

2021 TOWN FOREST REPORT

As in 2020, 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 dealing with the stresses and dangers of our trying times! Access to the forest is easier than in the past due to improvements to the road in from Paddy Hollow in Claremont, and parking with trail access via the Lipfert property on Rt 12A.

Due to the pandemic committee meetings were reduced to spring roadside green up on April 25 (attended by Reyer Jaarsma, Jim Fitch, Doug Miller, Lisa Kaiser, Ed Woodbury, Roger Stone and Ginny Prince) and a workday on October 24 with Reyer, Ed, Roger and Ginny maintaining the view at the lookout. Several other informal workdays occurred with small numbers of people. Discussion at the meetings covered new signs for the forest (a priority for 2022,)performing an inventory of the forest, potential tree farm status, potential harvest of an approximately 10 acre section adjacent to Root hill road which is designated for this purpose in the management plan., and invasive plants in the forest.

The forest management plan 20-year review is due this year. Watch for details on ConnectCornish later in the year.

On the invasive plant front, autumn olive has decreased; barberry is thriving but does not appear to have spread. Both species of buckthorn are present in small numbers and oriental bittersweet has surged.

The committee is still searching for ways to complete an inventory of the flora and fauna of the forest; suggestions are welcome. Lisa Kaiser spent countless hours and effort trying to organize a BioBlitz, a participatory, informal inventory by individuals contributing Smartphone photos of flora and fauna via INaturalist. Sadly, at this time INaturalist is user-unfriendly when it comes to starting a project with multiple contributors. As in previous years, an unsuccessful bid was submitted to the Antioch graduate student program attempting to enlist students willing to perform an inventory.

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. Check out the logbook (complete with hand sanitizer) at the lookout . Visit the town forest face book page and the webpage on cornishnh.net for info about the town forest, maps, and the management plan.

Many anonymous friends of the forest perform trail maintenance throughout the year. Loop road maintenance was performed as usual, including bush hogging, monitoring for invasive plants and cleaning drainage ditches. Loop road gates were closed to prevent soil damage for much of the year due to unusually wet conditions.

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 conservation commission rep

Frank Parks, select board representative

