

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee
Minutes Sept. 28, 2010
APPROVED

Present

Elsa Althen, Bill Barker, Gary Brown, Katrina Forest, Rhonda James, Anne Readell, Laura Shere, Sissel Schroeder, Susan Will-Wolf

Also present

Cathie Bruner (Preserve), Daniel Einstein (FPM), Roma Lenehan (Friends), Bryn Scriver (Preserve), Dr. Jack Westman (Restore Picnic Point for Pedestrians Committee).

Minutes

The minutes from the May 25, 2010 committee meeting were approved with one correction. The date needed to be changed from "Mar. 25" to "May 25".

Public comment

none

Introduction of Gary Brown as Preserve Director and update on staffing realignments

In addition to his new duties as director of the Preserve, Brown will continue in his current position as director of campus planning and landscape architecture at Facilities Planning and Management. His Preserve duties will make up 20% of his appointment. He will be an ad hoc member of the Preserve Committee. Daniel Einstein is no longer with the Preserve. He will work for campus planning and landscape architecture as a historical and cultural resources manager. In addition to her volunteer coordinator duties, Bryn Scriver is taking over administrative duties for the Preserve including providing support to the Preserve Committee.

Report of Summer work

Bruner provided the following report:

- 1.) Staff and Prairie Partner interns worked on the gully in Tent Colony Woods. They placed rocks, stones, gravel and sand to slow the storm water running through the gully. Erosion matting was laid and seed was sown to hold the bare soil. They also removed undesirable trees and shrubs to increase sunlight to the area to improve the germination of seed.
- 2.) Buckthorn and other invasive shrubs were removed on Picnic Point around the conical mound, in the narrows to open views, and around the pump. The soil was stabilized in these areas.
- 3.) Staff and volunteers have been continuing to add plants and do vegetation management in all the ongoing projects: edges of University Houses Gardens and Eagle Heights Gardens, Raymer's Cove, Big Woods, Tent Colony Woods, Frautschi Point, the field and field edges, Bills Woods, Picnic Point entrance, Central Lakeshore Path, Willow Creek Woods, Lot 34, and the Limnology Garden.
- 4.) Specific invasive species that staff has focused on are: porcelain berry-preserve-wide,

European poplar at Frautschi Point, Japanese knotweed at the University Houses gardens, reed canary grass at Central Lakeshore Path and pest legumes at Raymer's Cove.

5.) We continue to spend time dealing with user issues such as rope swings, removal of trees, camping areas, and graffiti.

Volunteerism report

Scriver provided the following report:

1.) Since April the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve have held 2 workparties per month in the Preserve. Most of their work has occurred in the Eastern Bill's Woods project area and includes planting native plants and removing buckthorn.

2.) Several large groups including AmeriCorps members and 4H conference participants as well as the student interns worked near the entrance to Picnic Point above the lawn area to remove invasive woody shrubs this summer. The goal of removals is to prevent camping in this area which has been an issue in the past, to gain easier access to control other invasive plants including garlic mustard and porcelain berry, and to eventually increase ground cover to prevent soil erosion.

3.) Since the start of the semester we've been busy hosting volunteer groups including students from the MBA program, Biocore 301, Horticulture 120, Environmental Studies 339, the GreenHouse Residential learning community, and the Sullivan Hall Substance Free House. Volunteers have helped us with site preparation in Willow Creek Woods, preparing the Robert E. Gard circle on the top of Muir Knoll for its dedication, and removing invasive woody plants on Picnic Point.

Sub-committee reports

Communication and Archives: Did not meet.

Education and Research: The group never met and Don Waller's term on the Preserve Committee has ended.

Development: Did not meet.

Planning and Implementation: Will-Wolf asked if the committee had any comments regarding the goals statement that the sub-committee had drafted and circulated. There were no comments.

At the May 25, 2010 Committee meeting the subcommittee presented a draft evaluation of progress in meeting biological management goals for the Preserve in a previous committee's 2005 5-year plan. Committee members were asked to comment on the draft evaluation. No comments were received over the summer, however a comment was made at the meeting that the report title should be more explicit. The title will be changed to, "Five-year assessment of **Progress** made concerning recommendations relating to Preserve Biology from the **Report of the Biology Sub-Committee of the Campus Natural Areas Committee** (2005) and the **Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan** (2006)." Forest proposed and Schroeder

seconded a motion to accept the report. There was discussion about section 1B. of the report. Anne Readel asked if it was necessary to state “there is much controversy.” Will-Wolf said she wanted to be upfront because everyone knows about the past controversy over cutting at Frautschi Point. The report was accepted with all 6 voting members present in favor.

Will-Wolf presented a draft report on Preserve priorities for vegetation management. The report identifies which areas have a written plan and which ones do not. Lenehan raised a concern that 1918 Marsh was not listed. Will-Wolf said that it was left off the list because so much is needed to “rescue” it, and that there is no clear avenue for finding the money needed to fix it. She added that the consensus of the sub-committee members was that the listed areas are potentially doable in smaller packages and can be accomplished “in-house.” Barker said he doesn’t want to send the message that 1918 Marsh is too large that we don’t want to deal with it. The sub-committee was asked to create a short-range and a long-range goals list. Schroeder motioned to refer the report for one month; Readel seconded it.

Action/Discussion

NSF Water Sustainability and Climate proposal update.

The proposal written by Chris Kucharik was funded. As part of the proposal there will be a water educational trail on the Lakeshore Path. There will be small or minimal signage on the path using e-technology and the website.

Picnic Point bike conflicts

Einstein reported on the Picnic Point survey work that was conducted this summer. According to Einstein the intention of the survey is as a snapshot that covers a 10 day period in July. The survey will be repeated in the Fall and Spring. The report reflects visitor opinions about services and behavior.

In a nutshell: Most people support dogs on leash and oppose dogs off leash. Most people support bikes being allowed on the main path but oppose fast moving bikes. Most people supported joggers. Most people support alcohol at the fire pits. Most people were not concerned about other visitors impeding their way by blocking the path. The top three important services are: shoreline access, plant restoration, and a rut-free main path. The bottom three not important services are: clean ash out of fire circles, keep side paths rut-free, and provide free wood.

Limitations to the survey were identified. This was an entrance survey. An exit survey could ask, “During your visit today was there anything that you noticed...” The survey did not get at if there are behaviors that present a risk. Althen was surprised that no one mentioned party boats as something that interferes with their experience. Schroeder pointed out that there was more support for bikes being allowed (n=72) than dogs on leash (n=66) and packs of runners (n=62).

Westman presented a proposal to the Committee called **A Proposal to Restore Picnic Point as an Urban Nature Sanctuary for Pedestrians**. He has been working on this cause since 1992. His committee, the Restore Picnic Point for Pedestrians Committee, wants to limit the main Picnic Point path to pedestrians for 2 reasons. The first is to restore Picnic Point as an urban sanctuary where nature can be enjoyed by people of all ages and physical abilities. The

second is to ensure the safety of those who use it.

Westman claims that much of the danger is to bicyclists who need to take evasive measures, unless it's a child that is the pedestrian. Westman said that because bicycle traffic makes it unsafe for children, Picnic Point is regarded as "off limits" by Madison programs for children.

Westman is also concerned that ruts on the path are dangerous to both bikers and runners and that bike traffic contributes to hazardous erosion ruts. He thinks the bikes should be limited to the paved areas-service roads in the Preserve. He also points out that bicyclists have access to a variety of shared-use paths emanating from campus and they no longer need to rely on the Picnic Point path for exercise or recreation.

Barker asked the question "Is this issue important? If so we need a fair and deliberate process." Will-Wolf asked how we would enforce a change in bike policy. Right now we keep bikes in one place on the main path. Someone asked if bikes are still a problem at the Arboretum. They were told that the Arboretum has people gates and a ranger program to enforce the rules. Forest asked if there was a core of volunteers who could act as stewards. Readel agreed that users of the resource could help enforce a slow bike policy. Shere said that fast bikers were not likely to be responsive to education and we may not want volunteers to have to deal with them. Forest said that it would be easier to enforce a no bike policy than a slow bike policy. Lenehan pointed out that educational campaigns to slow bikes worked for a little while, but there is a lot of turnover every year in the student population and that education would have to be ongoing. She also worried that banning bikes from Picnic Point would just drive them elsewhere in the Preserve.

Barker will speak to the bike/pedestrian subcommittee of the Transportation Department.

Brown clarified that Westman quoted commuter path standards in his report. Picnic Point path is recreation path and it's fully ADA accessible. Density of use is not an ADA issue.

Readel wondered about a bike free week or weekend. Forest suggested that bikes could be banned 1 day a week. Althen thought that these ideas did not go far enough and agreed with Westman's assertion that Picnic Point is a sanctuary.

Adjournment

Submitted by Bryn Sriver