

**Harwinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
Annual Meeting
Harwinton Public Library
March 31, 2016**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President, Bob Orciari at 7:00 p.m.

Attendees

Officers

Bob Orciari	President
Tamara Christensen	Vice President
Herb Etter	Treasurer
Karen Burnett	Secretary

Board of Directors

Larry Connors	Rob Lesniewski	Howard Rood
Tom Schoenemann	Elaine Sederquist	Bill Tracy

General Membership

Steve Craig	Karen Kelleher	Donna Potwin
Candace Pacholski	Eric Rahn	Susan Rood
Jonathan Verronneau		

Guest

Amy Paterson

Introductions

Officers and members of the board were introduced.

Secretary's Report

Minutes from the annual meeting on March 26, 2015 were available at the meeting. Minutes were distributed earlier by email to officers and directors. Tom Schoenemann moved to accept the minutes. Bill Tracy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Herb Etter presented the report showing a balance of \$15,735. He also noted that we have restricted funds for land acquisition. In the past year we had many work parties which increased our costs for lumber and other supplies. At the end of 2015 our assets in the bank were \$58,634.49 and the assessed values of our properties was \$1,746,780. There were no liabilities. See attached.

President's Report

Budget

Bob Orciari reviewed the budget. Income intended for land acquisition will be aggregated and moved to the restricted fund. We spent more on property improvement and maintenance than we budgeted but we did have board approval of overage and more will be budgeted for 2016. We have a grant application for \$1,400 for a boardwalk. Directors and officers insurance is an expense every other year. See attached budget.

Membership

Bob Orciari presented a schedule of membership information. It shows that we had about 160 contributors last year with an average contribution of just under \$50. There is another breakout for dollars donated specifically for land acquisition. Last year both the number of contributors and the amount contributed decreased. There was a discussion of the timing of the annual mailing requesting donations. See attached report.

Land Acquisition Plan

The Harwinton Land Conservation Trust is in the process of formalizing a Land Acquisition Plan with selection criteria. We currently have six properties and one easement. Currently we are looking for land quality over quantity. We prefer direct ownership as opposed to managing an easement. We are in the process of fine tuning our selection criteria. Property criteria such as size, connectivity to other preserved areas, environmental factors, public use factors and land use factors were chosen. Once the criteria were selected they were given relative weights and then rated; thus creating a weighted rating for each of our current properties. This was reviewed to see how the results compared to our intuitive ratings. There was a general correlation indicating that our technique is on the right track. It still needs adjustments. See attached details.

Bull Pond dam

A chronology of the status of the dam at Bull Pond was presented. See attached. The masonry dam has partially collapsed but beaver activity has generally maintained the level of the pond without downstream flooding. Hurricane Irene precipitated an inspection visit by DEEP which found the dam in need of renovation. However, we also found that we do not actually own the entire dam. We took such action as we could but renovation requires participation of the other owner and we have not been able to achieve that. This remains an open item.

Chairman's Report

Larry Connors said he doesn't have to worry about much due to the support of the officers and directors. The Land Acquisition Plan is a good project in that it will give us a framework to choose our direction. It should also be reviewed regularly to see if we need to make changes to it. The plan gives us direction and will help us turn down properties that are protected by some other regulation so we can focus our energy on property that would not otherwise be protected. Larry expressed concern over the number of members. He is hopeful that property improvements and Land trust activities will encourage participation. The fact that we do most of our own labor helps keep our expenses down.

Vice President's Report

Tamara Christensen said that we get about 198 visits each month on our website. This always spikes in the spring. We have 252 likes on Facebook and our posts get reposted on the Harwinton Gazette. We have recently added Instagram. This year we changed the way we do Thank-yous. We have new cards with new art. We have geocaches on four of our properties. On September 17th at Bull Pond the Connecticut Botanical Society will lead a walk with plant ID.

Guest Speaker

Amy Paterson, Executive Director of the CT Land Conservation Council spoke about land preservation in Connecticut.

Slide Show

Short showing of pictures of the 2015 activities of Land Trust volunteers.

Overview of Properties

Bull Pond - reported by Bob Orciari in the absence of stewards Steve Courtright and Bill Lindquist
The trails are in good shape. Brush needs to be cut. Maybe some planting, mulch and garden work could be done.

Meadowview - steward Rob Lesniewski

We hope to finish the boardwalk this year. A section of trail in the back has been mapped out and is currently in use by deer and some people. There was discussion of the mechanics of getting lumber to the back part of the property for the boardwalk. This might involve assistance by a neighbor in allowing transport over his property.

Forever Forest – reported by Bob Orciari in the absence of steward Liz Brayboy

This is in good shape and probably does not need a work party. Phragmites is filling in the pond and we might be able to combat it by rebuilding the dike so that the water is deeper.

Laurel Marsh – steward Tamara Christensen

The Eagle Scout project was not done. We need to clear branches by the road. There is a sunny spot which would be a good place to build a bench which would overlook Wilson Pond across the street. We could extend the trail.

High Meadows – steward Herb Etter

This could use a small project to clear the survey lines.

Indian Meadow – steward Bill Tracy

We need to improve the boundary markings. We have a resident family of bears.

Prudden easement – stewards Tom Schoenemann and Howard Rood

The property was walked on schedule and they found it was well kept. It is also for sale so we should notify the new owners regarding our involvement. Bill said that state law requires disclosure of this at the time of sale.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Nominations

Bob Orciari nominated the following slate for members of the board of directors:

Liz Brayboy	Larry Connors	Steve Craig
Karen Kelleher	Rob Lesniewski	Howard Rood
Tom Schoenemann	Elaine Sederquist	William Tracy.

Larry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Burnett, Secretary

Harwinton Land Trust
End-of-Year Financial Statement for 2015

<u>General Operations Checking Account:</u>		
<u>Balance 1/1/15</u>		\$17,214.48
Total deposits	\$8,871.48	
Total expenses	\$10,549.97	
<u>Balance 12/31/15</u>		\$15,535.99
Asset decrease	\$1,678.49	
General Operations (CD #00066)		\$23,221.54
Restricted Prudden Legal Protection (CD #00165)		\$6,432.02
Restricted Prudden Maintenance (CD #00385)		\$2,431.46
Restricted Land Acquisition Fund (Money Market)		\$11,013.48
Total banking (Thomaston Savings) assets as of 12/31/15		\$58,634.49

<u>Assessed Value of Properties:</u>	
FOREVER FOREST	\$175,920
HIGH MEADOW FARM	\$195,750
BULL POND	\$540,710
LAUREL MARSH	\$279,860
INDIAN MEADOW	\$313,600
MEADOWVIEW FARMS	\$240,940
TOTAL	\$1,746,780

Total Land Trust assets as of 12/31/15 **\$1,805,414.49**

Total Land Trust liabilities as of 12/31/15 **\$0.00**

HARWINTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, Inc.

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Adopted January 14, 2016

2016

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>2015 BUDGET</u>	<u>2015 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2016 BUDGET</u>
R1 Contributions for Membership ¹	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 6,465.00	\$ 7,000.00
R2 Contributions for Land Acquisition ²	\$ 750.00	\$ 990.00	\$ 1,000.00
R3 Community Fund of NW CT (Holley Doremus Fund)	\$ 170.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 180.00
R4 Other grants and cash donations ³	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,470.00
R5 Checking account interest - General	\$ 30.00	\$ 26.48	\$ 30.00
R6 Special fund raising events	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 100.00
	=====		=====
Total revenue	\$ 9,150.00	\$ 8,861.48	\$ 9,780.00
 <u>EXPENSES</u>			
E1 Insurance (General Liability) ⁴	\$ 860.00	\$ 984.00	\$ 900.00
E2 Insurance (Directors and Officers) ⁵	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,400.00
E3 Annual dispersement to Land Acquisition Fund ⁶	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 2,822.23	\$ 990.00
E4 Membership dues (Land Trust Alliance & CFPA/CLCC)	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
E5 Sec. of State Filing fees	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
E6 Printing ⁷	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,882.30	\$ 1,600.00
E7 Postage (mailer and thank-you letters)	\$ 670.00	\$ 665.43	\$ 700.00
E8 Office supplies	\$ 150.00	\$ 155.54	\$ 150.00
E9 P.O. Box rental	\$ 106.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 110.00
E10 Website	\$ 100.00	\$ 53.90	\$ 70.00
E11 Property improvement and maintenance ⁸	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 2,394.45	\$ 2,000.00
E12 Prudden maintenance	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 100.00
E13 Miscellaneous ⁹	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,072.12	\$ 200.00
	=====		=====
Total expenses	\$ 8,486.00	\$ 10,539.97	\$ 9,620.00
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 664.00	\$ (1,678.49)	\$ 160.00

¹ Membership contributions include donations for dues, memorials, and employee match.

² Will be dispersed to Restricted Land Acquisition Fund in the following year.

³ Grant from Thomaston Savings (\$1,200) for survey in 2015. Projected grant (\$1,470) for lumber in 2016

⁴ Includes a one-time short-rate penalty fee (\$112) for having cancelled employer coverage on D & O insurance in 2014

⁵ Directors and Officers insurance covers two years (split out from general liability insurance starting in 2015).

⁶ New money market account established for accumulating previous years' contributions for the Land Acquisition Fund.

Note: \$2,822 taken from checking and added to closed-out CD to equal \$11,000 that was accumulated by donors.

Dispersement to the land acquisition fund is not an operating expense.

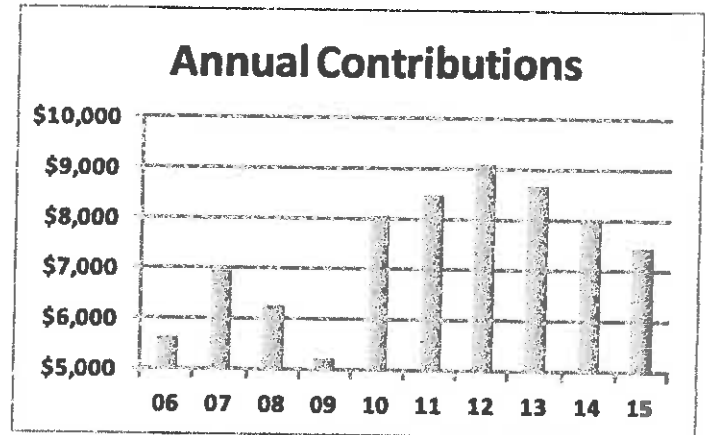
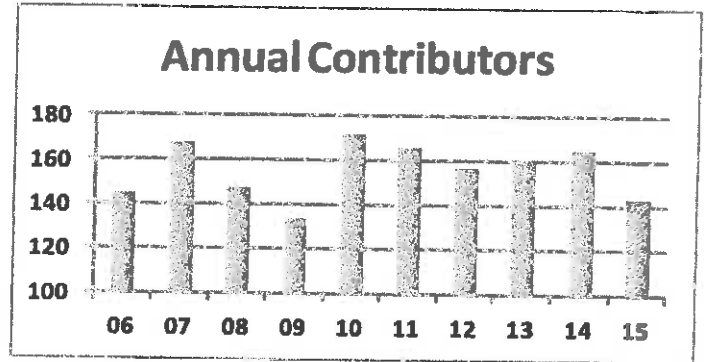
⁷ Printing costs: Mailer (\$1,476), Property brochure (\$175), Thank-you cards (\$231.30).

⁸ Property costs include gravel for trails (\$791.99) and lumber for boardwalks (\$1,317.63) plus misc.

⁹ In 2015, plaque for Eagle Scout (\$45); High Meadows surveyor cost (\$1,000), metal plates for scout decks (\$27.12).

Summary of Membership and Contributions to the Harwinton Land Trust

Year	Number of Contri- butors	Total Contribu- tions	Average Contribu- tion
2003	59	N/A**	
2004	45	N/A**	
2005	115	\$3,775	\$33
2006	145	\$5,645	\$39
2007	167	\$6,939	\$42
2008	147	\$6,260	\$43
2009	133	\$5,220	\$39
2010	172	\$8,075	\$47
2011	166	\$8,469	\$51
2012	157	\$9,115	\$58
2013	160	\$8,680	\$54
2014	165	\$8,035	\$49
2015	143	\$7,445	\$52
AVG (06-15)	156	\$7,388	\$46



Tally of Dues dedicated to Land Acquisition

Year	Amount
2005	\$630
2006	\$1,345
2007	\$1,370
2008	\$815
2009	\$755
2010	\$1,005
2011	\$2,274 *
2012	\$1,135
2013	\$1,035
2014	\$585
2015	\$990
Total	\$11,939

* One donation of \$1,000

Approximate Annual Mailing Costs

Printing	\$1,500
Postage	\$550
Total	\$2,050

No. Harwinton Households	2,500
Cost per mailer	\$0.82

No. of Household Contributors	160
Percentage contributed	6.4%

Harwinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
Draft Open Space Acquisition Plan, 2016

Executive Summary

- The purpose of Harwinton Land Trust's Land Acquisition Plan is to clearly demonstrate the Trust's commitment to properly acquire and protect important natural open spaces in Harwinton.
- The Plan is intended to provide a set of guiding principles and procedures to assure that it acquires the best properties within its financial means.
- The Plan recognizes the importance of natural open space for enhancing the rural character of Harwinton, its environment, economy, and opportunities for outdoor recreation and nature study.
- With recent threats to State and Federal funding for open space, the Trust created a Restricted Land Acquisition Fund that will help gain matching grants for land acquisition from private and governmental funding sources.
- Because Harwinton already has large tracts of State wildlife management areas (Roraback) and watershed lands (Bristol Water Co.), the Trust seeks quality of land over quantity of land.
- Further, the Trust favors acquisition by direct ownership rather than by conservation easement.
- The Trust understands that not all lands will have the same level of importance for open space acquisition, that it will have limited capacity to provide proper stewardship on its properties in perpetuity and therefore, will need to be highly selective when acquiring new properties.
- The Trust recognized that some means was needed to quantitatively evaluate the importance of land in an unbiased manner and developed a rating system that can assess potential acquisitions based upon environmental, social, and public-use attributes.
- The rating system shows that the Trust will favor acquisition of lands that can protect important habitats connecting to existing Trust properties, while providing public access for nature study and passive recreation.
- The Trust's six existing properties were evaluated by the methodology and results reflected the actual overall importance of those areas.
- The rating system will provide quantitative bench marks for accepting or rejecting offers of natural land by developers, and will help the Trust proactively and selectively seek properties that would be most beneficial to the Town, its residents and environment.
- Due diligence will be adhered to in all financial land transactions.
- The Trust wishes to preserve farmland in Harwinton, but can only achieve this in an advisory role by providing farmers with information and guidance on funding programs.

Table 1. Assigned ratings of natural open space properties owned by the Harwinton Land Trust. Attributes were rated from 0 to 50 by directors and officers. High avg. ratings (>33) are shaded.

Size of area:	Avg. Rating	Bull Pond Preserve	Meadow-view	Forever Forest	Indian Meadow	Laurel Marsh	High Meadow
a- is less than 1 acre	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
b- is 1-5 acres	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
c- is 6 - 10 acres	18.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.0
d- is 11 - 20 acres	28.1	0.0	0.0	28.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
e- is 21-35 acres	38.0	0.0	38.0	0.0	38.0	38.0	0.0
f- is 36-50 acres	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
g- is larger than 50 acres	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Connectivity factors:							
a- Will connect to existing land trust property or	48.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
b- Could connect to land trust property with additional future acquisition	34.4	0.0	34.4	17.2	28.8	0.0	0.0
Will connect to town conservation property	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Will connect to state conservation property	30.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Will connect to federal U. S. Army Corps. Property	26.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Will connect to water company property (no public access)	8.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Environmental factors:							
Can add to an existing core forest	38.1	0.0	38.1	27.1	38.1	9.0	0.0
Will provide a stream buffer and riparian habitat	30.0	30.0	28.7	22.5	30.0	15.0	15.0
a- Will protect an important watershed and help reduce flooding or	27.8	6.9	9.3	3.5	9.3	3.5	17.4
b- Will provide some limited watershed protection	14.7	9.2	6.5	9.2	6.5	9.2	1.8
a- Contains mostly important or unique habitat or	30.6	19.1	13.6	7.8	0.0	3.8	3.8
b- Contains some important habitat	17.2	4.3	5.7	8.6	13.4	12.9	12.9
May support species of special concern	22.2	5.8	4.9	5.8	9.9	2.8	0.0
Could provide sound wildlife or forest management practices	18.9	4.7	6.3	4.7	10.5	2.4	0.0
Public use factors:							
Is located in an area that is highly visible and likely to be appreciated	29.4	28.4	6.5	18.4	0.0	18.4	25.8
Has potential to provide public access	42.8	42.8	42.8	42.8	23.9	37.4	0.0
Has potential to provide adequate public parking	38.4	38.4	38.4	38.4	8.1	27.3	0.0
Can provide defined and easy access for canoes and kayaks	34.4	34.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
a- Has potential to provide long hiking trails or	38.3	33.5	34.1	33.5	12.8	4.8	0.0
b- Has potential to provide a short trail	25.0	3.1	2.8	3.1	18.7	12.5	0.0
a- Has high potential to provide other passive recreational activities or	38.1	38.1	20.1	9.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
b- Has some potential to provide other passive recreational activities	18.7	0.0	5.8	4.2	5.6	8.3	4.2
Has potential to provide educational or research opportunities	32.8	28.7	25.5	28.7	7.3	20.5	4.1
Contains interesting geologic or historical features, or scenic vistas.	30.0	28.3	23.3	22.5	0.0	11.3	7.5
Land use factors:							
a- Contains a pond with a constructed dam or	21.7	21.7	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
b- Contains a pond without a constructed dam	40.0	0.0	35.6	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Will protect scenery along a prominent ridge line or hillside	38.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Would be welcome as an attribute by the surrounding neighborhood	24.4	24.4	13.6	21.4	13.6	12.2	0.0
Is likely to remain free of dumping or other illegal activities (ATVs, etc.)	22.2	0.0	7.4	11.1	9.9	18.7	0.0
Had undergone some alterations, but can be restored under Trust ownership	23.3	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Threatened by unwelcome land practices, but can be protected by the Trust	25.6	6.4	0.0	3.2	0.0	3.2	6.4
Property has an existing A2 survey	11.9	11.9	11.9	11.9	11.9	11.9	11.9
Agricultural factors:							
Contains some agr. land that would be allowed to revert back to natural habitat	36.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contains some pasture land that, by deed, will be required to remain in pasture	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contains some farm land that, by deed, will require continual farming	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Rated Value:	471	449	393	290	283	129	

Chronology of Bull Pond Dam Issue

2003: The masonry dam of Bull Pond is inspected by the DEEP and found to be intact.

Spring, 2004: A Land Trust inspection of complaints of low water level in the pond finds that a section of the masonry dam had collapsed, but no downstream flood damage is observed or reported.

Summer, 2004: Water levels return to normal, and stay normal, due to beaver dam construction.

August, 2011: Hurricane Irene hits CT, but the beaver dam holds firm. No flood damage is reported directly downstream, while major road washouts occur elsewhere in town.

September, 2011:

As a result of Hurricane Irene, the DEEP inspected numerous dams in the area and determined that several including the Bull Pond dam were in need of renovation. A certified letter from DEEP requires either the reconstruction of the dam or removal of the dam. Trees growing on and near the dam must also be removed within 120 days.

The Trust immediately removes all trees on its eastern half of the dam. Based on the Trust's survey map of the Bull Pond property, it appears that the Trust does not own the western half of the dam. Thus, it would have no legal ability to remove trees on that side of the dam. However, the Trust cables trees that had fallen over on its own side of the dam and pulls them from the private property.

2012:

The Trust hires a professional surveyor who determines that the Trust does, in fact, NOT own the western half of the dam.

Private engineering firms are contacted by the Trust to obtain cost estimates for renovating the dam. Cost estimates come in at \$250,000 to \$300,000.

In written correspondence, the DEEP indicates that no work on the western half of the dam can be carried out unless ownership and responsibility issues can be resolved with the private land owner.

The private land owner is contacted by the Trust. Offers by the Trust to remove trees and take ownership of the western half of the dam go unresolved.

2014: The Trust is notified of a pending tax sale of the adjacent private property. The lawyer conducting the auction is notified of the DEEP order to remove or renovate the dam, and the likelihood that the new owner would inherit shared responsibility for rectifying the dam issue.

2015:

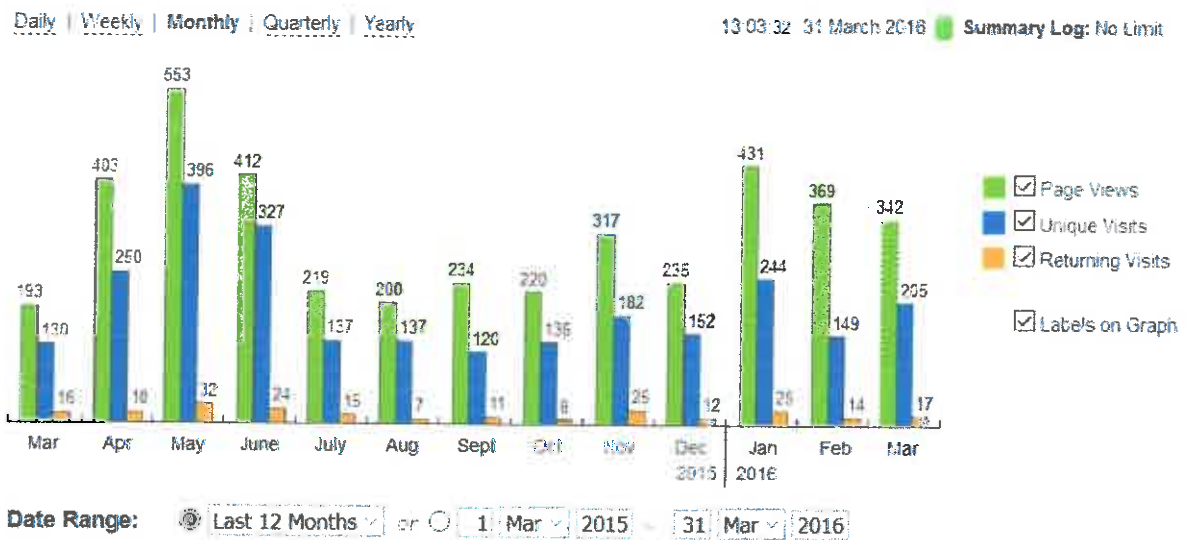
The owner pays the back taxes and retains ownership of the property, including the western half of the dam.

Harwinton First Selectman offers to help with the dam issue by having a local contractor remove the trees from the private section of dam, but the Selectman is unable to locate the owner.

2016: The beaver dam on top of the broken masonry dam has continued to hold steady despite several major flood events from 2005 to the present time. It also continues to maintain normal water levels, with fluctuations holding within a foot or so.

2016 Annual Meeting Social Media and Geocache Report

Website --



	Page Views	Unique Visits	First Time Visits	Returning Visits
Total	4,128	2,565	2,341	224
Monthly Average	318	198	181	18

Facebook -- 252 "likes"

Instagram -- 35 followers

Geocaches --

Laurel Marsh -- 4 "finds" in the last year. Most recent 3/19/16

Forever Forest -- 2 "finds in the last year. Most recent 1/30/16

Bull Pond -- Placed 1/16/16 -- 4 "finds." Most recent 3/31/16

Meadowview -- Place 1/17/16 -- 5 "finds.: Most recent 3/26/16