



After a wet and snowy winter, the trails at the CMA are settling down as growing plants begin to take up more water, and we begin to get a better feel for how the longer-term effects of the massive wetland restoration will impact the trails and other features of the 73-acre CMA. There is no doubt that the site retains water longer- this was our primary goal, and it has certainly been achieved!

Vernal pools have remained full though the beginning of June, and the amphibian population has exploded. Frogs are everywhere, we have seen many wood duck and increased numbers of migratory songbirds at the site- all encouraging signs. We have continued our strenuous efforts to build



boardwalks to keep dry foot access to the entire trail system. This has been complicated by the doubling of the cost of raw lumber that has occurred since March 2020. We have purchased more than \$6,000 lumber and constructed 430 feet of new boardwalk to maintain access, but there is much still left to complete. Existing boardwalks need to be elevated and stabilized. Conducting construction with existing fastened-together boardwalk is slow and difficult work.

As mentioned last report, and see below, our priorities for 2021 remain monitoring, creation of boardwalk, completion of NRCS planting task and expanding trail as possible, given the reduced corporate help for volunteer days and the reduced budget that accompanies a lack of Goldman Sachs workdays! If we can focus on access and keeping gains in invasive management carried out in previous years we will consider that a success in this difficult Covid impacted year.

Following up on several of the items from our last stewardship meeting, we had an initial conversation with Russ Furnari of PSEG about what might be involved to get stable electrical power to the site. The provider in Harding is JCPL, but Russ was helpful in advising what the steps might be and offered to reach out directly to JCPL in a way that might prove helpful to achieving our goal at reduced cost. This is on our wish list in our most recent 1,3-5 year plan. Stable power would help both with stewardship, but also with the expanded goal of providing a covered shelter for education at the site.

We will have a site meeting to conduct invasive species removal of highly invasive bamboo at the Hoag property June 16<sup>th</sup> at 9am. This property adjoins the new 10-acre Kent parcel and we want to exterminate the bamboo we noted on our last inspection before it takes over any more. If anyone would like to help, we would love to have you! The new owner of the easement at the Ben and Lois Wolkowitz property contacted GSWA for help in clarifying what the expectations of an easement owner were, and the new owner is committed to removing invasive Bamboo on this property also.

We had a site meeting with John Raffelowski of TreeTech to obtain pricing for removal of dangerous and overhanging trees around the site. We are waiting on a quote, but work might take 1-2 days in late summer. We appreciate the assessment of tree health which allows us to prioritize the trees we need to act on most rapidly. There are 8 main issues- (list appended at end of report).

Using grant funds, we have ordered and purchased a Husqvarna n electric battery pack and pole pruner and blower- these tools are more environmentally sensitive, quieter, and more efficient to operate and because they are lighter, can be operated by a broader range of staff and volunteers. As with many items, they are backordered because of the pandemic and may not arrive for a few months.

Now that all the major components of the restoration are complete, we can provide a fuller accounting of the total costs associated with the CMA restoration. Despite initially being concerned there would be a \$15-20,000 gap between funding and costs, we are happy to report that the final out of pocket cost to GSWA was less than \$2000. See separate cost accounting sheet for more details.

Our summer stewardship has begun, and any high school or college volunteers and interns are helping with boardwalk construction, trail maintenance, fence repair and invasive species removal. We meet every Friday, and one other day, schedule dependent. If you know of kids who are not afraid of hand on, physical outdoor work- send them our way- the more the merrier! We have had a couple of small community group volunteer events and have a couple more planned for June.



We will also be unveiling the bird houses, benches and memorial and celebratory planks purchased at last fall's gala. There will be a celebration at the CMA Trailhead on Tiger Lily Lane on June 10<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. Please consider joining us there to see all the changes that have occurred.

**Our main management goals for 2021 include:**

- Monitor restoration and create additional boardwalk as necessary dependent on water levels at property.
- Revegetate new ditch plug areas with shrubs and herbaceous vegetation.
- Install 15 engraved ceremonial planks, 6 birdhouses and benches purchased during gala as part of new boardwalk area.
- Overhaul deer fence, now 16 years old. Replace damaged supports and strengthen and elevate.
- Plant wetland plants into and around 10 newly created vernal pools totaling more than 360,000 square feet of new wetland.
- Create new bridge crossing for silver brook to replace stream impacting culvert bridge removed during restoration.
- Lay out new trail linkage to Harding Land Trust trails

**Tree Health assessment CMA Tree Tech**

**5/21.**

Bridge over Silver brook- blue trail. Dead tree pinned in stream and hanging.

2. Blue Trail – Along old mosquito ditch (hanging over boardwalk)
3. Blue Trail- additional broken and hung-up branches and widow makers from wooden boardwalk to bridge
4. Orange Trail- Before Holly Trees. Hanging over trail
5. Orange Trail- Red Maple over trail with broken trunk (near Fenske Boardwalk extension)
6. Red Trail- raised boardwalk around marsh- Broken trunk-danger to fence and boardwalk- (Ash with bent trunk)
7. Yellow Trail- Dead trunk. Remove pressure on two live trees
8. Green trail- near corner with HLT trails Tree broken and top bent and under pressure hitting the ground.

Split into phases- what can be done in a single day. No machinery. Leave all wood dropped. Work to be conducted when conditions driest- likely September -October.

CMA Trail Map for orientation showing recent work accomplished.

