

Notes from the Spa Ponds Site Management Meeting held on 17th August 2019

Present: Lorraine, Shlomo, Josh, Diane, Jez, John G, Phil, Mark, Thomas, Dennis, Alan, and Kevin [12]

The meeting took place on-site at Spa Ponds.

- Shlomo explained how the Spa Ponds site walk was an opportunity to appreciate the work carried out last year and to identify tasks for forthcoming work sessions.
- Shlomo passed on Chris Jackson's invitation for volunteers to take part in pulling Himalayan balsam in the stretch of the River Maun near Warren farm on Monday evening 2nd September.
- Near the entrance Irene approached us about her concerns for the horse that is frequently tethered in nearby woodland. Shlomo agreed to find out more about what can be done.
- Several tagged trees were spotted - presumably tagged by the Forestry Commission - including several along Packman's Way and at least two on FTNCG-owned land at Pond 0.
- Level of Pond 1 brooklime and watercress seemed about right, but great deal of pondweed/duckweed covering much of water's surface. John suggested we use stick to skim off.
- The need to mow the glade and remove new growth was identified, along with the need to widen the bridleway in some places - Shlomo was tasked with discussing this with Andy Hollis.
- A discussion took place at the bridge in relation to the next phase of the Lively Up the Maun project, including plans for EMEC to rough lay the hedge along Spa Lane and to do more to help prevent run-off, and ongoing discussions with WatersideCare regarding the possibility of doing more to narrow the river (slow flow means more silt, which means wider river, which further slows flow), adding features that could help speed up flow and improve water quality. The limit of FTNCG's ownership along the River was considered (along with the need to involve other landowners), and these discussions will inform the forthcoming (30th August) meeting with WatersideCare's Les Warren and Rob Martyr.
- Recent sightings of signal crayfish near the bridge also discussed. Sightings have been reported to Chris Jackson. Important that any action is taken only by those who are qualified and experienced.
- A heron was repeatedly sighted during the walk around, especially near Ponds 2 and 3.

Actions:

Shlomo to circulate e-mail from Chris Jackson re:2nd September balsam pull.

Shlomo to circulate map of planned EMEC work and Phil's recent letter to WatersideCare.

Shlomo and Jez to meet with Les and Rob and report back.

Shlomo to find out more about what can be done about tethered horses, in light of Irene's concerns that the Forestry Commission told her there was nothing they could do.

Shlomo to contact the Forestry Commission regarding the tagged trees, to learn of their felling plans and to alert them to the potential heritage value of Pond 0, and to suggest that Matt Beresford be brought in to assist should the Forestry Commission wish to work near Pond 0.

Shlomo to contact Andy Hollis to ask for his help mowing the glade (including removing new growth), widening parts of the bridleway, and anything that could be done to let more light in to the glade.

Shlomo to ensure heron sighting is reported and reported to the County Recorder.

Thomas given spray paint and invited to tag more of the (mainly sycamore and sweet chestnut) saplings to be removed and used for dead hedging to allow more light, etc.

Tasks for future Spa Ponds work sessions:

- Clipstone Drive Entrance
 - Repair kissing gate (when funds become available), and replace railway sleeper
 - Strim nettles (ongoing)
 - Level the path
- Along Path (Packman's Way)
 - Thin out marked sycamore, etc.
 - Remove bracken
- Glade Area
 - Rescue young trees in nursery
 - Mow (don't strim)
- Ponds 0
 - Repair Gibbo gate
 - Clear and strim Pond 0 once the bramble has died back
- Pond 1
 - Remove duck weed / pond weed (skim with stick)
 - EMEC to clear more trees to let in more light (when funds become available)
 - Remove bracken along dead hedge
 - Dig out path near spring to create (restore) silt barrier
 - Hand clear around roses (see geolocations in My Google Maps system)
 - Weave new growth into hedge / Lay hazel hedge
- Pond 2
 - EMEC to clear more trees to let in more light (when funds become available)
 - Lay elder and hawthorn on Packman's Way path near platform (and clear bramble)
 - Use grapple to remove wood in water near woodland path / end of pipe
 - More dead hedging, use wood fetched out from Pond (or 'fix' to pond edge)
 - Clear around roses at top end
- Pond 3
 - EMEC to clear more trees to let in more light (when funds become available)
 - Clear around the drain pipe between Ponds 2 and 3
 - Widen bridleway (with help from Andy Hollis)
 - Block off major silt entry point at bottom corner (starting near to farmer's field)
 - Clear logs and woody debris (with grapple), and duck weed (with skimming stick)
 - Add more silt barriers along steep slopes up the hill on eastern side above Ponds
 - Repair an extend dead hedges
 - Thin bracken at top end, including along path
- Pond 4
 - EMEC to clear more trees to let in more light (when funds become available)
 - Clear path at bottom - remove or pollard sycamore and other smaller trees, and use to create dead hedges (including along eastern side), and to firm up bank.
 - Remove logs and other woody debris from Pond 4
- Translocate holly, rowan, etc.