2022 TOWN FOREST REPORT

Entries at the lookout log show numerous hikers and mountain bikers visiting the forest, 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.

Reyer and Rob Jaarsma, Roger Stone, Jim Fitch, Ed Woodbury, Cindy Heath, Lisa Kaiser, and Ginny Prince attended the spring meeting on April 10 and picked up nearby roadside trash, as Frank Parks had previously covered the town forest frontage. Frank Parks, Ed Woodbury, Reyer Jaarsma, Bill Palmer, Roger Stone and Ginny Prince made short work of the Oct. 1 work day, clearing small trees and blow down on the Grassy Road. Several other informal workdays occurred with small numbers of people. The 20-year management plan review was held on Dec. 5 and attended by the management committee, Leo Maslan, Linda Leone and Jody Schubert. The updated plan describes current conditions in the forest and specifies a maximum of 3 consecutive nights for camping.

Discussion at the meetings covered tree farm status, potential harvest of an approximately 10 acre section adjacent to Root hill road (designated for this purpose in the management plan), long term protection of the forest, camping rules and inventorying the forest. The 2012 management plan review established the goal of performing a comprehensive inventory of all the natural resources of the town forest. This goal proved unrealistic due to its large scope so the committee decided to perform multiple focused inventories starting with preliminary catalogues of bird and plant species. Additional measures such as a timber cruise and surveys of mammals, fungi and geological features are planned.

In this vein, on May 23 Matt Tar of UNH Cooperative Extension led a bird walk on which he and 8 participants documented 36 bird species in the town forest along with another 12 on abutting properties. On Aug 15 Lionel Chute of the Sullivan County Conservation District and Dode Gladders of UNH Cooperative Extension conducted 21 people on a plant and tree i.d. tour. Lionel was enthusiastic about the wide range of forbs, grasses, shrubs and tree species present which support diverse wildlife habitats. In addition he noted the enormous value of allowing forested public lands like the town forest to develop naturally, since most privately owned tracts are regularly harvested or otherwise altered.

Richard Thompson donated new signs for the forest entrances and major trail intersections. Lisa Kaiser painted the lettering; look for them to be put in place as time permits. Invasive autumn olive, barberry, buckthorn and oriental bittersweet appear somewhat controlled. Many friends of the forest perform trail maintenance throughout the year. Loop road maintenance was performed as usual,

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 Facebook page and cornishnh.net for info about the forest, maps, and updated management plan.

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 forest slide show on the Cornish website. For more information, if you're interested in youth or community projects or to share thoughts about the town forest contact any committee member:

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