

**FWT Board Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2021**

Attendees: Denise Bilsback, John Boettcher, Kevin Farrell, Bud Gearhart, Hal Harris, Craig Hurlbut, Dennis Kuhn, Ken Merkey, Norma Platt, Matthew Steiner, Anna Taylor, Eric Turberg, Sarah White

A. Guest Presenter: Kevin Farrell of the Genesee Land Trust

Summary: GLT planted more than 2500 native trees and shrubs in the Island Cottage Woods area in 2017, through 20-25 acres, supplemented with invasive shrub treatment.

Problem: Emerald Ash Borer and other pests led to dead and dying trees, the increase of invasive shrubs, and the loss of conservation value and green infrastructure.

Project:

1. Identify goals: habitat for birds, deer-resistant species, and climate resilience.
2. Work with local experts (June Summers, Bill and Martha Zetter, and other ecologists) to identify a species list.
3. Conduct fundraising campaign (see also below).
4. Bid out contract, awarded to Jim Englert.
5. Plant 2500+ trees and shrubs (number selected by contractor and his team, with limits on where to plant because of wetlands).
6. Monitor trees at least monthly.
7. Conduct tours for community engagement.

Financials:

Materials	\$45,000*
Labor	\$35,000
Total	\$80,000

* Note: materials were between \$40,000 and \$50,000, so total cost is at least \$75,000.

Cost per tree = \$26 to \$34

Grants covered part of project.

Questions:

Q: Has GLT ever tried crowd-funding?

A: Not specifically. They have run campaigns for projects.

Q: Would it be possible to partner with GLT to run a similar project in Webster Open Space.

A: Yes.

Next steps:

1. Develop priorities/goals for Webster Open Space. Decide on them at April Board meeting.
2. Determine high-priority locations based on goals (given 1000+ acres, what is the biggest bang-for-the-buck).
3. Investigate funding options.

B. Administrative Tasks

1. Approve/Change Agenda - OK
2. Approve Minutes from February Meeting - OK
3. Membership Status- Denise Bilsback: Detailed report distributed via email to Board.
 - Total membership: 220 (down from 230 in January)
 - No work hours in February
4. Review of Treasurer Report- Bill Polito: Summary report distributed via email to Board. \$260 in new deposits; no new expenses.
5. Social Media – Ken Merkey:
 - Engagement: 808 FB (up from 592 YOY; up from 733 in January)
 - FB Likes = 743 on page (up from 565 YOY).
 - Each post reaches an average of 82 people. A few posts reached 1000+
 - After this meeting Norma and Anna to get Ken on Instagram account.
6. Website Inquiry Summary – Norma Platt
 - Just 1 inquiry: A person from mid-Atlantic who had the original template for the railroad signs. Norma directed him to the Webster Museum and railroad museum. Offered him a walk if he's ever in town.
7. Communications Update- John Boettcher:
 - Working on spring newsletter. **ACTION ITEM:** Articles due April 4.
 - Summary of materials from past-president Sherri sent to Board, and all is stored on Dropbox.
8. Habitat Committee Update- Norma Platt: No report this month.
9. Website Updates – Steve Snyder, Website Committee on Refresh: Anna to get a report next month.

C. Main Topics

1. Waivers (Parks & Rec) and Conflict of Interest:

Board member waivers: Missing 7. **ACTION ITEM:** Complete ASAP.

Question about the waiver of liability on equipment. Board would pay for repair of Larry's equipment.

Volunteer waivers: Craig drafted covid wording to require masks and social distancing. **ACTION ITEM:** Craig to forward to Norma who will work with the town on adding as needed.

2. Planning:

- New Trails Status - No update

3. Maintain:

- Trail Projects 2021:

- Project List – Craig sent project list to Board via email. Work day set for 3d Saturday of each month, starting in April. First project is trash pickup on Hojack and State Road bridge. Note: Hickory Bark will be scheduled by Eric, so not on Craig's list.

Send feedback to Craig by March 15. If no feedback, then list will go forward and trail stewards can start sourcing supplies.

- Whiting Road access from Pellet needs a solution, but Craig will add a placeholder for it on the list. Trail is snow-covered, so difficult to finalize now.
- Sign Replacement – Denise to coordinate, including sending a note to Larry for new sign on Pellet Rd.
 - Replacement signs:
 - Bird Sanctuary trail that was destroyed last fall
 - Four Mile Creek at the start of the Blue trail that was vandalized
 - Chiyoda trail wooden sign
 - New signs that will be needed
 - Pellet Road to direct folks to the Small Meadow.
Also: Do we need a kiosk? Maybe yes, since there's a paved parking area.

4. Scout projects: No new scout projects.
5. Trail Mapping: Update from 03/03/21 Mapping Team meeting
 - Good progress with tutorial from Catherine.
 - Updated trail maps needed for Wegmans Passport. WRNP, Gosnell, Hickory Bark, FMC all need updates.
6. Promote:
 - Music in the Park- Mother's Day/ Father's Day weekend day. **ACTION ITEM:** Anna to reach out to Carmen G with idea.
 - Wegmans Passport 2021: follow up with Wegmans - working on this. Plan for group hike in May (less muddy and maybe less need for social distancing).
 - Open Discussion
 - o Dropbox. Sherri (former FWT president) is the owner. 10 people have access. Seems to be a personal account (free). Should design a document-storage plan and document-retention policy. **ACTION ITEM:** Hal to add Sarah to access. Sarah to create draft plan for how to organize.
 - o Abandoned cars in FMC. Someone on the trail talked to Dennis about the cars, with considerable knowledge. Dennis will work on an article for the Spring NL, and consider adding signs about them on the Website and on the kiosk. Son of former owner might know about the cars, too. Dennis will work with him. Dave's input will also be needed. Should guided hikes be added with information about the cars? Probably not.
 - o Zoom account. FWT has a corporate account that allows for meetings longer than 40 minutes.
 - o Special thanks to Anna for keeping the meeting running well, even with the distance and technology difficulties.

Adjourn!