

Friends of Goodwin Forest
September 1, 2020

Present: B. Mazzawy, B. Spaman, J. Sanchez, B. Bernard, J. Giana, B. Powers, B. Marshall, Sen. D. Champagne, M. Rondeau, M. McKay, D. May, C. Doucette, F. Servo

Attendance was taken by J. Giana using the preregistration list. Jim asked those who attended the January 14 meeting to review the minutes. A motion to approve was seconded and the minutes accepted as presented.

Membership Report The report, prepared by Membership Chair Lesley Bourque and read by J. Giana, showed 211 individual members and 49 couples, for a total of 260 members. Membership is holding steady.

Beth Bernard introduced State Senator Don Champagne, thanked him for his support for the improvements to the Goodwin house and thanked him for putting us “back on the map.” Sen Champagne encouraged us to get as many lawmakers as possible on board. The Senator was given an overview of the Goodwin trails as this was the first time he had been to Goodwin.

Beth then introduced Frank Servo, the new DEEP Forester replacing Dick Raymond. Frank is based at Goodwin and will work with private landowners in Eastern CT for outreach and technical assistance. One of his tasks is the updating of the Management Plan for Goodwin State Forest, inventorying the forest and making recommendations. The current plan was approved in 2012 and will expire in 2022. Prior to May 20 he was working at Yale-Meyers Forest. He is a Yale grad.

Treasurer Report: Numbers submitted by Bill Marshall and approved.

The plant sale, membership dues, etc., have come in so most of the revenue for the year is complete. The plant sale has been very successful and donations have been received, many in the name of Fran Zumpano.

Expenses: The Center Naturalist was filled in late, so did not start as early as budgeted. The Master Naturalist program will begin this fall so there will be expenses for that.

As of now, we have \$44,939 in the treasury. The treasurer’s report was accepted by unanimous vote.

Media/Outreach: The report, prepared by Lynne Warren, was read by J. Giana. Lynne did no paid advertising for the plant sale feeling the COVID would reduce sales, but the sign on Route 6 plus notices on our Facebook page resulted in record sales. The Friends have 1,044 followers on their Facebook page. The friends Facebook page has a REACH of 1.5 K, meaning 1,500 saw the page. The Friends Facebook page has an ENGAGEMENT factor of 363, meaning 363 people liked, shared and linked our page to others.

CFPA News The report, provided by Eric Hammerling, was presented by Beth. The annual COVERTS program was cancelled due to the COVID. There will be a 1 day alternative Sept 18 regarding Managing Woodlands for Wildlife at Sessions Woods, led by Pete Picone.

Beth is preparing a Master Woodland Manager Program curriculum similar to the Master Naturalist program, to begin in 2021.

Beth also provided a handout of the CFPA Guidelines for In-person Interactive Programs. Beth would like feedback. Guidelines for safe offerings include preregistrations, attendance number limits and contact tracing. The CFPA has a preregistration page on their website, which Goodwin will also use.

DEEP News. The report was provided by Lori Paradis Brant and presented by Beth. There has been discussion between Lori and Eric regarding Beth's contract, which expires in December. There is concern by the CFPA board that Beth is currently supervising DEEP employees, and CFPA wants to redesign the job to address program issues, only, with a DEEP person, currently not existing, providing supervision of the DEEP employees and monitoring the physical plant. Lori wants Goodwin to have a personnel set-up and staffing pattern similar to other DEEP educational facilities, with more full-time staff. Lori wants at least one full-time position at Goodwin.

Beth introduced the seasonal staff:

- Meg Rondeau, Goodwin Naturalist, started in May
- Mike McKay, Maintainer, started Jan 20
- Warren Hastings, not present, horticulture

The siding project will continue in mid-September. The project will continue around the front. DEEP is also updating the electrical service to 200 amps, coming directly to the house via a new pole rather than through the garage. The museum will also get upgraded electrical and the phone lines and internet will be upgraded. Staff will now be able to run webinars from Goodwin rather than only from home. The siding project has brought upper level DEEP staff to Goodwin to see the siding project, and to then realize more upgrades are needed and will be done. DEEP will also turn the first-floor office area back into educational space, with offices moving to the second floor.

Beth thanked the Goodwin volunteers for installing the stone dust path to the museum from the road, eliminating the previous slippery path.

Mike has begun reglazing windows in the house over the past winter and is borrowing the brush hog from Matt Quinn to clean up the Air Line Trail.

Goodwin Naturalist. Meg Rondeau, the new Naturalist, indicated that the Master Naturalist program starts next week. She will be doing 3 more webinars, having done one already on wildlife behavior. She is also working on forestry projects for the Girl Scouts, Walktober programs and on-going monthly programs.

Trails report Bob Mazzawy reported that he has significant help from Susan Crawford, who regularly rides her horse along the trails to report on trail issues. Glen Newcomb of the Quiet Corner Section of the New England Mountain Biking Association also reports on issues, or has his folks handle them themselves. Tougher stuff goes to Bob, with the heavy duty or dangerous items referred to Matt Quinn.

A new trail map is pending DEEP action. Bob reported there are 13 kiosks at various locations on the trails with 1 more forthcoming. Bob acknowledged the work of the late Fran Zumpano in the trail system and noted that benches will be installed in Fran's memory on the east side of Pine Acres Pond.

Bob noted that Charlie Rose has retired as Manager of the Natchaug Trail, and that Dave Rostkowski will take his place.

Bob has applied for a \$2000 grant from the Quarter Horse Association for trail improvements.

There was a discussion led by Frank Servo regarding the trail closures due to dangerous trees. Should volunteers continue to mow closed trails while telling hikers the trails are closed, or not mow them. It was agreed to mow as that would help the loggers gain entrance to areas that they needed to reach.

Jim asked folks to consider how to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Friends of Goodwin, an item brought up at the January meeting but never acted upon due to the COVID. Suggestion was made to ask for ideas from long term members. The suggestion was made to coincide the celebration with the celebration for Fran's benches.

Jim brought up the request from Lindsay Suhr of CFPA for the Friends to co-sponsor the CIPWG Symposium on Invasive Plants. The Friends would mention the event in newsletters, Facebook & web pages and therefore be recognized as a sponsor with NO CHARGE. Approved by the group.

Funding of the Goodwin Maintainer Beth noted that the funds for the maintainer will be ending shortly, and wanted the position to be continued by the Friends under a contract, similar to the Goodwin Naturalist, for the period September through December 2020. It was decided that since funding was available to fund the 3 months for 2020, the contract would be undertaken.

Front Steps Project: While inspecting the siding project, DEEP staff noted that the front steps needed repair or replacement, and suggested this as a project for the Friends. There was some discussion as to the past practice of the Friends NOT working on DEEP buildings, but the Friends had already worked to replace the rear bulkhead, so this practice was in abeyance. It was agreed that the project would be approved to the limit of \$300, with Mike McKay assembling a materials list and Bob Mazzawy providing materials from lumber on hand as available. The Friends would help with construction. Before ANYTHING is build, DEEP has to approve the design for code conformance, etc.

Other Business: There was some discussion as to the need for folding chairs, due to the COVID requirements for outside meetings and the current limited availability of folding chairs at Goodwin. Lynne warren provided a circular for canvas folding chairs which could have the Friends logo printed on them. Beth will obtain more information from Lynne.

Meerting adjourned at 2:45.
Next meeting November 10, 2020.
Minutes taken by Dale May.
Minutes typed by Jim Giana.