

RGT Stewardship Plan: Long Hill Natural Area 2015

- a. If this is the first year that RGT has owned the property, please use the longer (First Year) form.*
- b. Please save this document with the name and year (for example, Bates Stewardship Plan 2014) otherwise it will be impossible to figure out which plan belongs with which property.*
- c. Complete #1 and #2 before the property committee meets to plan for the next year (usually done while they are monitoring the property).*

1. Property and Year: Long Hill Natural Area (LHNA) 2015

2. Last Year

a. Goals Last Year and Accomplishments:

Cleared a strip southeast from summit to view Leverett Pond and town center. Trail maintenance: mowing, limb removal and drainage ditches cleared. Cut up of fallen trees across the trail. Constructed of escape ladder in well for small animals. Checked cap on well off of Camp Road near pond.

b. Anticipated Budget Last Year and Actual Costs:

\$500 anticipated, \$250 actual cost.

3. Goals for this year:

Cut a similar strip from summit southward to view Holyoke Range. Remove "Private property, no trespassing" sign at the head to second trail to the left off of Camp Rd. Address the Bourke encroachment situation. Monitor the Long Hill View CR along with the LHNA.

4. Activities planned to meet those goals (and timeline):

For view cutting hire a professional tree person in early spring 2015. Concerning the sign Gary Hosley, a local resident, has been asked to take it down. Address the Bourke encroachment issue (for sequential steps see appendix attached to Bouke #2 report under "LHNA Monitoring").

5. Anticipated costs (both on-going and for this next year only): \$500

6. Plan completed by: November 27, 2014

Additional notes

The large hemlock blown over and leaning precariously across the trail observed by Thomas and Kahn. Thomas subsequently placed a warning tape and danger sign asking people to walk around the tree. As with other two other large trees that have come down across the trail Thomas will cut this one up once it finally falls to the ground (this was accomplished Nov 27, 2014). Downed branches have been piled on the flat around the ascending the trail. Thomas suggested that this area might be made into a circular botanical identification path since it has considerable diversity of trees and ferns.

Thomas also recommended an additional view of Mt Toby to the northwest which he indicated would not require much cutting and would allow a glimpse of that range as one approached the summit.

Thomas also reported that the wooly adelgid (an aphid-like parasite that sucks the juices from the hemlock needles and is identified as a white clump under the needles) has taken a toll on the hemlocks. Many are dying or dead although the extreme cold of last winter has somewhat reduced adelgid prevalence. As a result more light is getting through the canopy and the forest floor is coming alive with small birches and ferns. The dead hemlocks will provide increased nesting and foraging opportunities for woodpeckers and other insectivores. Ultimately, as the roots of these large trees decay, they will be blown over increasing the combustible litter on the forest floor. It is likely that oaks and hickorys will replace the hemlocks proving mast for squirrels, turkeys and deer. This the forest floor, which is predominately a hemlock needle desert with high acidity, will in time change into a much more diverse and productive habitat.

Signed: Brooke Thomas

Ken Kahn

Date signed:

___ I have asked to present this report at the next RGT Board Meeting

___ I have printed out a copy of this report and put in the green Field Notebook.

___ I have sent a copy to the person who puts reports in the RGT blue Archive Notebook.

___ I have sent an electronic copy to the person who puts reports on the Board-only section of the RGT website.