

## **Stranahan Stewardship Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

Decisions taken are underlined.

**29 March 2012**

**Members Attending:** Jim Brimblecombe, Jenny Warshow, Ed Jalbert

**Activities:** Members met at the Old Schoolhouse Common. The following matters were discussed (not necessarily in the order below):

1. Gates on the Thompson Road. It was unclear to members whether or not all the gates on the road were properly locked. Jim and Jenny will check to see that the gates on the south end of the Thompson Rd. (near Hollister Hill Rd.), Ed will check to see that the north end – near Ronald Pitkins – is locked. We discussed whether or not the snowmobile trail was closed for the season and decided it probably was, starting March 15.

2. There was discussion about how much logging will take place on the Stranahan Forest. Jenny suggested creating a questionnaire to circulate to residents asking their thoughts on the matter; Ed thought this was a good idea.

3. Ed relayed a request from the Marshfield Conservation Commission that some of the money earned in stumpage from timber sales on the Stranahan be used to finance improvement work – trails, signage, repairs to the Thompson Rd. and so on.

4. Jim said that the road commissioner had a used culvert to put in at the base of the hill on the south end of the Thompson Rd. and that rip rap or matting was needed on the drainage ditches below the second gate on the south end of the road. Ed suggested scattering some conservation mix on the ditches during the next meeting.

5. Ed showed Jim and Jenny the new boundary signs. He asked if it was OK to let Voss Signs use an example of the sign in their next catalog – there was no objection.

6. Jim said the sugaring season was still ongoing and that he had made less syrup than last year but still was on track to make over 700 gallons. He will leave his taps out in the Stranahan for the time being.

7. Members discussed Bob Light's 100 taps along the south end of the Thompson Rd., near its junction with Hollister Hill Rd. Jim noted that many small trees were tapped and Jenny noted that lines crossed the road in 4 places. No one could find a contract with Bob and it was agreed by all

members present that he be required to follow the same tapping standards that Jim does in his lease with the town.

8. Possible future logging was discussed. Jenny had heard some complaints about last winter's log job – mostly that some folks were surprised that logging was allowed at all. Ed and Jim had compiled a list of areas in the Stranahan where Russ had recommended some type of harvest. These areas amounted to over half of the forest. Ed discussed the uncertainties about whether or not forest management was required under the terms of the conservation easement. Jenny said that much of the pressure to get income in lieu of taxes from the Stranahan was relieved by money from the sugaring and haying leases. She also said that there could be harvesting in the other town forests on Folsom Hill and the Martin Covered Bridge properties. Ed said that harvesting was unlikely on the Folsom Hill parcel because of access issues and that only 20-30 acres was available for harvest on the Martin Covered Bridge land. Ed said that it might be possible to get \$3000 to \$4000 a year from cutting timber over and above the leases and that this money could be used to help reduce property taxes in the town. Jenny said that the same money could be gained by fund raising without cutting a single tree. Jenny said that most future cutting should concentrate on improving forest health rather than income generation. There was some discussion of what forest health is. Ed said that, in general, the forest here does fine without any human intervention, that there is no absolute reason to cut wood here to keep forests healthy. Exceptions would include harvesting to combat Asian Longhorned Beetle and Emerald Ash Borer. Jenny said that many people used the forest for hiking and that this had a significant economic benefit to the town and extensive logging might impact this negatively. Ed said that it would be great if we could harvest timber in balance with other uses such as hiking, hunting and so on and that we could have no-cut or low-cut areas along the hiking trails. He said it would be a good thing if the Stranahan could be an example as a multiple-use forest to other town forests. Ed also stressed the importance of taking responsibility for the forest resources we all use. Jenny suggested that we investigate doing precommercial forestry work on the Stranahan. There was some discussion of the types of precommercial work that might be done on the forest. Ed suggested snag creation, wood duck nesting boxes in the wetlands, pruning future sawlogs in the pine plantation and apple tree pruning and release in the old fields.

Jenny thought we should pick a stand where harvesting was recommended and walk through to check out possible impacts to nearby trails. There was also some discussion of the STA's for vernal pools. These areas cover close

to 100 acres of the forest. Jenny mentioned an unmapped vernal pool in the west end of the property that will need an STA buffer. According to the management plan, any cutting in STA's will maintain forest cover at B-line and above stocking levels. We agreed to walk a potential harvest area during our next meeting in April.

9. Jenny and Annie Reed went out to check out the location of the old truck (wanted for restoration) on the Thompson Road and discovered it was off the property.

10. There was discussion of the large culvert on the north end of the Thompson Road. Both the road agent and Ronald Pitkin think it is not strong enough to support a log truck. This culvert is located off the property on the legal trail portion of the Thompson Road.

11. We agreed to meet at the old landing on the Jake Martin Rd. on April 16<sup>th</sup> at 6PM.

Submitted by: Ed Jalbert

Submitted On: April 1, 2011

Approved On: \_\_\_\_\_