

Friends of Goodwin Forest

January 12, 2021

Via Zoom

**Minutes of September 1, 2020 were unanimously accepted and passed.**

**Treasurer Report:** Bill presented the 2020 end of year and 2021 proposed budget, with comparisons with 2020 and 2021. He noted that due to the pandemic, expenses are expected to exceed earnings. A review of the expenses for 2020/2021 are driven by two elements, the Naturalist salary and the maintainer's salary. Discussion ensued. The operating cost for the maintainer position is being looked at by DEEP to fund and Eric reported that CFPA is concerned that if we show the monies in the budget, it looks like we are prepared to salary this position. It was agreed to remove the maintainers salary out of the budget. Some discussion took place regarding finding additional monies through other grants. It was noted that the AQHA grant monies have not come through as of yet. A motion was made to accept the 2021 budget and 2020 end of year treasurer report. Passed unanimously.

**Membership update:** Jim reported that there was 1 new member signed and our total is 263 members, however there were only 22 renewals. He noted that new letters will be going out for renewals of membership. Beth reported that she and Meg will be putting a membership/donation plea at the end of webinars and programs.

**Social media/marketing:** Lynn reported that there has been an increase with Facebook followers since the pandemic. The website has also seen an increase in people visiting. She has started using Twitter as well to enlarge the demographics. The plant sale will happen this year, similarly to last year and the trail run will be posted once it is decided how it will operate.

**CFPA news & updates:** Eric reported that the contract for the directors' position is still continuing to be negotiated with DEEP. The new legislative session has begun remotely so this impacts the access we have to the legislatures. We need to become creative in our efforts to advocate for FGF. The Ct. State Parks day has

been canceled. Eric gave a brief history on the Rec Trails Program and is hoping that DEEP will promote this endeavor this year. He also noted that DEEP is hoping to get some federal funding for the Rec Trails Program. He noted another priority is working on policy for no net loss of forests and an incentive for private landowners to protect the trail easements.

**DEEP news & updates:** Beth reported for Matt that they are taking care of the dead oaks and the airline trail harvest is happening. The trail is closed past the Natchaug Trail and logger Steve A. has moved on to Pachaug and is unsure when the Goodwin red/white/yellows trails will be done.

**Director's report:** Beth reported that this past year has indeed been a challenge. Working from home, moving around space in the building and self-guided experience. The school program continued and the plant sale went on with adaptations for safe shopping. There was a hybrid Master Naturalist program and the trail and garden volunteers were welcomed back with safety guidelines. She noted that over 10,000 people used the trails. She sent out a thank you to the staff at Goodwin for their resourcefulness and flexibility. Other accomplishments were programs she led or participated in. CT Forrest and climate change, Project Learning Tree which had 750 registrants, talking climate change with children, Become a Backyard Naturalist (140 participants), Forester Webinar with Frank Cervo, and a Woods Forum for landowners. Looking ahead to 2021 the center will remain closed as well as the youth campsite. Outdoor in person programs are on hold, but the trails are open, except where the harvest is taking place. Beth thanked all of the trail volunteer for their efforts with keeping the trails clear and safe. The Windham Partnership proposal for 550 students field trip to Goodwin is upcoming, however if still in pandemic mode, will do at the school. Project Learning Tree will be doing a facilitator training, and Tom Wessels is tentative for the fall of 2021. The Master Naturalist program is slated for 2022. Initiatives: post updated trail maps. Major facility projects include siding, finishing the floor, the front steps and creating a new education space.

**Educational/program report:** Meg gave a review of 2020 programs. The webinars that were presented weekly and biweekly had good attendance. Before all went hybrid, there were 4 in person programs with the scouts and 1 long distance hike. The Master Naturalist Level 1 program had 13 students and it

went very well. 2021 started with the First weekend hike and seek which had 584 registrants of which 45% were kids. This was done over 3 days. Upcoming for the year Meg reported she has more webinars planned and virtual programs, such as hikes, classes. She has programs planned for live attendance and for more in-person self-led programs.

**Goodwin Center physical plant & maintenance:** Mike started by thanking the group for their support. He reported that there has been a lot of tree clearing secondary to weather. He was able to procure equipment for fall clean up. He has plans for working on the center. Mike reported that some of the equipment will be moved out of the garage and stored at Natchaug, so the construction company can use the space for storage. Beth reported on the physical plant. A pre-construction meeting took place regarding the start of the front face of the house and IT issues. It is hoped to start the week of the 24<sup>th</sup> and should be completed in one months' time.

**Trails report:** Bob stated that not much has been happening, just dealing with windfalls. Stan has been working on the trail maps and Beth is prioritizing printing out the maps for the kiosks.

Meeting was adjourned. **Next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2021 at 1pm.**

**Respectfully submitted by Emily Logee-Savoie**