

CLEARING VEGETATION IN THE PARKING LOT OF THE HUNTING FOREST TRAILS - 9/6/2019

Around 9:00 am on Thursday, September 5th, Sandy Blanchard, Harry MacLauchlan and Martha Butterfield met at the Hunting Forest Trails parking lot with Road Agent Russ Pearl to discuss what vegetation the trail cutters would need to remove to improve visitors' visibility of Lovejoy Road while driving out of that area. He also mentioned the need to remove more trees to line up with the boundary markers previously placed there to delineate the edge of the parking lot. As he planned to obtain the Selectmen's



approval to bring in a wood chipper to process the cut up trees, he told them to lay the pieces down together in a pile with the bottom of the tree facing the road. Once the pile was chipped and removed, Harry would go there in a couple of weeks with his excavating equipment to pull out stumps, and the top layer of soil would then be removed in preparation for laying down at least 8" of crushed gravel to finish the parking lot. Also, a paved apron

would need to be added at the entrance off of Lovejoy Road, and the ditches on either side of the apron would also need to be dug deep enough to allow for drainage.

The following day, Friday, September 6th at around 8:30 am, a crew from the Loudon trails Committee, all of them retirees, arrived at the parking lot to begin clearing select trees from the area. Present were Craig Mabie, Laura Vincent, Sandy Blanchard, Deb Eastman-Proulx, Denis Proulx, Bob Lyon and Martha Butterfield. Luckily, a tractor with a mowing attachment to trim roadside scrub had come by earlier that morning and cleared away much vegetation along the side of the road next to the stone wall, so they had less work to do in that area.



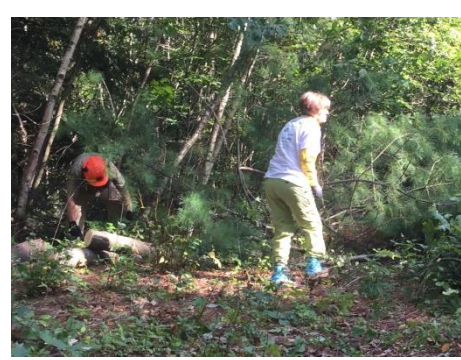
Sandy had taken notes of her discussion with Russ Pearl the day before and shared with the group what needed to be done that morning, and everyone was ready to begin, having brought their loppers, handsaws, weed whacker and chainsaws.



Bob and Denis immediately started up their chainsaws and began removing the scrawnier, decay-prone trees on all of the sides of the parking lot. They worked like pros, swiftly cutting trees into smaller pieces, while Craig, Sandy and Deb quickly dragged the cut up pieces to the center of the parking lot, placing them side by side with the bases of the limbs and trees facing toward the road. Meanwhile, Laura and Martha used their loppers to cut vegetation near the road in those areas that the tractor mower had missed.



It didn't take long before the stacked vegetation became a pile, as Craig, Sandy and Deb added to it, as shown above.



Here, Bob hustled out of the way as the pine tree he'd cut moments before came down where he wanted it to land. Deb quickly rushed to the spot to drag the cut pieces away. Sandy pulled branches to add to the pile as quickly as they were cut by Bob or Denis. The pile grew ever higher and wider, as more cut pieces were added to it by Laura. Everyone worked in unison to complete the tasks at hand.



As seen in the image to the right, the pile grew to an impressive height.



Soon, the area began to take on a much improved appearance, as more of the smaller, crowded trees were removed along the stone wall, making that



area more visible from the road.

The stone wall

became more distinctive, and a large, flat-topped rock next to it became visible and would be a great place for resting and putting on hiking shoes, as shown in the middle of the photo on the left.



Now that the area was cleared, it was much easier to see Lovejoy Road from the parking lot, making it much safer for entering and exiting the area.

The group worked so efficiently that they had enough time to completely remove all of the decayed brush that had been cut and set aside the previous spring, making the area much neater.

Craig is shown here taking a photo of the pile of brush before he left for the day, while Sandy is texting Russ Pearl about having found a long, coiled up cable a previous logging operation had discarded at the site and would need to be disposed of later on.



The trail cutters' labor ended at 10:30 after just two hours of intense work, a combined total of 18 hours, 25 minutes worked by seven people that week, including travel to and from the site. The group stayed an extra ten minutes, just to chat about what they'd accomplished.

Martha Butterfield 9/6/19