HMCA Activities Update

by Diana Todd

for sharing at the July 11, 2016 meeting of the HPC

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

1. MES Day (Marlboro Elementary School day of fun & learning on the mountain) took place on the rain date, June 1. HMCA Director Carol Berner recruited leaders for nine different activities, the most ever. HMCA paid six of the leaders stipends of $75 for their work in preparing and leading the activities. The other leaders declined the offer of a stipend.
2. The Trail Committee continued work on sprucing up trails, including weed whipping the new growth on White’s Loop and the Hogback Summit Trail, and repairing trail signs that had been knocked askew.
3. HMCA is planning their off-mountain Summer Meeting: Wednesday evening, August 3, 7:00, Memorial Hall in Wilmington, featuring Jeremy Davis, founder of NELSAP, speaking on “Lost Ski Areas of Southern Vermont,” featuring Hogback and other local ski areas that are no longer in business.
4. HMCA is planning a Volunteer Day, Saturday morning, August 6, 10:00 to noon, to focus on the area around the Bishop Cellar hole. We’ll cut small saplings growing in the stonework, and remove side branches on larger trees. If enough people participate, we’ll send a crew to do similar clean up at the upper cellar hole, and a crew to the Quonset hut to clip growth around that building and tidy up inside.
5. We received a list of all the birds that had been netted, banded and released on Hogback last fall by UMass researchers. Nine of the twelve species identified by Audubon Vermont as “priority for preservation” were found on Hogback last fall. The full list is now posted on the HMCA website. The UMass research is not yet complete. They will be leaving the receiving antenna up through at least the fall migration season, and perhaps longer.
6. HMCA applied for three grants to support this fall’s ESH work on the Great White Way. None of the three applications was successful. We are currently considering what our options are. At a minimum, we will continue with the volunteer effort of 5-6 work days in the fall, and will spend the $1,000 budgeted for the project to hire additional help by skilled chain saw operators.
7. The annual 360-degree photographs of the ESH cuts at 100 foot intervals have been taken. The regrowth on Meadow is now substantial enough that we can expect to see nesting birds start to use the area within the next year or two.
8. The Hogback Facebook page now has over 500 “likes.” The web page continues to receive about 15 visits per day.