

Comments and Questions from the 11/15/2021 public forum:

Feedback from Commissioners:

Dave Langseth- Are the proposed field management recommendations in regards to providing habitat diversity for wildlife? Expressed concern of removing the cedar trees in the field and wants the Commission and staff to weigh the decision for any tree removal carefully. Was parking on Brent Road initially larger than what was currently proposed in the plan? Expressed interest in exploring an off street parking area further with the consultant instead of the reduced plan of 1-2 handicapped spaces. Wondered if signage could be used to educate bicycles on priority of users on UA trail segments. Recalled that there was significant bank degradation to the Millpond and wondered if it would be best to replace stones around the pond edge to deter further deterioration. Asked if the proposed trails would have significant impacts on the movement of wildlife.

- Yes, and the proposed management recommendations were based on what species were already present and what the underlying field wanted to be if properly managed.
- The removal of the cedar trees was proposed for the long term goal of keeping the field open with the suggestion of culling the cedar trees so they did not dominate and encroach the field.
- Yes, the plan originally included 8 parking spaces proposed at Brent Road. That was reduced to 1-2 handicapped spaces based on the feedback received from the public which expressed concerns regarding tree removal that would be required, construction in wetland resource areas, and large support to continue to park along the road instead of creating an off street parking area.
- Signage might be helpful and yes, in an ideal world bikers would yield to other public users regardless of mobility issues.
- Staff stated that a fence was installed around the millpond to deter people and dogs from entering the pond as part of the daylighting project.
- Staff stated that since the UA trails proposed are on existing trails and on edge habitat, they are not expected to heavily influence the movement of wildlife, but the new trail could create wildlife and human conflict or increase interactions since it is in an area where coyotes have been seen.

Kevin Beuttell- Expressed support for a consultant to explore a full parking area along Brent Road. Did the consultant explore any potential conflicts with current trails and resource areas on the property including the possibility of relocating trails around sensitive areas? Expressed concern for material selection of the proposed UA trail and did not think the currently proposed compacted stone would stand up over time and could potentially become a maintenance burden. Expressed support to provide a UA trail experience beyond the proposed loop trail so UA trail users are able to experience different habitat types on the property. Do we need to prioritize the invasive plant priority areas, reduced the target areas or do we think that what is proposed is feasible?

- No, the consultant did not explore the potential to relocate trails around sensitive areas, but that could be included in the next phase when an engineer is hired if recommended by the Commission.

- Yes, when the engineer is hired to look further into a UA trail, the specifics of materials used would be determined at that time.
- Staff think the priority areas for invasive plant management is feasible. Many of the areas in the fields will be targeted with a hired consultant when the meadow preservation project is started. The remaining areas can be targeted by volunteers and seasonal staff.

Alex Dohan- Is parking allowed at the Adams pool in the off season? Expressed support for UA trails, but was hesitant to begin another UA trail project that might not have the necessary funding. Expressed that maybe biking could be restricted to certain trails on the property and closed on others to deter user conflicts with UA trail users.

- Since the Adams Pool is private, the area would be not be able to be used as public parking.
- At the 2019 ATM there was an appropriation of \$138,273 for writing the Conceptual Management Plan, Meadow Preservation, and to hire an Engineer to conduct a design plan for the UA trail and parking areas. There is currently a balance of \$114,646.

Holly Samuels- Is fencing being considered in certain areas (e.g. meadows) to protect wildlife from people and dogs? Is the old bike path wide enough for a mixed use trail? Expressed that the bike path will always attract bikers regardless of signage.

- The millpond is the only area where a fence is currently proposed to keep out people and dogs to benefit wildlife.
- When staff walked the site with Dick O'Brien, the hired sub consultant, some areas of the trail were wide enough for mixed uses while others were the minimum width required for a UA trail. They also mentioned that the old bike trail had been highlighted as a restoration project by the lead steward for a number of years. The original bike path was an 8 foot wide stone dust path from when the property was owned by Recreation.

Ruth Ladd- Expressed that since the old bike path is long and straight it will always attract bikers and for the bikers to ride fast. Suggested that maybe adding bends into the trail would be the best way to ensure that bikers would need to ride slower, while also being mindful of the stone walls and other notable features.

Feedback from Public:

Don Goldman- Expressed that the property wasn't large enough to accommodate bicycle touring. Thought it seemed reasonable to have a way for bicyclists to traverse the Woods on the way to a destination, but didn't think it was suitable for trail riding. Wanted a map showing where the bicycle paths were planned, doesn't want to have to dodge bicycles while walking. Expressed that in a previous meeting, there was a suggestion that the Town try to ascertain the volunteer commitment for maintaining the Woods, especially with regard to invasive species, once the initial work had been performed. Also expressed that if the orchard was revitalized, it would take specialized knowledge to upkeep the orchard.

Judy Patkin- Expressed that there is plenty of parking space along Brent Road, but there is a lot of overgrowth of vegetation that is growing into the road and should be managed. Also expressed that a

handicapped spot could be installed along the road instead of off of Brent Road. Also expressed that the North Street is never filled and should be sufficient for handicapped parking. Thought that the UA could go from North Street to the Millpond and not extend to Brent Road.

Bernie Gunther- Expressed that there is a zoning requirement of a 25 ft set back from a road for any parking lot. Due to the setback and turn around requirements a large number of trees would need to be removed and does not think that an additional parking lot along Brent Road is a good idea. He asked what the process was moving forward. He also inquired whether staff had plans to manipulate the water levels of the millpond.

- Staff stated that the Conservation Commission will vote on the Conceptual Ecological Land Management and Design Plan during their 12/20 meeting. If approved it will be used as a tool moving forward to manage the property, but not a “call to action” for all items in the plan. There is currently funding in place to support management of the fields and to hire an engineer for a detailed design plan of the potential UA and associated parking.
- Manipulating water levels at the pond came up during the daylighting stream process and it was decided to keep the weir structure, but there are no current plans to manipulate the water level of the pond.

Jeff Howry- Stated that he provided a scope of work and letter from the MA Historical Commission to staff for a cultural resources survey to be conducted on the property. He expressed that this survey should be conducted for the entire property before any work is conducted.

- Staff understands that this survey is required then federal or state funds are used for a project.

Alan Milner- Expressed that if a handicapped accessible path was extended from North Street to the millpond and over to the old house site instead of down to Brent Road, it would provide an interesting destination without the Brent Road parking issues. Expressed that the neighbors on North Street have been manipulating the water levels at the millpond for approximately 40 years and would like to see the Conservation Commission takeover ownership of that.

Ted Lyman- Stated that the proposed UA loop trail is proposed in a known coyote bedding area and could cause potential conflicts with wildlife and human users.

Jan Gunther- Expressed that the trailhead kiosks were built by the youth of the town as well as some trails and didn't support replacing them just to replace them, but would support scouts to be continued to be used for any upkeep and maintenance.

Jennifer Hewitt- Expressed support for Ted's comment regarding coyotes being know to utilize the area where the proposed UA loop trail is located.