

## Conservation Commission Minutes Mulligan Forest Easement Walk, August 7, 2017

Participants met at the Mulligan Forest parking area along Stevens Hill Road at 9:15 AM. Members present were Sam Demeritt, Paul Miliotis, Susan Mooney and Liz Kotowski, Alternate. Volunteers were Celia Abrams and Leanne Gast.

This walk is the first of a series of walks to determine trail and facility upgrades of easement properties that permit public access in anticipation of grant proposals to be submitted by the Commission. Mooney provided three copies of the survey/topographic maps and Abrams had an aerial topographic/ habitat cover map.

Following are notes of the trails walked and some discussions held along the way:

- The group discussed several issues at the entrance of the property. A topic was the future use of present kiosk at the parking area. It is too small for maps and the original map is faded beyond practical use. Maybe use this kiosk to identify the property as "Mulligan Forest, a conservation easement partnership of the Fernald Family, The Society for the Protection of NH Forests and the Town of Nottingham." A new kiosk could be located just inside the gate in the shade where the sun would not fade the posted information nor would the access to the kiosk require mowing.
- The parking area is adequate for several vehicles.
- The discussion also included the use of the property by people driving ATV's. There needs to be signage indicating that the property was protected for non-motorized public recreation only. It appears that the design of the gate allows room for some ATVs to drive under the bars.
- We do not know the names of the trails/ woods roads. The path is wide enough for logging vehicles, is gravel covered and is an easy to moderate range of difficulty for walking.
- Demeritt, Kotowski and Abrams took photos along the way. Kotowski noted distances walked with a fitbit and Abrams located GPS points on her GPS mapping device.
- Abutters to the north of the main trail were posted for Stoddard and then for Comeau.
- We crossed the logging bridge over the Bean River, Cardinal Flower in bloom.
- At about 0.5 miles the road split. A large oak tree (white?) is on the left road; we walked straight on the right road, climbing up a drumlin. Cellar hole near top of rise on the left prior to an elbow turn to the right.
- Tiger moth, *Haploa clymene*, striking ecru color with black cross markings on fore wings and posterior margins.
- Miliotis and Gast left the group at 10:00 AM.
- At 0.92 miles, another split in the road. The group went left.

- Further along, located a sign for pedestrian traffic only and three white paint blazes on a tree at the “turn around”. Group went right to power line corridor. (The left road goes to Little Mulligan Pond.)
- Noted just off the road to the right (southwest) there were several large squarish boulders (over a dozen) in a meandering line parallel to the road. Several were over 6 feet square. On the way back we went over and inspected them for quarry signs, There were none but lines of cleavage parallel to the edges were present.
- There were a lot of mosquitoes. All types of bug repellents were inadequate, it seemed. Cover up clothes was the better option.
- Reached the high point of the power line corridor at 10:55 AM. Total distance walked was 1.74 miles. Enjoyed views. Spotted a young porcupine “hiding” in the low brush. Scrub brush vegetation excellent for wildlife. (Did note quite a bit of scat on the trails. One we agreed could have been a bear’s.)
- Demeritt decided to follow the power line down to the parking area. Mooney, Kotowski and Abrams returned via the trail we had walked. The Mulligan Pond Trail we will do another time.
- In addition to inspecting the large boulders, we stopped at a black gum tree on the south side of the trail along the edge of a small wetland. The tree was determined to have a 54” circumference thus a diameter of 18”.
- Spotted a Black Racer (?) snake, about 4 to 5 feet in length lying along side the trail. Black, no pattern. Abrams took photos. The details of the scales will determine what species it was. It “raced” off into cover.
- At the Bean River bridge, Demeritt was behind us on the trail. He was able to negotiate one wetland crossing on the power line corridor but not the second so had “bushwhacked” back to the main woods road.
- The walk ended at 12:20 PM. The core group walked a total of 3.55 miles.
- The trails were very walkable. Suggested trail markings (blazing) and trail names for a map for visitors would be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan P. Mooney, Secretary.

These minutes were accepted as corrected at the meeting held on August 14, 2017.