

HINESBURG CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Dave Hirth, Melissa Levy (Chair), Bill Marks

MINUTES of October 11, 2010

The regular meeting of the Hinesburg Conservation Commission (HCC) was called to order at 7:05 on Oct. 11, 2010 by Melissa Levy.

Present: Dave Hirth, Melissa Levy, Bill Marks

Guests: Jenn McGowan, Roger Crouse

Lake Iroquois Update

Roger Crouse, president of the Lake Iroquois Association (LIA), came to bring HCC up to date on the activities of his organization. Eurasian milfoil is a major problem, and curly-leafed pond weed is a minor problem at present (but could become big if it is ignored). LIA has "greeters" at the fishing access in the summer – paid individuals on weekends and volunteers during the week. The greeters have all been trained by the State to inspect for exotic plants and zebra mussels. There are 40+ species of exotic plants on Lake Champlain and most of them are spread by boaters, hence the importance of greeters at the main boat-launch site. A milfoil-eating weevil has been introduced to the lake for the last few summers in an effort to bring about some biological control of the major pest plant. The weevils are effective but unfortunately don't spread much, so you can see specific patches which have been defoliated by weevils, but the areas are small. LIA has grant money to hire divers to pull milfoil at the roots. This is an effective method, but they have not been able to cover very much of the lake in this manner. LIA also encourages home owners to pull milfoil in front of their own property.

The other major problem on Lake Iroquois is input of nutrients to the lake. Two nearby dairy farms used to be the major sources of nutrients, but these have been out of the dairy business for the last few years. That leaves septic systems and fertilizers as the principle sources of nutrients. A State survey of the lake has indicated that fertilizers applied by home owners are the greater problem. The LIA tries to persuade Lake Iroquois home owners to avoid using fertilizers and to maintain a buffer between their lawns and the edge of the lake. LIA also distributes a brochure to home owners in the watershed reminding people about how they can play a role in responsible lake management.

HCC members encouraged Roger Crouse to consider identifying projects that might attract interest from students at UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. This is potentially a good source of manpower from students with good energy and a real interest in lake management problems.

Geprags Park

We discussed park management as a follow up to our last meeting which was a field trip to the park. We discussed: 1) control of invasive plant species – reed canary grass, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and barberry, 2) possible brush management techniques, and 3) signage for trails. We also talked about the possibility of creating a trail extending from Geprags Park to Shelburne Pond. We would need to enlist the aid and support of the Trails Committee for this effort. Dave Hirth will contact Mark LaBarr at Audubon Vermont for Mark's ideas on brush management methods. Mark may also have a report for us on their breeding bird survey of the park last spring/summer.

Change in meeting dates

For the next few months Melissa has a problem with Monday meetings and has asked that we change our meeting dates. We agreed to meet on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays until further notice. Our next meeting will be Oct. 19th, which will give us two meetings in October.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted by: Dave Hirth
