

Foster Land Trust Minutes
August 5, 2008

Foster Land Trust (FLT)
Benjamin Eddy Building
South Killingly Road
Foster, RI 02825

Meeting called to order 7:05 p.m.

In attendance: Linda Tibbetts, Chair; Walter May; Kristen Cole; Myra Mercier; Lucy Minturn; John Neale

Minutes: For July approved as written by unanimous vote.

Management plan for pending Hopkins purchase: Al Ball from Trout Unlimited spoke about the organization's proposal to help FLT maintain the Ponagansett River and Dolly Cole Brook areas. The TU proposal includes offers to help monitor water quality, maintain the river banks, pick up trash periodically, and provide fly-fishing lessons and/or seminars as requested. In exchange, TU is requesting access to the area below Ram's Tail Road, and the ability to make changes at the site with FLT approval. Mr. Ball suggested that if we agree to a partnership, the contract may be limited to three years so that FLT can assess the benefits of the arrangement.

Some thoughts from Mr. Ball:

- Catch & release areas tend to discourage litter, however the RI DEM may not stock trout if a catch & release policy is used
- TU can help RI DEM to stock fish using "float stocking" (a way to distribute the fish evenly throughout the targeted area)
- FLT may want to place restrictions limiting catches; possibilities include limiting take to five fish or fewer, exempting native (brook) trout from catches (taking brown or rainbow trout OK), or restricting methods to single fish/artificial lure
- Use of kayaks should be allowed; not a deterrent to fishing
- A sign at the property outlining rules, showing a map, and identifying the types of fish would be welcome
- Christine Dudley is the contact at RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife

Management plans:

Tikkanen property: W. May reported that haying is complete with 215 bales taken. Regarding management needs, L. Minturn reports that the cellar hole needs to be filled, and the stone walls should be cleared of brush. W. May suggested that since the haying is being conducted at Tikkanen, the volunteer hours from G. Rogers should be used at this property. He recommended that some of the hours can be used to cut a trail at this site, or improve existing trails damaged by previous logging and ATV use.

Hayfield property: W. May reports that haying has not been done at this site; it appears that someone has been running motorized vehicles (ATVs) there, possibly destroying the hay. It also appears that the neighbor's backhoe remains on the property. L. Minturn will write a letter to the neighbors regarding the backhoe, and ask them to keep an eye out for ATV violators. This led to a general discussion about the possibility of instituting fines for people who ride any type of motorized vehicles on FLT properties. L. Tibbetts will take up the matter with the Town Council to request fines and/or seizure of vehicles for violators. Regarding management needs for the Hayfield property, there are still two borders to identify; this task can be completed by FLT trustees. Walter suggests that we can use part of the volunteer hours to mow the third field, which should be cut every 2nd or 3rd year to encourage growth of native wildflowers. He also suggested converting the existing logging trail at the back of the property to a hiking trail. Linda suggested clearing the stone walls. This may be completed by the Town, since only a light clearing is needed. Linda also recalled a RI DEM agreement to provide parking for general use on FLT side of the site. She will follow up with them about it.

Saino property: K. Cole presented a report showing a need for one or two parking spaces at the Tom Wood Road Trail on Shippee Schoolhouse Road, and suggested that the volunteer hours could be used to create those spaces. (Equipment may be needed to level the areas specified) There is also the possibility of a partnership with the Foster Preservation Society, to add signage explaining the historic significance of certain landmarks. W. May mentioned that the property's west side boundaries have been defined, but the east side boundaries have yet to be identified.

Spencer property: J. Neale reported that the main trail to the Ponagansett River is in fairly good shape and the markers are in place. He also reported the appearance of a new ATV trail that joins into the main trail. There was some discussion about following the trail to see where it begins so that we can address the off-road vehicle issue; also we need to be clear about the property border in the area of that new trail. L. Tibbetts reported benches could use sanding/waterproofing since they have been extensively carved by passers-by. This work should not require the use of our volunteer hours however.

Hoff property: W. May reports that the neighbors are not familiar with the property borders as first thought; the back of the property borders RI DEM land and the east side borders state property.

Summary: No final determination for spending the volunteer hours was reached. The issue will be taken up at the next meeting.

Property use regulations: The general regulations discussed at our last meeting should be sufficient. They are included in the FLT Property Use Regulations draft document distributed at the last meeting, and will be finalized during the September meeting.

Financial: W. May reports that insurance was paid.

Grants: L. Tibbetts reports the RI DEM grant deadline expires September 26. Potential acquisitions will be discussed in Executive Session.

Public relations: To be discussed at next meeting.

Liaison reports: J. Neale reports the Planning Board will visit a site off Route 102 north of Coventry line to inspect a property for which the owner is requesting zoning variances. Turkey Brook runs through the property, and it also contains other wetlands. There was nothing new to report from the other committees.

Correspondence: The Land Trust Alliance has provided an ID for FLT use on its Web site. Please contact L. Tibbetts for the ID and password.

Executive session, pursuant to RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(5) re: acquisitions: To discuss potential acquisitions using the RI DEM grant funding set to expire on Sept. 26.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 2 in the Eddy building.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Cole