

Memo

Date: September 19, 2025

From: Ken

To: CCC

Re: Briar Bush Road Town Forest – Tour with County Forester

On September 10, 2025, Ken, Kelly, Audra and Steve Seron met with the County Forester Tim Fleury to tour the property. The goal of the meeting was to gain insight into what the CCC might consider for management options looking ahead. We walked an oval loop viewing most of the property beginning and ending at the small parking area at a gap in the stone wall.

This is a brief summary of Tim's observations and assessment. The lot is dominated by a mix of white pine, beech and red oak, with lesser components of other species.

-The white pine is the most common species. They are generally large (18" + DBH) and scattered throughout the property. Most of the stems have defects reducing their value as saw logs for timber production. The defects include multiple stems and inclusions from branches resulting from their growth in an open field environment many years ago. It's likely some of them would have interior rot.

-There is a small patch of high quality large red oak in an area near the road where we parked. These were most likely left after the prior harvest due to their proximity to the road. Isolated large red oak were also observed elsewhere throughout the property.

-Beech is present throughout the property with some large stems and many smaller stems in the understory. Beech has been suffering from decline for many years due to Beech Bark Disease. Within the last few years, Beech has become infected with a nematode which created Beech Leaf Disease (BLD). This new disease has resulted in near complete defoliation of the understory trees. According to Tim, it is still unknown if the mature canopy trees will survive.

-The terrain is rolling with numerous rocks and a few wetlands observed. There are several old stone walls on the property, some very large, and a few large stone piles. These features support the premise that this property was completely cleared in the 1800s. There were other hand made stone features as well as a natural stone outcrop.

The consensus opinion was that due to the BLD and the low market value of existing trees, the CCC should wait approximately 5 years until we know the outcome of the disease and see how the stand changes. Relative to the potential for a commercial timber harvest, it was Tim's opinion that due to the poor quality of the white pine, limited amount of red oak and small

size of the lot, a harvest would not produce much income for the town. There is a likelihood that the post-harvest regeneration would be dominated by Beech, which, given its tenuous situation, would not be ideal. One possible future outcome could be creating a small loop trail among the large trees, highlighting the stone walls, ledge outcrop and wetlands. This could be accompanied by a small parking area for a couple of cars. This could be an attractive destination for a short walk in the woods. It would not likely be a major attraction but would be a viable use of the property for general public enjoyment, wildlife habitat and protecting the water quality of the large wetland along the eastern boundary.