

**Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District**

**February 9, 2022
Meeting Transcription**

Peter:

We're ready to rock. Okay, good evening everyone. This is being recorded, it's our monthly, February 9th Meeting, for the Land Use Committee. Welcome everyone. And when I first looked at the Safety Moment, it's a serious issue, it's your heart cardiovascular. But I thought it was a Valentine's or something from Mark or something, but it's not. So it is serious. But it is that time of year with the shovel on snow and everything, so to take a good look at that and it reminds you of Valentine's. So I wish you all happy Valentine's. And moving forward, approval of the January 12th minutes.

Greg:

So moved.

Mike:

I move to 2nd.

Peter:

All in favor?

Group:

Aye.

Peter:

[inaudible 00:01:10] It's okay, right. All right, we have an honored guest here, Steve Trumbo. Did I say it Steve right?

Steve:

That's correct. Yes, that's correct.

Peter:

Yep, yep. And you're going to be telling us about the Carrion beetles research update?

Steve:

Yes, I am.

Peter:

So, the floor is yours.

Steve:

Okay. I have PowerPoint. Do I have the ability to share from-

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Jennifer:

You should be able to share.

Peter:

Yep.

Jennifer:

Yep.

Steve:

Okay. Okay, can everybody see this?

Peter:

Yep.

Mike:

Yes.

Peter:

Yes.

Steve:

All right. Well, thank you for giving me a chance to just tell you briefly about what I do. But as I said, my name is Steve Trumbo, I'm from the University of Connecticut. I've been there for about 27 years, and I think I went out to the RWA property first time, maybe about 18 years ago. And it's been really important for my research and being able to do my work. So I'm just going to give you really brief background, not too much, just a little bit on the natural history. These beetles, show you a picture of the couple that traps I put out there in the field, and tell you a little bit of work I do with chemical ecology, recycling, care ecology and perhaps application into forensic entomology. And then just show you some of the publications that I've been able to produce based on work that I've done in part or at whole, at the RWA property.

Steve:

So the beetles I work with are called Carrion beetles and the Silphidae and these ones that are bright black and orange are really unusual for an insect. They have a lot of parental care, a lot of social behavior, that's one reason I originally got interested in this group. And then the ones on the bottom are Carrion beetles. They also come to carrion, but they just come to lay their eggs and then they lead. They don't have the elaborate parental care that the other ones do.

Steve:

So the ones that are starred there, ones that are common at the RWA property, there are a couple of additional rare species, both in the top group and in the bottom group that I occasionally get. And these beetles, because they come to carrion, they help us to understand how nutrients are recycled, they're

sort of an ecosystem service. We call it now a benefit they provide. They just clean up their small carcasses for one thing, help to get rid of the carcasses, but put those nutrients back in the soil.

Steve:

And they also may be important for forensic applications. In like in a criminal case, they want to know a time in death and different beetles come to like a corpse at different times after death. And so which beetles are arriving early, which are arriving in the middle stages of decay, and which arrive at the end stages of decay, can actually be useful sometimes in criminal cases. And so these beetles are being developed for the use in that case.

Steve:

Usually, forensic biologists would use fly larvae for that indication, but perhaps the beetles can be used. That one on the far left, by the way, the American burying beetle is threatened. It's a really large beetle, is threatened beetle, and probably was around the RWA property, maybe 150 years ago, but I haven't seen any in my studies. I wish I would come across one, but they're pretty very rare now, there's only a few populations left in the country.

Steve:

So I work out at the property that we're talking about the, I think in notes before. So if you know where the Route 42 and Route 69 come together, just about a third of the mile east of there, I park in a pullover area on the north side of 42. There's a gate on the south side. It's a nice flat area which I have in a photograph here, which is really good for my experimental work. And so some of the early work, I just put out carcass to collect the beetles and then I take the beetles back to my lab at Yukon Waterbury in order to do studies on parental care. And I was interested in their social behavior. These beetles are really unusual, and that they give parental care, they will take a mouse like this, they round it up into a ball and they actually do this amazing behaviors.

Steve:

So on the left there, on your left is a dead mouse before the burying beetles have worked. On the right, is a dead mouse that the burying beetles have prepared. So that they'll actually take all the hair off of the carcass and take the head and tuck it for the belly and they... You can actually see the tail here of the mouse. So that round ball is a mouse that the beetles have prepared, a really unusual behavior. And one reason I got interested in early on some 30, some years ago.

Steve:

And they're also unusual in that they give parental care. They actually feed their larvae which is really unusual for an insect like bird nest [inaudible 00:06:19] try to be fed. These beetles will feed their larvae, their offspring and the offspring compete for these feedings.

Steve:

And a question I was interested in years ago was, why do you have male and a female? Not only is parental care unusual, but bi-parental care is very unusual, male and a female provide parental care. And so I've done some earlier work with that. Now, one really unusual species that we do have out at

RWA, they're about 65 species of these burying beetles in the world and all of them use like a small carcass, like a mouse or a songbird, but this one species uses snake eggs.

Steve:

And so that is of interest because if in some places there are snakes that lay eggs that are threatened, and if I don't think we have any threatened snakes out at RWA, but this beetle occurs from carrion down into Florida. And certainly in that areas, we do have some species that are on the threatened list. And we would like to know something about this beetle, so that perhaps I know there's a snake in Florida, that's in danger that is in the same place, that's this beetle. So if we can understand this beetle, perhaps I can give us some information about how to protect these snakes from these beetles, that sort of a thing.

Steve:

I've also done more recent work with chemical ecology. And this is one of the traps I use in which I put a carcass out. In a little plastic tube, I just put some chemical in there and puncture it with a needle so the chemical... There's a volatile that comes out and these chemicals are produced by decaying leaf litter, carcasses, but they come more so from carrion. So I can put something in there and see, do I get more beetles or do I get fewer beetles? Are these attractants? Are these deterrents? And so I can try to understand what beetles are responding to, and what chemicals are important at the early stage of decomposition, the middle stages of decay and the later stages of decay.

Steve:

And this is another trap I've used in which I buried this in the ground. It's about 20 centimeters high, which I have a carcass and it's a funnel trap. This doesn't allow the beetles to escape, so I can make sure that I catch the beetles. And again, you can put some chemical up there at the top, there's volatile, it lasts about a day. These volatiles come out and that changes what beetles you get to the carcass.

Steve:

So the chemicals we've investigated, we figured out which ones to investigate by doing this analysis in the lab, in which you draw air over a carcass and you just collect the volatiles in that little desorption tube. And you put that in something called the gas chromatograph, mass spectroscopy. And you can look at the chemicals that are being produced, and then you can test which ones are important that the beetles are attracted to at the beginning, at the middle and at the end of the decay. And this is work that I've done with a colleague in Germany who did this analysis.

Brian:

Just a quickie aside there, I am a mass spectroscopist who's done desorption, GCMS as well as LCMS in my other life.

Steve:

Oh yeah, it's great. That's great. That's something about that, yeah.

Brian:

So I assume it was 10X or something like that in the trap?

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Steve:

So excuse me?

Brian:

I said, I assume it was 10X or something like that in your desorption trap?

Steve:

I don't know the actual specifications for what she used in Germany, but-

Brian:

Okay, that's all right.

Steve:

Yeah.

Brian:

Go on.

Steve:

Yeah. So, but we've done this for carcasses early decomposition in the middle stages, in later stages, and we've looked at what happens when you get beetles there. And when the beetles are not there, that changes the odors that are produced. We found that the beetles are actually manipulating these odors and change in the odors, and we think for their own benefit.

Brian:

Okay.

Steve:

Yeah. So some of the chemicals that are important, like dimethyl trisulfide and dimethyl disulfide and methyl acetate, are actually the same ones that are produced at in a corpse flower. Some of you may know about these corpse flowers that they smell like a dead animal in order to attract beetles and flies, fool these insects and into pollinating them. Instead of producing nectar, they produce a foul odor and beetles or flies that like to come to decaying things will be tricked and will come, and they end up pollinating these flowers.

Steve:

And some of the exact same odors that these flower use are what we found. These three ones dimethyl trisulfide, the disulfide and methyl acetate, are actually chemicals that we found are very important in attracting beetles to that middle stage of decomposition. So in the forensic application, we want to know what's happening in early in decay, middle decay, and later decay. And we're starting to figure out which chemicals are important for attracting insects to each of those three stages during the succession of insects, the changing of insects, get different kinds of insects at different points. And if you're trying to estimate the time and death, that could actually give you some important information.

Steve:

So these are some of the publications, some of the early work I did with parental care and social behavior. These are more recent publications I've done. They've either acknowledged RWA. Some of them I just simply collected the beetles at RWA and then did the work in the lab, others more recent work I've been doing a lot of field work out at the RWA, including a paper that I just submitted in the last couple weeks here. The last one here, looking at these volatiles are actually produced by the microbes that are going to the carcass. They produce these different sulfur compounds and different volatiles. As I said, well, I attract beetles to early stages or later stages. So we're figuring out the whole process of decomposition, the recycling of nutrients, and maybe getting some information about how to determine the time of death.

Steve:

So I just point out that I do try to pick up some trash once in a while, some beer bottles. But last summer, I found on six deflated helium balloons on this property, and I'm sure they're just coming from the next-door property, probably from the Holiday Hill, but they're actually becoming... There was the most I found. But I do try to clean up a little bit when I find some trash out in field. But unusual number of deflated, these helium balloons that I found last year, I just wanted to point that out.

Steve:

And so I acknowledge. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to work on this property, it's been absolutely essential. I've also worked in the Flanders Nature Preserve up in Woodbury. I've done one brief experiment at Roxsbury, I've done some work in state forest up above and Algonquin State Forest.

Steve:

The Naugatuck State Forest is right next door. That's a hillier property, a rockier property. It's not as good for some of the experiments, but I certainly can collect beetles at Naugatuck State, but it's not as easy to do the experiments. So it's really that flat site and that property is an ideal place to do many of my experiments.

Steve:

And then I've collected and worked at other places, including some national parks. So I've collected from the East Coast, all the way out to California to get different time types and species of these beetles. And I've also got some funding from different places, including UConn, that's supported my work. But the funds and the permissions to do the property, really been vital to the research, and I'm very appreciative of that chance. That allows me... I just couldn't have done this work without the ability to... That these different agencies that gave me the opportunity to work, to collect on their property. So thank you once again, and if you have any questions, be glad to answer anything.

Mark:

I have a question. I missed the beginning of your talk, so maybe I missed this, what is the reason that you study these?

Steve:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Yeah, so a number of reasons. One is just, there's some theoretical questions about why you have these different types of social behavior. Most insects don't have parental care, so why do some have parental care? Other more recent questions about caring ecology. We want to understand as the ecosystem service, these nutrients get recycled back into the landscape. So we want to understand [crosstalk 00:15:16]

Mark:

Do they do any damage to anything on that property or in the woods? Do they do any damage?

Steve:

No, no, they are beneficial beetles because they're helping to clear the dead mice, the dead song birds. They're helping to get rid of them faster by doing this.

Mark:

They didn't go after the dead animals, wouldn't like vultures and stuff like that, go after them or?

Steve:

Right. If these beetles didn't get the carcasses, you would have more flies, carcasses that are with fly-blown that potentially could be a little bit of a nuisance. You'd also maybe have more vertebrate scavengers. I do have occasionally a vertebrate scavenger knock over a trap like a, I assume it's a skunk or a raccoon or something like that. And then I don't know if the vultures will come down in the middle of the woods like that, but certainly like crow might come to a carcass like that.

Mark:

I just wonder, it's a lot of studying for something that it doesn't do any damage. You're just studying the social behavior of the bug, of the beetle.

Steve:

Yeah. I hope that eventually it actually will pay off in terms of trying to understand something like for a forensic application. These beetles are being some... There's some people in Europe that are studying these beetles to try to understand like the time of death, so you have certain beetle larvae at the early stage of decomposition, then a little bit later, you have other beetle larvae. If you know which beetle larvae, you can determine in a criminal case, you could actually determine the time of death that was.

Mark:

It's interesting. What do I know? I don't get it. [crosstalk 00:16:58] That's not unusual for me that I don't get it. [crosstalk 00:17:02]

Brian:

[crosstalk 00:17:02] scientist. My question is, when you're doing this stuff, you're getting a different sets of chemicals depending on what animal do you have decaying or these beetles, are they specific to mice? Or are they... What other animal... Do you attract other sets of beetles?

Steve:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Yeah, I don't... each animal would have a little bit different chemical profile, but we know that the beetles will come if you put out chicken parts or a mouse or a songbird, they will come to all of those. So we know that there's generalists in terms of the type. As long as it's small, a small [inaudible 00:17:45] they don't come to, at least the parental ones don't come to large things. The other ones I showed you actually will come to anything like a deer carcass or something like that. And they would eat, fly larvae at a deer carcass. The printer ones work on anything that's small, mammal, bird, even like a small snake, maybe. So they're pretty generalist in terms of the type of resource they use.

Mike:

And the snake, they turn it into a little ball as well?

Steve:

With the snake, if it's small enough, they actually would pull it together and round it up. They almost coil it up into a little ball, yeah.

Mike:

How do you know... I have a question.

Steve:

Yes.

Mike:

How do you know what is better? Is it better that the insects get rid of the mice carcasses? Or is it better that foxes or vultures or whatever gets rid of them? How do you judge that? Are you ready to make that... Can you make that decision already?

Steve:

Well, we know that the greater diversity of scavengers, it just recycles things faster and cleans things up faster. So if you have both the beetles and the foxes doing their job, you'll get rid of these things faster, it's better for getting these nutrients back into these soil. So I would say working together is actually better than if you lose one or the other, you're going to slow down the whole process of decomposition, and that could cause a problem. So it's good to have all the flies, beetles, the vultures, the foxes, and whatever. It doesn't... They do the job working together better.

Mike:

Thank you.

Jamie:

Thank you. This is Jamie, I'm from [inaudible 00:19:34] really interesting. I've a question, the properties that you listed all were forest locations or open space locations. And so maybe this isn't an issue for you or the bugs, but do you do any research where it's closer to residential areas or industrial areas? And I guess related to that, if the rodents that you've used, or the songbirds have been exposed to, say, rat poisoning, or other insecticides or poisons that you find in residential or industrial sites to rid themselves of rodents, does that infect or impact the actions of these bugs? Thank you.

Steve:

Yeah. Some great questions. I have worked in some smaller parks around residential areas and some smaller woodlots. You don't get very many beetles. So the fact that you get a lot of beetles in the denser woods is indication of ecosystem health. So the fact that I get a lot of beetles at the RWA property suggests that it's a healthy. The system is not like a little fragmented woodlot. When you have small, woodlots like in a town park, I just don't think the beetles can sustain the population. So I'm glad that the RWA properties [inaudible 00:21:03] and has Naugatuck State Forest on one side, there's some other protected space in that area. It seems to be big enough to support beetle population. So they don't go extinct like they do at some of the small parks.

Steve:

So I haven't done much work around industrial areas. Certainly if the beetles, if I gave them something and they did survive, I might suspect there's some poison or something in the mice carcasses. But I haven't found that yet because I've tended to stick to these larger forests where that might not be as much of an impact.

Mike:

I have another question. Have you found with your research, does it make a difference when you search an area that is wetlands, as opposed to an area which is non wetlands?

Steve:

Yeah. If it's too wet, then the beetles won't be able to work because they're called burying beetles because they actually take the carcass down into the ground. So if it's too soggy, they just give up. And so that one area actually that site that I work at off of 42, there's one low-lying area. When you walk in the gate, there's a low-lying area that sometimes gets really soggy after heavy rains. And after heavy rains, I don't work there. I work in the area right adjacent to it, which is also flat, but there's some pine woods and that sort of thing that stays drier. So if that... Low wetland area works fine until the soil it gets too soggy and then the beetles don't like that. And so I have to switch, maybe go a hundred meters to the side in order to get out of the wetland site. So yeah, if it's too wet the beetles don't like it.

Mike:

Thank you.

Brian:

Yep. How different is the diversity in beetles from Naugatuck Forest versus North Carolina or Michigan that you got here?

Steve:

Yeah. What we have right here is pretty similar to what we have in North Carolina. But if you go just a little bit further north, you pick up two more northern species. That's one reason I have done some work at Algonquin state park above Winsted, because there's a two additional species which are pretty rare around here, but they're common up there. They're just this north south-division of where you pick up the two additional species. And in Northern Michigan, I would get these Northern species, but Southern Michigan, I wouldn't. And so we're right, that's one reason. This is actually a good area for me to do my

research, because I can compare areas that have different numbers of species and to do different sorts of experiments.

Joe:

Does this beetle have a predator?

Jamie:

That's my question.

Mike:

Does the beetle have a what?

Joe:

A predator. Is there a natural agent that likes these beetles and destroys them?

Steve:

Oh, a predator, yes. The beetles do smell a little bit and so a lot of birds don't like them because when you handle them, they smell a little bit like they use some of those odors. They smell like something that's a little bit rotten. I'm certain a crow would eat them because crows will eat something on the side of the road, they wouldn't be bothered by the beetles. But some birds don't like them because they smell a little bit rotten.

Joe:

Okay.

Jamie:

And [inaudible 00:24:33] again, what's the name of the plant that smells like a rotting animal?

Steve:

What's the question about those plants?

Jamie:

What was the name of it again?

Steve:

Oh, the general name are corpse plants. This is in several different groups, it's not just one type of plant. We don't have those around here too much, but there's this really giant corpse plant, which actually a few like museums and natural history things will have when they [inaudible 00:25:07] We kind of had one a number of years ago when they bloomed in their nursery, in their greenhouse. But they're smaller ones, they're more common in Asia to have these corpse plants, but there are in different parts of the world. But we don't have a major one right around here.

Peter:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Any other questions for Steve? Very interesting. Steve. Any more questions for Steve? I guess not, Steve.

Steve:

I must tell you that, I got more questions here than sometimes I do when I talk to students. So you guys are pretty much into it, so I appreciate that.

Peter:

I heard someone... Good point.

John:

Peter, is John Triana, and I want to mention a couple things. First, thank you to Steve for picking up the balloons. Related to that, is that the best thing to catch balloons is a forest. And if we could ever monetize the collection of these balloons, we would all be rich because there are millions of them in our forest, in our watershed lands. But for everybody, I just want to mention, I should have said this at the beginning that Steve is one example of researcher who is doing work on our property. We have a special permit program where we issue special permits to educational and research people doing research on, that they need outdoor field areas to conduct their research and to do their educational activities. This is one example of it, but there many from Yale, from the agricultural experiment station where Brian is just retired from, from Albertus, from Quinnipiac, UConn, you name it. There's a lot of researchers doing good work on our property, and Steve is just one example. [crosstalk 00:27:00]

Mike:

Thank you very much. I'd like to say something. I very much appreciate the work that Steve Trumbo has done. And also I appreciate the water company allowing him to do this all over the place and bringing that to us, educating us and on information about beetles, which I never knew before. And so I'm very happy with that, I appreciate the water company's effort in allowing people to study the insects and such on our property, and I hope that it continues.

Peter:

Well put, well put. So I gather everyone... Steve said we're pretty good students today, so what do you think Steve? Like a B, B-?

Steve:

Oh, definitely higher than that, yeah.

Peter:

Okay, I don't know. Even Mark? I don't know. No, thank you so much, I get it too. And you're saying when they shed their shell, that goes into the soil for nutrients, I believe.

Steve:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Peter:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Is that what I gathered?

Steve:

Yeah, all the nutrients from the carcasses get back into the earth faster when you have scavengers like the beetles and the flies, and everything else. Yeah, that works on these.

Peter:

Now you're mostly talking about animals and I should asked this before too, but when you're talking about forensics, if there's a body, is this way... No, on a serious note, do they use that at all to... Are you into that deep yet?

Steve:

No. What I understand, the primary thing that that's used in those cases are the fly larvae at this point. So flies also will come. And so certain fly larvae come on the first day, certain ones come maybe the fourth or fifth day. And so they can use what fly larvae and how old the fly larvae you are to do a back calculation to figure out the time of death. There are a number of different groups that are working on alternative mechanisms because that doesn't always work to use maybe the beetles that are on the carcass or the volatile chemicals that are produced at different times. So the different groups are trying to refine those methods, but up to this point, primarily it's been the flies that have been used.

Peter:

Okay. Well, that's what caught my ear when you were mentioning about that. So never mind the animals, but it's pretty interesting. And like we all said, I really appreciate you coming out and then educating us on this. Any more questions?

Brian:

Some of the guys at the station have done that. Some started that with some of the forensic cases occasionally.

Peter:

They have.

Brian:

So the state entomologist will do that.

Peter:

Yeah, okay. But that's a different... Okay. I got you.

Speaker 3:

[inaudible 00:30:02] and Kirby Stafford will do some of those things.

Peter:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Okay. Any more questions? Well, Steve, thank you so much for your time and I'm sure Regional Water appreciate you doing your studies on our property.

Steve:

Thank you, I appreciate the chance to do it.

Mark:

Thank you, Steve.

Peter:

Thank you.

Steve:

You bet.

John:

Thanks Steve.

Peter:

All right. All right, everyone. John Triana [inaudible 00:30:32] Regional Water properties.

John:

Yep, all right. So Joe is putting up the summary for the month of January. In January at the end of the month, we are 87%, last year we're a 85, long-term average of 77. Rainfall, the month of January, we're below the long-term average by about an inch. Last January was quite a bit drier, and still for the fiscal year, we are about three inches ahead of where we normally are at this time of the year. Last year, we were quite a bit behind.

John:

So even though it's kind of had a couple of drier months at the end and beginning of 2021, 2022, we're still ahead of the game for water supply. And we need for the water we use program, we correspond with property owners in Madison, two of them, and North Haven and Branford for North Branford for Beech Street and Poms Lane properties.

John:

I appeared at a Zoom meeting with Bennet and Smilas, which is a surveying firm to talk to town staff about how to split the parcels off so we can redo the disposition application for them. If you recall, about 10 years ago, they went through the disposition process which you approved, but the appraisals at that time which set the minimum price were very high. We had them reappraise in 2021 and the numbers came down to about 50% of what they were 10 years prior. So we're going to bring it through, and the plan is to convey them over to the North Branford land trust. They have shown that they are interested in the properties, and that would certainly be to our benefit because then we would just be having forest next to us rather than garages, houses and so forth. So more on that to come.

John:

Branford Brushy Plain Road property, I met with the first selectmen to discuss a possible sale of 30 acres to the town for open space there. He was going to discuss the matter with the town council. And for the rental houses, 95 Ives Street, we executed the purchased in sale agreement and received the title report from the buyer and executed all the signature pages for the closing. I can report that all the signature pages and the money was wired as of yesterday and we authorized the buyer to file the deeds on the land records. I believe that was going to be occurring today, although I did not hear a confirmation on that. So certainly by the end of this week, we'll have conveyed the second to last of all the former rental house. So we're almost at the finish line.

John:

Woodbridge at 1029 Johnson Road, we received revised plans from Tarlowski and sent a letter of approval for those amended plans. Forestry update, only two new things, both having to do with the slash wall harvest. The one over in Madison is almost complete, we're almost at the finish line there. And the one in Seymour off of Silvermine Road is about halfway done. That one is progressing a lot faster, just because the crew that in the temporary harvesting company, logging company has a lot more people than the one that we had in Madison.

John:

Other things that went on during the month of January for forestry, we responded to an email with questions and a complaint from the Seymour first selectman about that harvest office, Silvermine road. I did not hear any reply after that. We responded to questions, well, two abutters of the timber harvest that came over and talked to Josh while he was out there. And we can report now that our new forester has started as of Monday and next month, I will have him join us so that you can meet him in person or in virtual person, I guess you would say.

John:

Recreation stuff, we submitted our annual port to DPH in accordance with all the DPH permits that we have for the recreation areas. We held a New Year's day hike up at Lake Bethany, had 15 people, turned out very nice. Continued the process to hire new people for the next year's fishing season. We've had multiple people not show up for their interviews. At this point, it looks like we're only going to add one persona and we are hoping to add three or four. So this could put a damper on how many hours we can staff Lake Saltonstall for our angler, and to allow the rental of boats.

John:

Well, we acquired two new aluminum boats for the 2022 fishing season at Saltonstall, and we prepared the next newsletter for publication. If you are a recreation permit holder, you should have received that last week. For the recreation permit holder numbers at the end of January, we're up to 5,600 just down about 50 from where we were at December. Special activity permits of which we just heard from Steve, so he's one of the people who appears on this list. Just had issued too for the month of December. I'm sorry, month of January, which are regular ones that these are recurring ones for Jeff Ward and for Pat Leahy.

John:

Other items with encroachments and agreements, agricultural agreements, we signed an agreement or an amendment to Kay's agreement. An additional set of beehives up in Prospect, is very close to Bob Harvey's house there and spoke to a guy named Baldelli for possible use of the Parish Farm Road fields in Branford. We received the Christmas tree reports from three of the four people that we have Christmas tree agreements on our property.

John:

At 167 Saltonstall Parkway, we corresponded with Murtha about the progress of the lawsuit here, sent letters to Lucido's attorney and reviewed the draft of complaint. Marshall served the complaint to Lucido, and we discussed the legal hold of materials with Murtha and RWA staff. At 264 Harrison Road in Cheshire, we executed less agreement for a lawn fence. It's over the property line.

John:

8 Maiden Lane in Seymour, we sent a draft license agreement for the new property owner. And this is a case where all the people on Maiden Lane, this is a small road that's off of Route 34, very close to the Oxford Line and we own the property that's between Maiden Lane and Route 34. The people who live on Maiden Lane, they have no place to park, so they park on our side and we do it. We allow it by use of license agreements, and there's one of these properties changed to ownership, so we had to execute a, or we will have to execute a new license agreement with them.

John:

At 1201 Whalley Avenue, this is the pressure-reducing valve station that we have on Whalley Avenue there in New Haven. We executed a new license with Spinaci. They are the owners of the property where the ice cream shop is so they can use part of our property for parking. 81 Suffolk Drive in Madison, this is over by [inaudible 00:37:39] Kuck called to say that he would move the fence, and once the weather warms up, this is a long term encroachment that we've been noticing for many years. Finally, he's acknowledged that he's going to do something about it. So he said it was too cold now, I'll go back there and check it in April when things warm up to make sure it's been done.

John:

Invasive plants, Josh has been very busy covering the vacancy for the forester's position in January. So he didn't do too much for invasives in the month of January, but he and Will did submit a grant application to DEEP for the water chestnut harvesting project. We did this last year also, but did not receive the grant because really DEEP is looking for other types of places with aquatic invasives that are more accessible to the public and [inaudible 00:38:30] doesn't match that description. And he documented invasive populations in West Haven and Hamden.

John:

The deer hunt, Nicole submitted the annual report to DPH. from the post-hunt survey, she estimated the total man days spent scouting were 265 man days spent hunting were 927, and total man hours were over 4,700. East Haven Beach Avenue, water main discussed the draft easement and survey with Murtha and Juliano staff and submitted a draft of each to the East Haven town staff to review. We revised that just in the last week and sent them a revised survey and easement for their review. I know the town engineer has forwarded onto the town attorney, so we hope to get some word back from

them in March so that we can actually start the job there before the spring really gets going before the residents of those cottages come back.

John:

For the New Haven Country Club, we discussed this request for an assignment of the license agreement that we have with the country club with Murtha, and we decided that we would not sign the assignment since it is not in our best interest. For Rockland Road Gate up by Gilford, this is the Rockland Road that turns in the county road in Madison. We were notified by abutters on the Gilford side that the pin for the gate was cut and the gate was open, so it was vandalized again, and so that more trespass were allowed to come in. We submitted a work request to repair this, and I've not heard whether or not that has happened yet.

Peter:

Hey, Josh.

John:

That was fairly late in the month. Yes, Mark.

Mark:

Yeah, we hear about this vandalism stuff, and our police department is like depleted. I know we're working on a new plan or something, but what about cameras that can... The cameras nowadays can shoot back to like our water company and they run on batteries. And I think we should be setting up a lot of cameras all around. Not a lot of cameras, some cameras in these properties so that we can see what's happening. In other words, it would send it back to the water company or wherever you want to have a main area for reducing the amount of security agents that we would need. And I think it would really help deter this.

Larry:

Mark, this is Larry, and I certainly agree with you, and I've had a conversation with Paul Joseph, who the police department reports to and ask him to look into that.

Mark:

Good, good.

Larry:

So I don't know how soon we'll get that done, but I certainly agree with you that placing cameras strategically where, for instance, maybe where ATVs spend most of their time and that sort of thing would be a good thing to do, and it would help in terms of policing the watershed.

Mark:

That's right. And I know they're, these camera. I don't know how expensive they are. And of course they have to be hidden because otherwise they'll get vandalized.

Larry:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Right, right.

Mark:

And they run on batteries for a long time, and when the battery is gone, it sends a message, it's battery, it needs to be changed. I just think that's a great idea, and I hope we get to it soon. Thank you.

Larry:

Yeah.

John:

And Mark, I can answer that question now, too. We already have many cameras out there. In fact, our police department deploys cameras that have cell phone capability. So they know that when people are going by them, they will get a email that comes to their phone and says, "Okay, there goes the ATV." But they speed by, so you can't identify anybody. You mentioned that it would be a deterrent, it's actually not a deterrent, but it's just a way to observe of how much activity occurs on our property.

Larry:

That's right.

Mark:

It dials the cell phone back to a computer screen or?

John:

Yes [crosstalk 00:42:32] the phone grab, it takes the video and then it sends it via cellular service to the police department, so they know right away.

Mark:

Good.

John:

But the problem is that you can't identify people, you just know that all this activity is happening. So that's the issue. And I'll give you one anecdotal story about this is that they set it up at the Beech Street gate in North Branford-

Mark:

Oh, brilliant.

John:

... because they knew that they kept seeing ATVs and dirt bikes going by the cameras on our lake road, but they didn't know how... And they had our lake crew block off all the access by the gate. So they're like, how is this happening that people are still going through here? We could see they're going through, they're not going around, so they got to be coming out somewhere. So they put the cameras on the gate

to watch that. And then there was like a log that was over perpendicular to the gate. It was big but it was big enough where you could move it too, it wasn't so big.

Mark:

Wow.

John:

And what the camera picked up is that two kids came up with dirt bikes, they lifted the log up, moved it and then rode through the hole and then they picked up the log and they put it back. So that's why they couldn't figure out how these kids were getting it out. The kids were actually moving this stuff back and forth and accessing it that way. [crosstalk 00:44:01] cameras.

Mark:

You couldn't identify those kids? They weren't going speeding by.

John:

No, they weren't speeding by, but they have the helmets on, so you can't see their faces.

Mark:

But you got the clothing. Well, anyways, how many of these camera do we have going right now?

John:

Several. I don't know the full number, but there's more than one, I'll tell you that.

Mark:

Yeah. Well, I think that's great that we have that, but I think it's also good for safety. In other words, if somebody gets hurt there, say they trip on our property, you have a camera there for that. There's many uses for all that stuff.

John:

Absolutely.

Mark:

I just think that we need a lot of them and I think we need to go back to a main base where they're there. Doesn't have to monitor it all the time, but have to look at it once, twice a day and see what's going on. I think it's very important.

John:

All right. So other next bullet. Seymour Haddad Road and Silvermine Road parcels. I talked to town staff about possible sale, east parcels, but I'm informed that it was not possible since the town wanted to develop them. In theory, we could sell property to a town or a land trust or the state if they wanted to keep it as open space, and if it was on the watershed. The issue is that these are on the watershed, but because they want to develop it, it was not possible to transfer to them. John, Hudak, Steve Vitko and I

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

met with some staff of the Yale Golf Course and their consultants to talk about planned work on the golf course in 2022.

John:

For 180 Borrman Road, Nicole and I checked on a complaint from a butter about flooding of his backyard coming from Saltonstall Ridge and water was slipping and not going to where it was intended, towards storms or pipes that are on the edge of the property. That also was related to an ATV dirt bike issue. The Firm River greenway trail, I attended a Zoom meeting about plans for a greenway trail along the Firm River in North Branford and East Haven. And in this month's update, there are five articles for your reading, enjoyment and education. And with that, I'll take any questions that you have.

Peter:

Any more questions for John? I think we covered pretty much. Mark, the security, and I know that Larry and yourself have spoken on that and I'm sure it's a priority. So anything else for John? Anyone? Okay, thank you, John as usual.

John:

Thank you.

Peter:

Do all the job. Any other land items we need to discuss? I know Sunny is with us. Sunny, you have anything to say?

Sunny:

No. At this point of time, I'm good. There's no... I think John covered pretty much, I think all the items that was required to be covered. So I think, pretty extensive.

Peter:

Yeah, he does. Yeah. How are you making out, Sunny? Are you okay? Feeling-

Sunny:

I'm doing fine, yeah. So far so good, no complains actually. It's been a pleasure so far.

Peter:

Okay, great.

Sunny:

Actually, it's been a good ride.

Peter:

How about our boss? Larry, you have anything more to add?

Larry:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Nothing more to add to John's report or Sunny. Sunny' is getting oriented, and as a matter of fact, Sunny and I, and a few of the other leadership team members will be going out on the watershed with John Triana to look at some of the critical areas in the next couple of weeks. So we're looking forward to that very much. So thanks to John for being willing to show us around.

Peter:

Thanks, Larry. All right, any other questions? Mark? We're good? All right, our next meeting's March is 9th-

Mark:

You think I have a question all the time?

Peter:

I know you do, which is okay.

Mark:

I hope I ask interesting questions. Right, I try.

Peter:

No. Look, before you got here today, I compliment how you keep me on my toes. So listen, I'm in good shape with you in my corner. I don't mean that in a bad way, either.

John:

[crosstalk 00:48:17] I'm concerned that the electricity is going out and Killingworth.

Mark:

What did you say?

John:

I said, I'm concerned that the electricity has gone off in Killingworth because it doesn't look like there's any lights in Jamie's place. There she is.

Jamie:

I've just been sitting in the garage, in the front of my house in the car because it was too much for me to try to like waddle in on my cane in the dark. So I'm like, I'll just sit here for the meeting, but the light, the outside light went out. But I'm so comfortable, I meant stay out here. The kids can't get to me, they brought... I was going to say I had pizza, they brought me pizza-

John:

Wow.

Jamie:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

...as the presentation started. Yeah, except for we were learning about there was the larvae or whatever, I was biting into the pizza. That was the part I [inaudible 00:49:03]

Mark:

If you need couple of dollars, you get some Bob's. I'll send them out for you.

Peter:

I appreciate your dedication, Jamie. I know she didn't want to miss a beat at the meeting and it sounds like you're doing better.

Jamie:

Yeah, I am. I mean, I'm moved to a cane and I'm off my walker, so I think that's good. So they took the bandage off today, it looks pretty... It's unpleasant to look at, but much better than the last one, so I'm excited. [crosstalk 00:49:39]

Peter:

You just keep moving, that's the key to recovery. Take it from me. So anything else? Anything else? I know-

Mark:

I never knew anybody recover from a knee operation quicker than you did.

Peter:

Well, I have to make a living.

Mark:

Jamie, he jumps out of his truck at Dunkin' Donuts. I said, "How're you doing?" He said, "Just had my knee done." I said, "yeah, how long ago?" "Three weeks." I go, "What?"

Peter:

Well, it's not-

Mark:

Jumped out his truck.

Peter:

I fake it a little bit, but I'm better than I was. So anyway, our next meeting is March 9th, 5:30. I need a motion to adjourn.

Greg:

[inaudible 00:50:26]

Bob:

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February 9, 2022

Second.

Peter:

All in favor?

Group:

Aye.

Peter:

All right, everyone. You have a great night.