

REC Steering Committee Minutes for 2015 October 27

Members Present: Cece Rudolph (Don), Wes Ebert, Steve Schmidt

Guests Present: Amy Bergmann, NCMS Teacher; Lenn Bergmann & daughter Rachel (girl scout)

Prayer – Led by Steve Schmidt

Old Business

1. Approved June 1st, 2015 meeting minutes
2. Review Harvest
 - a. Totals - \$1800 went into general fund, but the deposit slip calls the account name: Other income/REC
 - b. Repairs by logger, Cody Bergmann.
 - i. The gate opening was widened by re-installing the east post and gate. The new position will allow for more space for vehicles and large trailers to enter the driveway/field.
 - ii. Tire ruts between the pond and marsh and NW into the bottomland area were smoothed out and seeded with an annual grass to limit erosion. The NCHS freshmen also worked on this project by using shovels and rakes to level the ruts furthest to the west during their Trek to the REC last May.
 - c. Current Status**
 - i. Natural regeneration
 1. Wes Ebert has identified wild blueberries growing on the upland hill where Jack Pines were removed. It will be interesting to see how much they mature in the coming years.
 2. Initially, the fastest tree species to grow new shoots was the black cherry, followed shortly after by poplars.
 3. As predicted, the clear cut is being taken over by poplars shooting from the root stock of the logged trees. They are so thick in some spots that the deer cannot easily get to them. Most of the stems within their reach have been browsed, however.
 - ii. Planted trees – We will need to assess this with more focus than a simple trail hike allowed. Perhaps the spring meeting could focus on this or a separate event. As of spring and early summer, there were some tamaracks that have made it a year. Spruces are doing pretty well in spots. Sugar maples that were protected along the upland area appear to be doing well. (SEE item 4 under New Business for more information)
3. Deer Exclosure update
 - a. The deer exclosure/fence was completed on September 14th.
 - b. A trail camera was installed during the deer fence installation on August 11th. Several pictures of mature deer were recorded during the installation. The memory card was traded on September 8th. No deer were pictured during the period between September 8th and October 1st. The batteries died in that time period, though.
 - c. New growth was noticed on the poplars inside of the deer fence within a week of completing fence!
4. Buckthorn Update
 - a. Priorities
 - i. Wes has researched this and found that the suggested priority is to eliminate seed sources first. Then work to hand pull smaller plants on the margins of thickly overgrown areas.

- ii. Areas that likely have seed producers:
 1. North of pond.
 2. Area of bottomland between road and slough. It is only accessible from the road.
- iii. Steve will ask conservation club and other NCMS/HS groups about a buckthorn service work day in spring.

New Business

1. Use update
 - a. NCMS Conservation Club visited during this meeting. 40+ students pulled some buckthorn and began work to edit/create a new trail guide.
 - b. NCHS Biology class studied classification and organism ID in early October.
 - c. NCHS Environmental Science studied forest soils in early October and species diversity yesterday.
 - d. St. Mark's 5th grade came out last week to study GPS and forest activities. They discovered beaver activity! We counted 5 poplars taken down by our new visitors. It will be interesting to observe and monitor their activity.
 - e. Over 100 student hours so far, but less than last year when the BioBlitz was held.
2. Trail Guide revision
 - a. Jeremy Hoffman Eagle Scout project in 2003 – map sign and trail markers and trail guide.
 - b. The middle school conservation club might rewrite the guide to match current conditions.
 - c. Steve will find a copy. If any teachers have a hard copy or electronic copy, please forward to Steve or Dev Quandt.
3. Hang Bat Houses
 - a. Rachel Bergman, girl scout and daughter of Amy Bergmann (NCMS teacher) and Amy's husband, Lenn brought 2 bat houses to donate to the REC on behalf of Girl Scout Troop 7060 in Merrill.
 - b. Lenn installed them on the south side of the upland area next to the marsh. This spot is sheltered from cold winds and will be a great spot for insect food, especially mosquitos!
 - c. We will monitor them for bat activity spring to early fall.
4. 2016 Nursery Order
 - a. We decided not to order trees from the state nursery in order to assess how the ones planted the last two springs have survived.
 - b. This will inform us as to what worked and what did not. Which species survived? Were they protected from deer or did the deer just leave them alone?
5. "Chores"
 - a. Steve hung 4 more no hunting signs. There are now 5 signs along Mallard Court and 1 sign along the trail on the hill side to the south.
 - b. Steve emptied the compost from the composting toilet.
 - c. Wes and Steve staked some loose spots on the bottom of the deer fence.
 - d. Steve replaced the batteries on the trail camera.
 - e. The dead poplar next to the gate and dead jack pine in the field still need to be removed.
 - f. Chemical treatment of poison ivy in ditch will be postponed for spring as recommended by Steve Robison to Steve via email. Wes said that the plant must be actively growing for Round Up to work.
6. Next meeting Spring 2016