

OLD ORCHARD BEACH CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Monday October 10, 2023 7:00 PM

Town Hall

Attending: Irv Paradis, Dawn-Marie Dunbar, Kimbark Smith, Cynthia Nye

Guest expert: Laura Minik Zitske, wildlife biologist Maine Audubon

Members of public: Janet Sparkowitz, Kayci Willis

1. Discussion on Winter Fencing and Piping Plovers with Audubon

Snow fencing was installed about 50 years ago, and dunes replanted in the 1980s. Wooden posts and rope, 30 years ago, landowners can still request them from the town. Dogs and humans can get through them.

Laura says that Audubon's symbolic fences are effective; people and dog owners respect them; they do get knocked over more often on Old Orchard beaches than other beaches.

Off leash dogs and raking are the biggest threats to plovers. Raking the beach can be damaging and destructive to beach and plovers; Roger Stevens raked carefully to protect dunes and plovers. When everything is raked up, seaweed can't help the beach rebuild, and baby plovers and nests are more visible on a raked beach. Raking requires a DEP permit; the seaweed is supposed to be composted and returned to the beach.

Irv will follow up with DPW and find out what is done with the seaweed and if it's returned to the beach.

Fencing options

- Snow fencing keeps humans and dogs out of dunes; we would have to work with DEP to get permitted to install it; people in Maine are moving away from it because it can restrict plover movement and upkeep is challenging; fences get washed over and wires are dangerous as the fencing deteriorates
- Ogunquit uses poles-and-rope fencing and people like it and mainly stay out of the dunes. They use it seasonally, so rules may be different for us.
- We need to stop social trails.
- Any fencing will need upkeep to avoid damaging the dunes.

Irv will contact Anna Smith at Maine DEP about fencing types and permits.

Irv will visit Ogunquit and contact their DPW.

Janet will find out how other towns deal with refuse from fireworks.

Laura appreciates and welcomes our help in interacting with the DPW and town on behalf of plovers. It's challenging to get help. All of our beach except right around the pier is designated an essential habitat for piping plovers.

Cats capture plover babies and adults as they try to squeeze into the metal protective fencing Audubon provides for nests. Can we raise awareness so people keep cats in at night?

There are problem areas that need attention more than others.

- maybe side fencing can be different from beach-facing fences
- Diana (town manager) wants to work with Kb on grant for fencing in some places
- some seaweed gets left on the beach

2. General Updates –

We have been awarded \$50,000 grant money for marshes - drainage, tidegate, hydrology
Kimbark and Mark are applying for a grant for fencing.

3. Good and Welfare

Kayci Willis proposed a “trail walk and talk” series to start at Blueberry Plains on Saturday, October 28. Committee approved costs for flyers, stickers, and flagging tape.

Tuesday, October 17 at 3:00 : Colleen Teerling, state entomologist, will visit Guild Park and talk with interested people about HWA

To do: We need a phrase to represent Roger for the memorial plover statue

Minutes submitted by Cynthia Nye

Kimbark G. Smith, Chair OOB Conservation Commission