

OLD ORCHARD BEACH CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Monday March 10 7:00 PM

Town Hall

Members attending: Kimbark Smith, Charlie Backus, Mark Koenigs, Cynthia Nye
Guest: Missy Mans, OOB Piping Plover Monitor

1. Missy Mans Plover Update

2024 was the worst year in six years that she's been monitoring. It started out well with a first nest at the end of April. For a while we had 5 nests from east of Walnut to Island View. Within a week the eggs got taken by crows. They wait for the chicks to leave the enclosure. We had 9 nests but lost 8. Typically, the parents start again. This year only two pairs renested. One renested over the line into Scarborough; two of those survived and Scarborough counted them. Another pair nested off Bayview but they relocated to Saco. We took credit for that chick, but it did move to Saco.

Strange, tough year - lots of evidence of birds. People took down an Audubon enclosure and put the signs in the lifeguard stand. Once there are chicks, Missy goes twice a day. Western Beach in Scarborough (next to Ferry Beach Scarborough) had their most ever - 13 nests - "our" birds probably relocated there. Piping plovers are okay with windsurfers, but drones make them crazy.

OOB police use drones too, but just near the pier. The problem seems to be tourists flying them.

Ordinance for drones?? Does Scarborough have one? Kimbark will call and ask.

Wrack should be left in the dunes, not raked out. Tell people - how?

Missy would like to post signs at the beach entrances to make people aware of nests before Audubon can put up enclosures.

Cats stalk around the enclosure and wait for the parents to come out.

Missy talked with Dave, the new DPW director. The beach has gotten smaller and more sloped. We've lost 20-30 feet of dune grass. If people place stakes where the old fence was, the dunes might come back.

Scarborough started carry in carry out, no trash cans, and rake only on Fridays.

Last year there was much complaining about the beach not being cleaned of seaweed, but it didn't stop people from coming.

Birds will come back and try again.

Missy needs help on the West side, not usually much activity there but still needs monitoring.

2. Project Updates by Members

Mark recommends pursuing some projects that have been approved but never actually implemented. Mark and Kimbark put together a list of trail capital improvements in 2023; it needs to be followed up on: for example, the School St connector trail hasn't been finished; the sidewalk needs to be extended to connect to Ross Road, then the shoulder to Pondview needs to be rebuilt. Property owners are encroaching on the path because it hasn't been built. Another approved-not-done project is canoe access to Mill Pond.

Mark and Kimbark will meet tomorrow.

3. Good and Welfare

Charlie researched and reported on avian flu. Maine has gone from moderate to heavy threat, mostly geese and ducks, a few seagulls, a red tailed hawk, an owl; songbirds. Don't pick up feathers or birds.

Kimbark and Mark will talk about how to find someone to replace Irv.

Minuted submitted by Cynthia Nye, Secretary

Kimbark G. Smith, Chair OOB Conservation Commission