

BOW OPEN SPACES

Final minutes, Baker Public Library

Date: December 5, 2023

OFFICERS and BOARD ATTENDEES: Harry Hadaway, Tom O'Donovan, Bob Lux, Frank Boucher. Board: Martin Murray; Absent: Bob Dawkins, Eric Thum, Marc Ferland, Ken Demain. Guests: Meme Exum, Rick Silverberg

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The report was approved and accepted with minor changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The report was approved and accepted.

First Focus talk with Karri Makinen, currently the head of community development in Bow. Karri says she previously worked in community development in the town of Salem, NH. In that role, she worked with the ConCom closely. She says Salem has acquired many small easements over the years and noted that Salem didn't not have a BOS-type organization. Karri has a lot of exposure to GIS technology from her work. She also has exposure to easement monitoring and experience with lax town rules regarding easement boundary violations. She has experience with working forest management (logging), mountain bikes/jumps/ramps and atv abuse, hunting conflicts, tree stand mismanagement etc.

She commented that our trails do not provide sufficient user-friendly information (namely parking locations) on our maps and trail brochures. Tom points out that we don't want to lose 'the wilderness experience' aspect to our forests. Some degree of accessibility is important to have it right though.

Karri asked a lot of informed questions with very useful give and take: what does it mean to be a member of BOS (Martin essentially answered to support our efforts); whether we host any events for members to get more people more engaged; whether we have guided hikes and clean-up days - Martin noted we do have weekly mountain bike rides on our local trails as well as Story Walks and snow shoe

walks. Tom asked if the GIS website could have current use as another layer. He notes that trail layers do exist on the town GIS site (which seem to be inadvertently hidden). These were discussed as well as having an improved local trails layer. Tom brings up mountain bikers making unauthorized trails in easement woods. He notes that Bow has some 'quite famous' trails, eg, 'Moose Knuckle'. Finally, Karri asked about our relationship with the conservation commission in trail creation, including trails affecting wildlife, analyzing trails for density/impact etc. Keeping trails away from houses is also important.

Lastly, Tom brings up strategic plan land conservation acquisition opportunities and setting bonding money ahead of time to purchase land as quickly as possible when it becomes available. Karri asked who has what in BOS in the way of easements deeds and about the digitization and storage location of our pertinent documents. Martin brings up the point that maybe files in an old Google account (begun by Mike Morris) contain some 'lost' information. BOS is in the process of compiling folders for each easement property which are to be kept in the Heritage storage room in the library. BOS looks forward to beginning a lasting relationship with Karri with her community development input.

LAND CONSERVATION: by Tom, namely on the two familiar properties:

(1) 40 acres (1/2 of the total property which abuts already existing easement land) of Westover property has been in mitigation discussions with TF Moran and Coastal properties. DES has worked thru differences and will have a public meeting. Established is a stewardship fee (20K), the easement's being created before the land leaves Westover ownership and the specifics of the easement, eg, no trails except for the already existing snowmobile trail.

(2) Regarding the 11 acre Houghton lot (on Woodhill-Hooksett Road), a Source Water Protection grant (\$44K total, 30K stewardship) was approved at the subcommittee level, then it went to the full commission & was approved.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: Tom notes he is beginning to create our 'strategic pamphlet' with specific objectives that support stated goals. The pamphlet will start with trails to be developed by Marc and stewardship by Eric.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Bob was absent but sent the below:

"Here are the comparative stats.

Current membership is as follows:

2023

- \$4,680 in membership dues
- \$135 in donations
- 29 paid members

2022

- \$2,045 in membership dues
- \$255 in donations
- 29 paid members

Active membership is as follows:

2023

- \$8,665 in membership dues
- 89 paid members

2022

- \$5,560 in membership dues
- 83 paid members

In addition, we have 8 new members. You can see them on the current year member report with the new reference. Tom has brought in a number of these members in his goal to bring in at least 10 new members.

The second notice for unpaid renewals was sent out this weekend to the members.”

STEWARDSHIP: Eric was absent but sent a report by email:

“ 1. Scanning the rest of the stewardship files to a DataStick and hope to deliver all binders to Baker Free Library by the end of the week. Also working on storing files online, with help from the Land Trust Alliance.

2. Met with mountain bikers on Wednesday, November 30 at Tom's house to discuss unauthorized mountain bike trails in our conservation lands.

3. Met with Carol Niegisch, our Knox Forest steward monitor. She said her monitor work should be done by mid-December.”

Rick Silverberg commented on trail abuse in Walker Forest near the Stinger trail - an unauthorized reroute and banked curve.

Bob Lux spoke on Hammond NP, talking about the necessity and challenges of refreshing blazes, carrying/using paint in cold weather etc. He reported on his HNP boundary progress walking which is mostly done and without any infractions found as of this time.

Harry spoke on the Woodbury loop finding a new, substantial trail - might it have been the one Tom discovered? (Tom was absent at this time in the meeting). MTB trail abuse on Concord trails was brought up by Rick as a heads-up for Bow.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Martin says the newsletter went out before last month's meeting. He will send it to new members who were not included the first time. We are transitioning to a new website, will pay for annual backups, \$48/yr to save to the Cloud. He says BOS will

start a public relations committee in 2024 to assist Meme in getting the web site up and going. At this point, Harry notes the difficulty of following trails under a blanket of leaves, raising the question of obvious blazing and the issue of getting lost in Nottingcook due to losing track of trails due to inadequate blazing and the fact that trails have not been blown. Removing leaves thus making trails more apparent leads to more erosion as has been noted before.

TRAILS REPORT: Marc was absent but sent a report by email:

“Probably the most notable (and controversial) bit of agenda item I have is the leaf blowing that we've done in the past month. Certainly trail purists would prefer no leaf blowing at all, but I think a balance of some blowing to make our roughly 22 miles of official trails safer and more accessible is a more pragmatic, responsible, and prudent approach. Considering trail usage that's exploded in the last few years, I would expect trail blowing in the fall to continue in years to come.

A second and more minor agenda item is that the 4x4 trailhead sign on Robinson road has recently gotten knocked down. Rather than wait until the spring to have someone from the town put up a new one (as was done at the Hammond Preserve trailhead sign on Dunbarton Center road a couple years back), I picked up a 4x4 last night, and a fellow trails committee member and I plan to fix the sign within the next week.

Also, there was a meeting with a prominent member of the Bow mountain biking community - and new BOS member - named Steve Gallier. Steve and some of his biking colleagues rank among the many "trail angels" that provide countless hours of hard work that keep our trails looking great. At the meeting, we discussed our collective efforts regarding maintaining the trails in Bow, as well as the reasoning and need to follow proper protocols when approaching a new trail build, or existing trail re-route. Our meeting went well, and I believe a mutual understanding and respect came from it.

Lastly, Martin had asked many of us board member's to provide a 2023 recap of accomplishments regarding our respective duties. Here is the paragraph that I sent him about Trails:

Aside from the regular chores of clipping back growth on the trails, clearing blowdowns, re-blazing, and keeping kiosk areas neat and stocked with maps, here are some of the more notable projects that were completed by the BOS Trails Committee in 2023. After 40 working hours and \$750 in materials cost, we replaced a “red-listed” bridge on Boundary Trail in the Knox Town Forest. Re-purposed boards and another 15 working hours were applied in replacing a nearby bridge on the School Forest Loop that too had seen better days. We updated the kiosk map at the South Bow road entrance to Nottingcook Forest. We rebuilt water bars, dug drainage trenches, and installed wire meshing on bog bridges in Nottingcook forest.”

WRAP UP: Harry spoke of sending acknowledgement via thank you note to special large contributors to BOS, eg the Slocums and several others. Meme asks for biography photos for the BOS web site which will be unveiled at the January meeting. January will mark our returning to meetings upstairs in the library.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lux
Secretary
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