

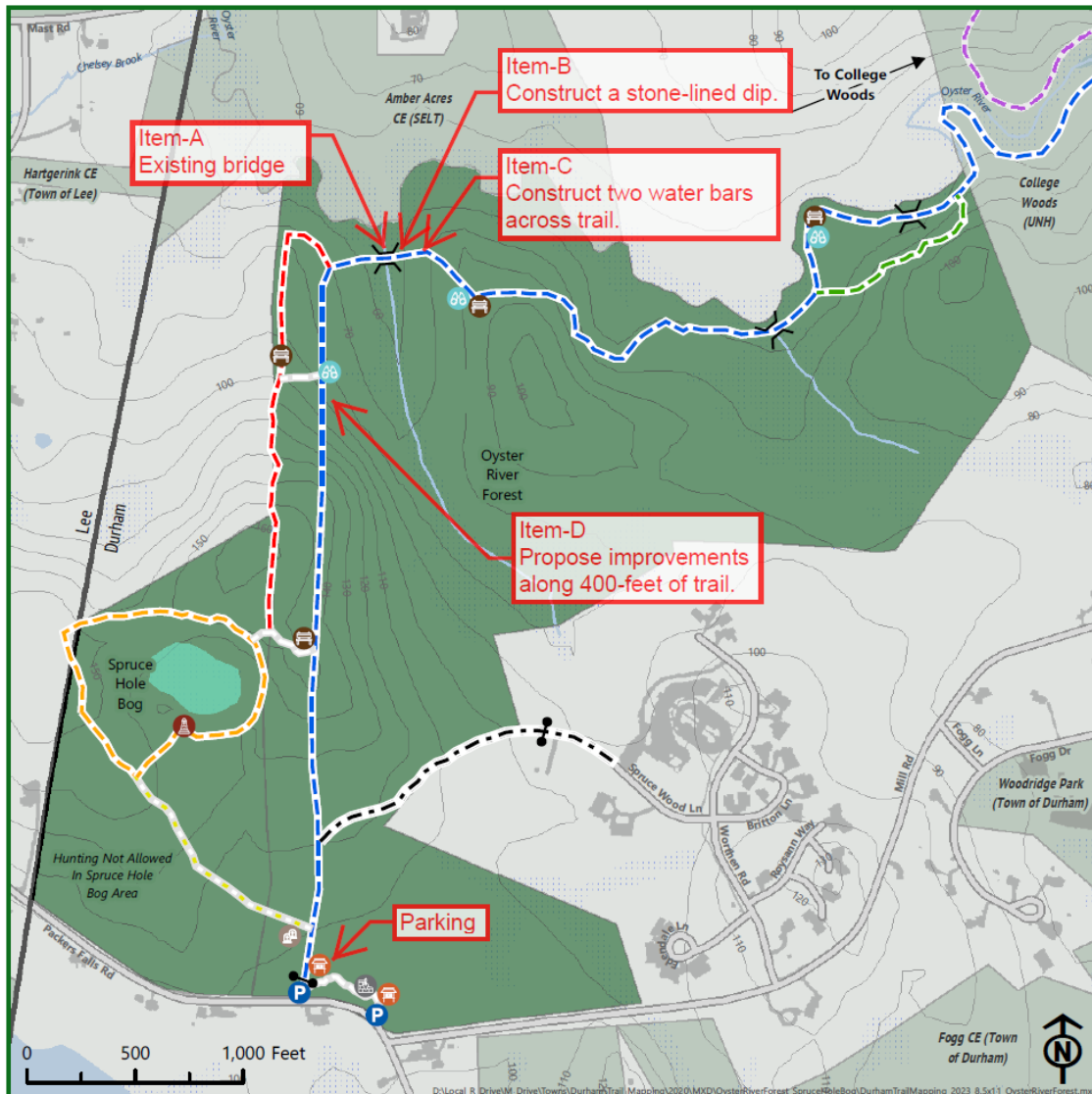
LAND STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE
Town Hall Chambers – 8 Newmarket Road
Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2025

Members Attending: Ann Welsh, Gale Carey, Neil Slepian, Darrell Ford, Myrta Janosz, Ted Howard, John Carroll, Carolyn Singer, Sara Callaghan and Marty Gorham

Absent: John Nachilly

Also attending: Todd Selig, Veronique Ludington, Rich Reine and Rachel Gasowski (via Zoom)

1. The Meeting was called to order at 8:31am by Ann Welsh.
2. The meeting agenda was approved.
3. The minutes for the December 11, 2024 meeting were reviewed, edited and approved.
4. With additional information and suggestions from Greg DiSanto of Martin Forestry Consulting, LLC, the members continued their discussion of maintenance and improvements to an area the Oyster River Forest trail. The following items of discussion are keyed on the map below.



Item-A

It is recommended that the elevation of the existing bridge deck be raised by 12-inches.” to better accommodate seasonal high water. The member’s understanding is that the existing concrete abutments would remain and be reused with concrete added to increase the height. The existing beams spanning the abutments would be reused. The decking boards would be replaced with new pressure treated material. The approaches to the bridge would be modified to align with the new bridge deck elevation.

Item-B

Just east of the existing bridge, where the trail is very often wet, it is recommended to raise the tread using earth and to construct a stone-lined dip. The top surface of the stone-lined dip will be approximately 12-inches below the elevation of the new bridge deck. This will improve the trail condition and will better accommodate water that currently backs-up from the channel beneath the bridge.

Item-C

East of the proposed stone-lined dip, where the trail slopes upward and is subject to erosion, it is recommended to construct two water bars across the trail to direct water to the sides of the trail.

Item-D

It is recommended to harden and improve drainage along approximately 400-feet of existing trail south of the approach to the existing bridge. This would be accomplished by bringing in, placing and compacting new gravel material.

Estimate costs for the scope of work are as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
A - Raise Bridge	\$5,000 to \$7,000
B - Stone-Line Dip	\$2,000 to \$2,500
C - Water Bars	\$1,200 to \$1,200
D - Harden Trail	\$5,000 to \$7,000
Total	\$13,200 to \$17,700

Items A and B are being proposed so that the trail can remain in use to the public while accommodating the impacts of higher water elevation due to beaver activity. Other solutions such as moving the beavers, or installing beaver deceivers were discussed. However, it was decided that these alternate solutions were not appropriate for this conservation area.

The current town budget includes \$10,000 for trail maintenance and improvements at the Oyster River Forest. It was discussed whether some of these proposed improvements would be eligible for a grant from the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (GBRPP). Veronique and Gale agreed to investigate possible GBRPP grant funding. If grant funding is not available, then Item-D, 400-feet of trail hardening would be removed from scope of work.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to seek possible additional funding and to recommend that the town proceed with the scope of work as described.

5. Stewardship Coordinator Update

Veronique Ludington, the new stewardship coordinator, introduced herself to the subcommittee members. Veronique comes to Durham from the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve where she held the position of assistant stewardship coordinator.

Veronique has been working to become more familiar with the town lands and the different stewardship and management plans; started working on the annual town monitoring of conservations easements including the Oyster River Forest and Beaudette properties; met with Steve Lutterman, the town GIS Program Administrator to discuss mapping; walked the Stolworthy Wildlife Sanctuary, the Thompson Forest, and the Powder Major land within the town's boundary.

Ann Welsh coordinated mowing at Thompson Forest with Sewell Enterprises.

6. Trail Markings in Steven's Woods

Neil stated that some people have gotten lost and confused by the trail markings where the yellow trail connects to the green trail. It is believed that this is most likely occurring on an unmarked, closed trail on the UNH MacDonald Lot. Sara will facilitate a contact with Steve Eisenhaure in an effort to address the issue.

7. Reports from Committees

Historic District Commission/Heritage Commission

The town has accepted a grant from the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) in the amount of \$286,600 to support and rehabilitate to Bickford-Chesley House at Wagon Hill Farm.

Town Council

Contrary to last month's update, funds to survey for property survey have been included in the town budget. A clarifying footnote will be added to the December minutes.

Ann suggested that Stolworthy should be the next property to be surveyed and have boundaries marked. Ann asked that an estimate be obtained from Stake and Stone Survey for this service.

Conservation Commission

The CC is continuing work on the amendment to the Wetland and Shoreland Overlay District Zoning.

Recreation

There are two new Discover Durham's Trials series planned. These include West Foss Farm on February 16th, and Oyster River Forest on March 14th.

8. Other Updates

There was a discussion about a dog named Sammy that is behaving poorly and sometimes biting other dogs at Wagon Hill Farm.

9. The subcommittee adjourned at 10:03 am.

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday, February 12, 2024 at 8:30 am in the Town Hall Chambers.