

2020 TOWN FOREST REPORT

This year of the pandemic saw many people visiting the forest, especially hikers, highlighting the value of our forest as a local natural refuge for everyone trying to deal with the stresses and dangers of our trying times! Due to the pandemic committee meetings were reduced to spring roadside green up on April 6 (committee members and family) and a meeting on October 25 with masks and distancing, attended by the committee and Bill Lipfert, Bill Palmer and Doug Miller. Workdays were informal with small numbers of people.

An exciting accomplishment this year was the work on Root Hill Road from the Claremont town line traveling north into the town forest. It's now in much better shape than it has been in decades. Culvert replacement, labor and gravel are courtesy of generous contributions from Bill Lipfert, Claremont Cycle Depot, Mike Fuerst and an anonymous donor as well as much labor obtaining permits and hauling and spreading gravel by Bill Lipfert. One wouldn't want to take a low clearance sports car on the road but otherwise normal vehicles can now drive in to access the easiest town forest trails, making the forest accessible to people unable to make the more strenuous hikes from Tandy Brook, Hilliard Rd, Rt 21A or Root Hill north. Note the road is closed to motorized wheeled vehicles from March 1 to June 1, the same as any class 6 road.

The forest continues to be very popular for hunting, mountain biking, hiking, trail running, snowshoeing and skiing. The Eagles Ledge lean-to is available for anyone to use. Visit the town forest face book page and the webpage on cornishnh.net for info about the town forest, maps, and the management plan. Check out the logbook (complete with hand sanitizer) at the lookout for lots of great comments from visitors!

Thanks are in order to many anonymous friends of the forest who perform trail maintenance throughout the year. Loop road maintenance was performed as usual, including bush hogging, monitoring for invasive plants and cleaning drainage ditches.

The committee is still searching for ways to perform an inventory of the flora and fauna of the forest; suggestions are welcome, including anyone interested in setting up a BioBlitz. A bid was submitted to the Antioch graduate student program with no results so far.

As in past years, the town forest budget includes no tax money. State law requires that spending any funds such as this year's donations for road work must be authorized in the warrant, so the committee is requesting permission to spend up to \$1500 for trail marking materials, gravel and other miscellaneous items for repair and construction of signs, bridges, gates etc.

Look for a link to the annual town forest slide show on ConnectCornish later this winter. For more information, if you're interested in youth or community projects or to share thoughts about the town forest contact any committee member:

Ginny Prince, chair: 675.2129 virginiatprince@gmail.com

Jim Fitch fitchfarm@gmail.com

Ed Woodbury edwoodbury@hotmail.com

Reyer Jaarsma Reyer@myfairpoint.net

John Hammond, select board