

Town of Swanzey, NH
Open Space Committee (OSC)
Meeting minutes - March 11, 2015

Present at meeting: Chair Ames called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Present were Victoria Reck Ames, Bob McElvey, Karen Sielke, Sharon Greatbatch, Jeanne Thieme, Mary Farnsworth, alternate Theresa Diluzio, and Selectmen's Representative Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. The Chair seated DiLuzio for Bernard. Jan McClure (Nature Conservancy) arrived at 5:50.

Absent: Beverly Bernard, alternate Deb Crowder

Minutes: Thieme **moved** to accept the minutes of February 11, 2015 and McElvey seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

AGENDA ITEMS

Winter snowshoe hike – To be hosted by McElvey, with guest naturalist Wendy Ward. McElvey said he will welcome participants and introduce Ward. Sielke said she would take photographs. Members will arrive at the Pine Street parking location at 9:50; parking conditions were discussed, and it was determined that it may be necessary to park around the corner. Members acknowledged Bernard's great work in placing press releases in the *Sentinel* and *Shopper News*. McElvey said he would ensure promotion on Facebook, and Ames said she would ask Town staff to post the event on the town sign.

Yale Forest hike – Saturday, April 25 from 10:00 to noon; to be hosted by Farnsworth. Members discussed the route and features to explore. Farnsworth said she will oversee publicity, and will ask Bernard to handle press releases and Facebook. An event description will appear on the forthcoming OSC event postcard.

Events postcard – Members discussed proposed updates to the OSC mission statement that will appear on the card. Ames supplied a draft of the event descriptions and proposed card design. Stuck for a postcard title, members agreed to submit ideas to Ames by Friday, March 13. Prior to printing, Ames will e-mail the text and card design to members for additional review.

Mt. Caesar brush-clearing – Colby reported that there have been no developments.

Swanzey Lake summer camp program – Greatbatch reported that there have been no developments.

"Reading the forested landscape" slide show and hike, September 27, Tom Wessels, 1:00 to 5:00 – Thieme reported that Mike and Jennie Gomarlo welcome the idea of hosting the hike on their Cram Hill property.

Presentation on stone walls by Kevin Gardner, October 21 – DiLuzio reported that the event date has been officially confirmed and is all set to take place.

Discussion of potential conservation project -- Jan McClure (Nature Conservancy) presented an overview of a potential project to protect and restore an Ashuelot River forested floodplain off Matthews Road. As proposed, the Monadnock Conservancy would manage the conservation easement preparation and stewardship. (McClure's delayed arrival at the OSC meeting prevented Stacy Gambrel from attending to discuss potential participation by the Monadnock Conservancy.)

McClure explained that she initiated contact with the property owners in 2013, and said that Christian Marks, floodplain ecologist for the Nature Conservancy's CT River program, had independently identified this area as worthy of conservation. Those present noted that the proposed area is shown as "highest ranked habitat in NH (by condition)" on the NH Wildlife Action Plan. McClure said that she has arranged for appraisals of the properties to be conducted, and hopes to receive the reports by the beginning of April. Those present discussed funding, which will include McClure's application to the Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Fund, and possibly her application to NH's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). Funding for restoration might come from a USDA resource conservation partnership grant. McClure said that she hoped that the OSC would provide a letter of support for the preliminary ARM application. McClure said that she will be in contact with the OSC with further information about project scope, expected expense, and Town involvement as the project develops. Members reviewed the Town's process for requesting expenditures from the Conservation Land Acquisition capital reserve fund. McClure left the meeting at 6:30.

OSC members briefly discussed and reaffirmed the Committee's policy of strongly encouraging public access in all conservation projects. Members discussed the need for a site visit, and asked Ames to find out whether the OSC might be able to join the Monadnock Conservancy's Lands Committee when they conduct their site visit.

Thieme's service recognized – Sielke expressed the Committee's gratitude to Thieme for her many years of wise and effective leadership.

Introducing children to nature – Explaining that her research of this topic had uncovered the ideal text, Ames distributed to members gift copies of *All the Places to Love*, by Patricia MacLachlan.

For information:

- **Saving Special Places** land conservation conference, **Saturday, April 11**, 8:00 to 3:45, John Stark Regional High School, Weare NH. Registration is an appropriate use of the OSC budget. Please consider attending.
http://savingspecialplaces.org/?utm_source=Saving+Special+Places+2015+-+Registration+Ann+1&utm_campaign=SSP2015+SaveTheDate&utm_medium=email
- July 18 Old Home Day parade – OSC participation has been confirmed to the Old Home Day Committee
- May 8 Northfield Mt Herman Farmers' Market Teach-In – invitation to participate for a second year has been declined with regrets

- Come hear Emily (Thieme) Kerylow share some of her childhood adventures with Mike Johnson at Ridgehill Farm:

Stories About this Place Saturday, March 28, 2015, 6:30 to 9 p.m.

An evening of stories from people in our community talking about how the land has shaped them and they it: featuring Ben Haubrich, Ernie Hebert, Mary Iselin and Stacia Tolman. This live performance event promises to be a palette of candid recollections, musings, anecdotes and insights into things that comprise life in and around the Monadnock region. Desserts to share are encouraged. Presented by: Monadnock Conservancy.

Location: [Historical Society of Cheshire County](#), 246 Main Street, Keene

Contact: [Email Anne McBride](#) or call 603-357-0600, ext. 102.

ADJOURNMENT

Sielke **moved** to adjourn, Greatbatch seconded the motion and all were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 6:45.

Next meeting: April 8, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Ames
substitute recording secretary