



Randolph Conservation Commission

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 6:00pm

Conference Room B at Town Hall

In attendance: Jeff Thayer, Rachel Westbrook, Courtney Gately, Brendan Barden, Ian Blackmer, Emily Lewis, Chandler Engel

Meeting called to order 6:02

Minutes approved, Brendan abstained

Treasurer's report: \$12,327.57 in the bank

New Business: Christmas Bird Count December 16th. **Jessamyn** will publicize to the usual locations, send a link to the list

Looking for a replacement for Harrison Drapo, maybe looking for Randolph Center or East Randolph representation. Maybe putting the word out to East Valley Community Group to see if they know a person? A few names mentioned, ongoing project.

Sayward Update: AJ has been working with the town to cut back some of the trees by the side of Tatro Hill Road to improve the condition of the road to get more sunlight on it. Logging hasn't started yet. **Rachel** will check in with AJ to make sure neighbors have been contacted.

Ellis Update: Water system is in winter shutdown so nothing is going on at the location until about April (depends when the new reservoir gets in). A few other things need to be done, there's more work after that and they're hoping to complete the most of it in mid-July and all the final parts (demolition of reservoir thing and site remediation) might be in to August. Rachel contacted him to ask if there's a possibility to do some beneficial plantings as part of the remediation and hasn't heard back yet.

Discussion about the management plan for Ellis and whether it's a "can we pay someone to do this?" situation. **Emily** will look in to an approximate cost for that, we need to look into whether this is a job that will need to get sent out for bid.

Discussion about whether the forest management plan covers invasives, how the overall management plan needs to include invasive management specifically. Emily mentioned that the town of Enfield NH has a town-wide invasives management plan that is the 1st of its kind in New Hampshire. Maybe look into other towns in Vermont that have done this?

Discussion about whether the site is now open to the public during all hours? Will check, get in touch with Ridgeline. **Rachel** will check with Trevor.

Field trip to Rabbit Track when the weather improves!

Old business: Jeff Thayer brought up the emerald ash borer EAB plan and what happened with the plan that was created in 2016. There are 606 ash trees found that the town would be responsible for (in a 10% survey) which are along roadsides and in places the town would be responsible for. Jeff mentioned that there's a long line of ash trees along the back of the Braintree Meetinghouse that are all dead, we haven't seen many large, visible outbreaks in this region. EAB doesn't travel too far but they can come along on trucks or on firewood (human factor) which gets it to more remote places.

Maybe start with talking to the selectboard with a proposal, pointing out that there are many large ash trees near the elementary and high school buildings and it might be worth raising that as a matter of some urgency? Green Mountain Power has a responsibility for trees that are 10" from the power lines according to the EAB report but it's not clear what the mechanism is. Anything requiring money goes to the Town Manager or the Selectboard. Public education can just go through the Conservation Commission. Jeff says that Barre is cutting and donating the wood to people in need for firewood, might be an option.

The bigger issue is that dead trees are more costly to take down so it may cost LESS to take care of some of these trees sooner rather than leaving it for later.

Adjourned 6:47