HMCA Activities Update

by Diana Todd

for sharing at the May 2018 meeting of the HPC

A summary of what HMCA has been doing in the interval since the last submission in early March, 2018.

1. What a lot of snow in March! Great for the skiers, but it delayed spring's arrival. The vernal pool training scheduled for early April had to be postponed to May 13. Cherie Corey will lead a bird walk on the mountain on May 19.
2. Francie Marbury was elected as a Director with a term expiring in Jan 2020.
3. Planning is underway for the annual Marlboro Elementary School day on the mountain, scheduled for May 25, with June 1 as the rain date.
4. The Biodiversity Inventory Working Group reviewed 7 submissions in response to the RFP, and recommended choosing Charley Eiseman to do the work for $8,400, including field work that spans all four seasons. The final report will be completed in late winter or early spring 2019. The HPC and HMCA Board were invited to read all the submissions and respond to the Working Group's recommendation. The contract will be issued and managed by HMCA, not by the town. The Select Board has informally approved the funding, but has not yet formally voted on it due to lack of a quorum. They will vote to approve on May 10.
5. Bob Anderson is building a prototype donation box. It is a vertical, square steel tube about hip high, with a slot for donations and an access panel with a padlock. We plan to install it near the bench on the Tower Trail, at the view at the ski slope crossing, and test it to see if it attracts donations or vandals. If it is a success, Bob will build additional donation boxes for installation at the north side trails and the Grant Road access point. Jennifer Garrett at VLT has told us the donation box is a great idea, and installing it does not conflict with the conservation easement.
6. An informal joint HMCA/HPC Working Group is working with the town clerk to devise an appropriate permitting/permissions process for certain types of activities on the mountain, consistent with the guidance in the Hogback Management Plan.
7. An ad hoc HMCA working group is devising a liability release form to be signed by volunteers who participate in Hogback work days.
8. HMCA has been invited to provide a speaker for the June 14 lunch of the Brattleboro Rotary Club.
9. EVG – Extreme Vermont Ghosts, has contacted HMCA via the Facebook page inquiring about what kind of permits would be needed to run a paranormal study in the old ski area. We've asked for more information about what they have in mind.
10. The Hogback web page continues to receive an average of about 25-30 visits per day.