

Skaneateles Conservation Area Advisory Committee meeting minutes

Monday, February 16, 2015, 7 PM, Skaneateles Town Hall

A. **Dave Card, Marcellus Fire Chief**, had planned to attend to discuss:

1. Safety issues at the Conservation Area;
2. The purchase of an off-road vehicle for accessing remote areas in rough terrain in places like the conservation area and Baltimore Woods;
3. Naming trails and marking them with the name to give people a better idea of where they are in case of an emergency [would also help for maintenance purposes];
4. Adding signs at kiosks to recommend that people carry cell phones and sign in;
5. Brush burning at the conservation area [a question for Dave].

He didn't show up. [Feb. 17 – Dave was invited to the next meeting (March 16th).]

B. **Mary Sennett, Town Supervisor** discussed:

1. Sue Murphy, Parks Department Manager, has agreed to head up the Fishing Derby organization with our help. The committee was overjoyed.
2. The Parks Department would like to hold a Playday event at the Conservation Area this summer (date TBD). There was no objection.
3. How would any changes in Parks Department involvement affect our budget (keeping in mind that the Highway Department will be doing brush-hogging, Phragmites removal, and supplying gravel for the pavilion that will also have a cost)? Mary explained that, for accounting purposes, the SCA budget would be charged for work done there by each town department, but that we needn't be concerned about exceeding a specific budget amount. The amount would be used to keep track of the actual cost of maintaining the area, for planning purposes. Fred commented that his shouldn't turn the conservation area into a park, and Mary agreed.

C. **Other Fishing Derby plans**

1. Tee-shirts & sponsors - The committee agreed that the kids should get t-shirts, but that the volunteers don't need them. So we would need sponsors for the t-shirts. It was felt that other giveaways are not necessary.
2. Is the fish population stable? It was thought that it probably was. [Feb. 17 – Perhaps fishermen could be asked, on a volunteer basis, during the first few months of the season, to log their catch as a way to get a feel for relative population changes.]
3. What is the planned date? It was agreed that it was July 18th
4. Can we get gravel to level around pavilion before the derby? Maybe Welch Allyn or other volunteers could help spread it out. Mary thought that the highway department had some gravel set aside for the project. There was some concern that if it was previously used in a highway project it might contain components that would leach into the pond. Randy will call Allen Wellington to ask.

D. Mabel Reynolds property tree harvesting. Bob had called Bob Davis, the ESF forester, but had not heard a response.

E. Land acquisition. Bob had not gotten in contact with Jim Chapman.

F. Management plan:

1. Greg McGee offered support for developing the plan;
2. Two ESF students will be available to do internship to map the vegetation types;
3. Any more volunteers to help with the plan? Nobody else volunteered, so the plan subcommittee is still Bob, Tom, and Randy.
4. Any thoughts about what should go into the plan?
 - a. Vegetation type map(s): It was agreed that this should be the first major part of the planning process and could hopefully be completed this year with the help of the ESF students.
 - b. Rules and regulations (since most affect the property condition): it was agreed that this should be part of the plan and that individual parts of the plan could be presented separately to the board.
 - c. Get inputs from the public (users of the property or potential users).
 - d. Ecological restoration plans (general, but emphasizing the importance, providing guidelines and suggestions, and allocating some funding if possible).

G. Bird feeder discussion: Joe Whiting explained the bird-feeding project that he and Diana have been conducting at the O'loughlin parking lot. We discussed the possible added threat of HWA exposure to the nearby hemlock trees by having bird feeders to close. We agreed that none of us knew enough about the added risk of having the feeders there, so we left it up to them to decide whether to move the feeders to a more appropriate location.

H. HWA insectary discussion:

1. Cornell likes our site except for the fact that it's not near any known infestations.
2. CCE reps have offered to come here to discuss the project.
3. But since this is not any ideal site for them, would we prefer that they look elsewhere? We did think that a currently-infested area would make more sense for an insectary location, but that if they still wanted to use our area, we would like to meet with them, preferably at the next SCAAC meeting on March 16th, which would provide enough time to invite interested citizens. [Feb. 17 - Jessi Lyons from CCE has responded that they plan to first apply for funding for insectaries at the south end of Skaneateles Lake and educational programming elsewhere. They are still interested in our area as a future insectary site, and she will try to make it to our March 16th meeting.]

I. Meeting night. Monday still seems best in general. The next meeting will be on Monday, March 16th.