HMCA Activities Update

by Diana Todd

for sharing at the March 13, 2017 meeting of the HPC

A summary of what HMCA has been doing in the interval since the last HPC meeting in early January.

1. The HMCA Board held its annual meeting on Jan. 10, 2016. Directors and Officers were elected. Director Jen Carr stepped down from the Board. The other sitting Directors were all re-elected. The following officers were elected - President: Diana Todd; Vice-President: Staley McDermet; Treasurer: Nancy Anderson; Secretary: vacant.
2. In early January Lyndon State College student Connor Hunt shared a copy of the report he wrote on the mouse/tick/Lyme diesease research he carried out at Hogback. In fall 2015 he live-trapped 31 small mammals and didn’t find a single tick on any of them. In spring 2016 (prime time for ticks) his advisor hiked a 1.4 mile loop along Hogback’s trails and forest edges with a “drag cloth” and came up with only a single tick. Just one. Good news.
3. Informal observations by HMCA Directors indicate that many skiers and riders (snowboarders) have been enjoying the former ski slopes, and many snowshoers have been enjoying the hiking trails. Snowmobiles seem to be sticking to the designated VAST trail. The sign installed in the Route 9 parking lot by the Stump Jumpers snowmobile club has likely been a big help with that issue.
4. On Feb. 20 the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum held an Open House which included several guided hikes in the Conservation Area, including a tracking clinic led by Lynn Levine. Two HMCA Directors served as guides for Levine’s clinic. Nancy Anderson set up a table at the Museum during the Open House to spread the word about the Conservation Area and HMCA.
5. On Feb. 24 HMCA co-hosted, along with Windham Regional Woodlands Association, a tour of the timber harvest underway at Molly Stark State Park. The harvest has been designed to enhance habitat for snowshoe hare, a species that has been in decline in Vermont and the northeast. Stewardship Forester Tim Morton led the tour and described the many needs (water and soil quality, protecting existing infrastructure, supporting recreational uses, etc) , that were taken into consideration in planning the project.
6. HMCA updated their Bylaws to permit (but not require) an increase in the number of Directors, to institute three-year terms for Directors (previously Directors served one-year terms) and to institute a two-term limit for Directors. After one year off the Board, Directors may be re-elected.
7. The Hogback Facebook page now has 645 “likes.” The web page has been averaging about 18 visits per day.