

**SAMUEL WILMOT NATURE AREA
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF APRIL 12, 2021 7:00 P.M.
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Note: the date of this meeting was changed (from Tuesday April 13th) by the Chair with the agreement of all members to accommodate a conflict with another meeting .

Present: Brian Reid, Ken Mercer (staff), Kate Potter, Leo Blindenbach, Tom Hossie, Patrick Bothwell, Rod McArthur

Regrets: Carrie-Anne Atkins, Maggie Luczak

Absent: Councilor Corinna Trail (conflict with Council meeting)

**Acceptance of the Agenda: moved by Kate Potter, seconded by Tom Hossie that the agenda, with additions noted below under Other Business, be accepted.
CARRIED.**

Minutes of Previous Meeting: moved by Patrick Bothwell, seconded by Rod McArthur, that the minutes of the meeting of March 9, 2021, be approved.

CARRIED.

Correction to the Minutes of February , 2021: Brian advised that the portion of the minutes from March 9th that dealt with the issue of winter maintenance of the trails contained an error. The minutes indicated that the Council Resolution proposing clearing of the trails during the winter specifically stated that salt was NOT to be used during the process. A review of the resolution indicated that reference to salt was NOT included in the wording.

Status Reports/Updates:

Probus Hiking Group: Brain advised that the group hike referred to in last month's minutes was cancelled by the organizers because of the changing rules relating to the number of people permitted at an outdoor event. It is expected that the group will reschedule later in the season.

Presentation to the Canadian Wildlife Federation:

Brian reported that he had made a presentation on April 6th to Managers and staff of the CWF's Right-of-Way Habitat Restoration Program, relating to SWNA's work in establishing our wildflower/pollinator garden. Other presenters included the City of Calgary, B.C. Hydro, the City of Cornwall and a group from Oshawa. The presentation was well received and was an excellent opportunity to showcase our efforts and establish contacts for the future .

Bird Box Cleanout/Monitoring:

Leo, Rod and Brian completed this task on April 8th. It was noted that many of the boxes were empty. This was a major concern because our occupancy rate has traditionally been very high (approximately 95%) It appears that someone had undertaken to clean out many of the boxes without our knowledge. Although the effort is appreciated, it does undermine our ability to measure occupancy rates . We will endeavor to determine who was responsible so that occupancy data might be retrieved and so we may tactfully suggest that permission be obtained in future.

Orono Times Article:

It was noted that an article pertaining to the establishment of the wildflower garden, and featuring lead committee member Leo Blindenbach and volunteer Kirk Kemp, had appeared in the most recent edition of the Orono Times.

Butternut Tree Planting: Ken had previously advised us that a developer will be planting a number of butternut trees in a specified part of the SWNA as compensation for having wrongly removed such from another project. Ken will keep us advised on the timing and progress of this effort.

South Lookout: repair/partial replacement of this structure has been budgeted for this year. Although the timing for the required work has not yet been established, the committee requested that it be given priority given the high degree of usage of the trails .

Deadfall removal: Committee members had reported a large tree which had fallen over a portion of trail west of the treatment plant. Ken advised that his department had remedied the problem as of the time of this meeting.

Spring Cleanup: this annual project, involving SWNA, the Port of Newcastle and the community of Bond Head, originally scheduled for April 17th, has been cancelled by the organizers because of covid restrictions. However, volunteers are encouraged to do whatever cleanup they can on their own time. It appears that many are already doing that on a regular basis . Our own monitoring of the trails recently reveals that they are relatively litter free. Patrick offered to check the creekbanks and pathways in the coming days since this is an area not easily visible from the main trails network and is often heavily littered by anglers.

Spring Planting: after considerable discussion, it was decided that the committee will proceed with this year's planting initiative on May 29th , but on a more limited scale due to covid restrictions. We will concentrate on infilling existing planted areas rather than expanding the scope of planting. As we have done in previous years, members will mark the locations for planting with florescent paint and probably pre dig most of the holes. Brian will follow with OPG and the supplier re timing , delivery and number of plants.

Moth Night:

Member Tom Hossie had introduced the idea of holding an “ event “ in July focusing on live-capturing , identifying and recording the incredible variety of moths that inhabit the nature area. He has undertaken this previously and is prepared to take the lead role in doing it on a larger scale, subject to covid restrictions . This is an excellent way of increasing our educational role , of gathering data and expanding our inventory of flora and fauna within the SWNA. The committee agreed to proceed. Tom does not expect a great deal of preparation will be required. Promotion, however, will be important.

Other Business: as identified at the beginning of this meeting, three other items were added to the agenda.

Monarch Tagging: Tom advised the committee that he had received information that two of the monarchs tagged last fall at SWNA. The overall number of monarchs recovered this winter in Mexico and enroute is well below that of previous years. However, this appears to be the result of covid restrictions limiting the number of people involved in the recovery effort rather than to any

particular decline in overall numbers of monarchs completing the migratory journey.

Request from University Student to conduct Research:

Ken advised that he was in receipt of a request from a university student from Queen's to conduct research at the SWNA concerning two invasive species: dog-strangling vine and garlic mustard. The committee is supportive of the request and Tom Hossie will act as our direct liaison with the individual to ensure understanding of the scope of the research etc.

Round Table:

Kate introduced the idea of including a few moments at each meeting for members to share any individual experiences, thoughts or comments not necessarily part of our agenda. This was readily agreed to and will become a standing item for future meetings beginning with the current one:

Kate: talked about recent walks with her family through the nature area and the many interesting things they had observed. She related this to the importance for children in particular to have a way of connecting with nature during a time when they have been very much "housebound".

Rod: spoke about observing a beaver near his home on Graham Creek and enquired about whether such were active at the SWNA. Tom and Brian responded that they had both seen beaver along the creek – as well as the signs of their presence. Ken pointed out that controlling the beaver population is an ongoing issue throughout Clarington.

Leo: noted that some of the large rocks at the entrance to the waterfront trail had been moved. He requested that they be replaced because tire tracks had been observed inside the nature area in that vicinity. Ken will investigate. Similarly, the plastic fencing accessing the storm drainage pond below the Toronto Street parking lot needs to be replaced – or some other barrier installed.

Rod: asked Ken whether we had any type of operational budget as a committee. Ken responded that he believed we had a standing \$500 amount assigned each year.

Brian: asked Ken if he could acquire a dozen 8 foot t-bars to be used for birdbox placement. Some are now on wooden stakes which are deteriorating; others are shorter than required.

Next Meeting: Tuesday May 11th. This will be an ONSITE meeting, location TBD, and will start at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment: moved by Kate Potter, seconded by Leo Blindenbach, that the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m