

Field Trip Report

Meadow Brook Property

September 14, 2016

Participants: Members of the Meadow Brook Ad Hoc Committee (Fred Lavigne, Susan Bryant-Kimball, Michael Yeager, Martha Carlson) and Wendy Scribner, UNH Cooperative Extension Forester.

The group met at the parking lot on Route 25 and walked west along the road and entered the forest.

Site 1: This mixed species forest is relatively young. It could be thinned for firewood. Relatively open, the site might be use for demonstrations, geocaching, or workshops on how to identify trees and select some for thinning and others for growing.

Site 2: A bit further west, trees were larger and mostly white pine. These were infested with bittersweet. Tops are small and the patch could benefit from thinning. Wendy suggested that the bittersweet is the first task, before any logging. She suggested a licensed applicator of pesticides might do a major part of the work as it might be too daunting for volunteers. Thinning out one-third of the trees would promote growth of crowns and production of a good crop of white pines in 50 to 100 years.

Site 3: Continuing west in the woods, the group came to a large ash tree. The forest here was mostly hemlock. This woods had been logged by the previous owner. A fine woods road leads from Route 25 through this to the wetlands in the northwest corner of the property.

Wetlands: Logging can be done near wetlands in winter, Wendy said. Susan asked if areas designated as wetlands ever revert to drier categories. No, Wendy said, that is very rare. Generally, due to beaver activities, wetlands may come and go but their soils remain wet.

Site 4: The group came to the end of the woods road near some bully pines which still show pieces of barbed wire pasture fence. We went over the beaver dam to a fine hemlock forest on the north side. A deep pool of water lies to the left upstream of the dam. A large grassy marsh with a wide water way and views of the Ossipees lies downstream of the dam. We went along the shore, past a gigantic red oak tree and large boulders to a good lookout. This area would be excellent for bird walks and other wetlands workshops, especially if the neighbor to the north would allow occasional public access. A well used roadway leads to that property, probably *abutting from land owned by* Mark Quinzani.

Habitat: Wendy explained that floodplain forests near marshes and fields of shrubs are excellent habitat for bats, mink, deer, and birds. Open fields are especially rare in this part of New England and are habitat for many ground nesting birds such as bob-o-link and bluebirds and tree swallows. Shrub fields, mowed only once every 3 or 4 years, between the fields and wetlands, can be excellent areas for pollinators, nesting sites for turtles, and woodcock. Snowshoe hare and wild turkeys also. Susan recalled that Chris Conrod in Tamworth has studied wildlife corridors in the area.

Invasives: If we chip any trees that are wrapped in bittersweet, we should be careful not to spread the bittersweet to other properties. Such chips should stay on site until they decay or go directly to Pine Tree Power for burning. Citizens should not be allowed to haul off polluted chips, Wendy said.

Site 5: The group returned to the fields where we examined a patch of sumac, aspen, cherry and pines just west of Field A. Portions of this field which lie outside the wetlands line will be cut by Bill Dunn. But he should save several cherry trees (“bear candy”, Fred said.) and a couple of old apple trees. Alders and aspen growing here will be excellent for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other birds.

Opening the fields to 9 acres will improve the grassland’s use by bob-o-link and other birds, Wendy said. There will be less edge for predators to hide in. She pointed out a patch of raspberries and goldenrod which illustrated what shrub would look like if we decide to manage the outer edges of the fields, areas within the wetlands which have been mowed and can still be mowed. Susan said she would like to see such management beyond Field B near Route 25 if we could cut the forest that has grown up there. This area could be cut on frozen ground and if it is converted from forest to field, no wetlands or forestry permit would be needed, Wendy said.

Developing A Management Plan: Wendy offered to send us some templates and examples of management plans. Peter Pohl will have experience in writing and developing forest management plans. The committee must identify our objectives which might include such things as the following:

1. Creating income.
2. Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat
3. Using the land as an educational resource
4. Growing a particular crop

Next, we should develop a 5 or 10 year plan, a road map of goals and activities. This should include a financial management plan so that we generate some income to offset whatever costs we incur. Foundations such as NH Fish & Game, US Fish & Wildlife, the Ruffed Grouse Society might help.

Other questions addressed in the plan should include:

1. How much public access do we want? Trails, regular access, limited access, or what.
2. Do we want to offer a couple of public workshops each year, train docents, or put up kiosks?

Sections of the Plan would include:

1. Forestry plan
2. Wildlife inventory, including threatened and endangered species
3. Farm fields plan
4. Wetlands inventory and/or enhancement plan
5. Field/Wetlands interface—is this the shrub area?

6. Education plan, if any
7. Cultural heritage resource inventory, such as the old cellar hole and stone walls.
8. Invasives control plan

Public input will be important as we develop the plan. We should use our web site, present ideas and posters at Town meetings, invite the public to attend meetings.

Even before the plan is prepared, our present actions are improving the site and laying the groundwork for the Management Plan, Wendy said. She and Fred listed activities to date:

1. Clean-up of the site.
2. Construction of parking area.
3. Removal of Structures.
4. Mapping of Wetlands boundary
5. Mowing of fields
6. Removal of debris in brook.
7. Soil Tests
8. Logging in fields area.

The group continued the discussion as they returned to Town Hall for lunch.