HMCA Activities Update

by Diana Todd

for sharing at the March 9, 2015 meeting of the HPC

1. We’re not pursuing the Summer Manager position for 2015.
   1. Insurance issues arose – would the person be covered under the town’s Worker’s Comp policy? If not, would we have to buy one of our own? A rough guess from an insurance agent suggested that would cost close to $1,000.
   2. If we want to pursue the idea for summer 2016 we need to start discussions with the town well beforehand to figure out how contracting and insurance would be covered.
2. UMass bird migration study
   1. VLT is enthusiastic about having Hogback host one of the temporary antennas needed for this study; Kerry Doyle stated that no written permission was needed from VLT for this installation because it is within the scope of allowed activities for the conservation area.
   2. Aaron Hulsey, the grad student directing the field work, will meet with one or two HMCA Board Members in late March to select a precise location for the antenna. The site under consideration is the top of the Early Successional Habitat opening on the former Meadow ski slope. If any HPC members want to come along on the scouting expedition, please contact Diana Todd.
   3. The antenna will be installed shortly thereafter, likely in early April, and will remain up through the fall migration. Aaron is developing a sign that will be attached to the antenna which will describe the research project. The guy wires supporting the antenna will be flagged with colored tape to prevent people from walking into the wires.
3. Anticipated spring and early summer projects – contact Diana Todd if you’d like to participate in any of these.
   1. Open up the “Castle” (ski patrol shack at the top of the main T-bar lift), which was sealed for the winter, in order to remove the trash and old carpet that was bagged in the fall but which we were unable to remove due to early snow. Re-assess the amount of work needed to stabilize the building.
   2. Buy and install a bench at Saltman overlook. Create and install a sign describing vernal pools. Funds are from donations received for the memorial plaque, which has already been installed.
   3. Finalize the proposed line of the cross-mountain trail (old service road from where Bishop joins Meadow to near the Alpenglow, routed to stay on HMCA land). Get HPC approval once the line has been identified. Clear the trail.