed unanimously.

Elections: There was a call for nominations from the floor. Lodge moved to keep the existing officers: Joe Oslander as Chair and Heather Crawford as Secretary. Motion was seconded by Hopkins. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Report:

Rt 79 parking lot: The lot has been paved and edges roped off to allow grass to regrow. All access points to the preserve, including the north gate, were getting heavily used on weekends in November and December due to favorable weather conditions. There is discussion about expanding the Rt. 79 lot to hopefully fit another 18 or so cars so users won't have to park on the highway. The question was raised that since we are attracting people from around the state, is there any way to get state funds to help with the lot expansion; Oslander will ask. Also, the chain across the access point into the trails from the Route 79 lot will be replaced with a cattle swing gate and a warning sign on the trail side to prevent biker accidents.

Eagle Project: Jared Grato has completed his Eagle project to install mileage markers on the Rockland (orange) trail. He also organized 20 scouts to help push back brush along the trail.

November Work Party: The cleanup of the controlled burn area from last spring was completed and looks good.

Coan Pond reports: There were six walks reported for December and everything looks fine.

50K race: Another \$1,000 donation was received from the race organizer for the use of the trails in the preserve.

Mountain Biking Activity: Signs with the Mountain Biking Code have been posted at all three access points. Engelhardt will add the info to the website as well. The trail system is completed as far as he is concerned and he is now switching the focus to trail sustainability.

There have been complaints that the effect of the paving and roping has been to make the usable lot area smaller than before as usage has increased so he has been working to encourage biker carpooling and avoidance of the trails on heavy use weekends. Engelhardt is concerned that the image of the preserve is being damaged by the overcrowding of the lot which makes the preserve look overused. He would like to see the ropes come down and additional parking added on the north side of the lot with trees planted to screen the neighbors to the north. Oslander reported that Mike Ott and Scot Erskine are working on lot expansion and a crew will be sent out to do the survey work for the expansion soon.

It was reported that conversations with riders shows that more expert riders are now parking at Renee's Way and using the fire roads to access the north end trails. There are now about 13 miles of singletrack trails in Rockland and some pressure may be removed by the trail systems now being constructed in other areas of the state. There have been 26,000 hits on the googledata for the trails (which can be accessed from the town website or with the Q codes at the trail heads).

Engelhardt has some trail signs being made by a biker volunteer. The vertical signs have the trail name and challenge level and can be mounted on trees. There will be about a dozen and he hopes to install them in February. He has also had three poster kiosks (legal paper size) installed with funds from last year's

NEMBA Winterfest. He is aiming for five kiosks with upgraded trail maps for this year. This year he wants to add two bridges in areas where the trail compaction has created flooding issues during rain storms. He is working to get construction/engineer experienced volunteers to take over the design and construction of these projects.

There will be another Winterfest on January 31st 10AM to 1PM with trail rides, demonstrations in the Renee's Way parking lot and food at noon. Last year they had 70 riders and passed the hat and raised \$250 for the trail work. The plan is to have the exhibits and food in the lot and riders parking on the street, so Lodge will put the word out on the neighborhood listserv so the residents will know what is going on.

Goals and Projects:

Lot Expansion was discussed above.

Transplanting pine trees in the southern end of the Route 79 lot. The use of burly biker volunteers was suggested.

Monthly Inspections: A schedule was established with assignments as follows:

March – Lori Lodge

July – Jason Engelhardt

April – Heather Crawford

August – Bruce Wilson

May- Rich Nace

Sept - Andrea Hopkins

June – Joe Oslander

Oct – Dave Erff

Walking Path at Renee's Way Access: Construction of a path east of the service road has been suggested and marked out by a volunteer. The idea is to provide a way in that is less steep and rocky to reduce potential for falls by walkers or bikers. It was pointed out that we do not want to be directing bikers towards the pond or scout camp areas or runoff towards the pond, so these issues will be factored into the design.

Oslander reported on minor vandalism to the outhouse near the pines and that that structure needs painting.

Hikes: The Land Trust is sponsoring a hike with Michael Donohue (and maybe Diane Roberts) to the Rockland Wildflower Preserve on Saturday, May 16th at 10AM.

Potential Eagle Projects: A suggestion was made of installing water bars on the Orange Trail where there is currently a large ice sheet. Since this is a access issue for accident response, Oslander asked those using the area to take pictures of the worst areas.

Controlled Burn: Crawford will contact the NMVFC about doing another burn this year. Possible areas would be (1) on the water side of the outdoor classroom, (2) going back the the first burn area at the corner of old Crooked Hill where it goes to Rockland Junction or (3) something on the north side of the pond where there has been significant growth of greenbriar and autumn olive.

Proposed Change in meeting schedule: Since there is not too much to do in the preserve in the winter months, Oslander has proposed a change in meeting schedule. There would be an evening meeting every other month (January, March, May, July, September, November) and work party meeting in the preserve in June, October and maybe August. April would be the controlled burn month. Everyone present was agreeable to the idea and Oslander will let Scot Erskine and the Beach & Rec Commission know about the schedule change.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 18th, 2015 at 8PM at the North Madison Firehouse. The following meeting will be May 20th.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Crawford

Subject to Approval