

Mill Brook Watershed Management committee

10/16/23 minutes, draft

Present: Prudy Burt, David Bouck, Bill Wilcox, Julie Pringle, Kristen Fauteux, Cindy Mitchell, Angela Luckey

Absent: Tim Boland (?)

Also present: Maggie Craig, Ken Carloni

Maggie and Ken were present to further discuss their biochar project, previously discussed at our 9/25/23 meeting. Since then, the committee received input from state fisheries biologist Steve Hurley and entomologist Greg Whitmore. Both Greg and Steve suggested that nutrients should be treated at the source and expressed the following concerns about biochar being deployed in Mill Brook; the ability to keep bags in place in such a dynamic environment especially during flood events, that the arrangements of bags would obstruct stream flow and the downstream drift of macro invertebrates, potential impacts to pH, dissolved oxygen resulting in impacts to macro invertebrate larvae and fish eggs (Mill Brook is listed on the cold water fish resource list, due to the documented presence of native breeding brook trout and American brook lamprey.)

Alternatively, committee members suggested that Maggie and Ken obtain permission to withdraw a quantity of Mill Brook water, and perform their biochar experiment under controlled conditions at the former state lobster hatchery, where a number of large tanks remain. This would give them information/data while eliminating any potential impacts to this stream. Other suggestions included using biochar in a land-based bio-swale application in an area of known stormwater nutrient input.

Maggie and Ken had some suggestions to mitigate concerns raised by Steve, Greg and committee members, including swapping out the proposed biochar bags for large charred logs. Prudy said that past experience here indicates that large logs will move during flood events; heavy staging planks used for a boardwalk adjacent to Mill Brook were scattered through a flooded vegetated wetland during a 5" rain event in 2011.

While the committee wanted to encourage Maggie and Ken, it was agreed that concerns outweighed possible benefits. Maggie and Ken thanked the committee for their careful review of this proposal.

The committee continued to finalize the data collection update. Members agreed that the 15 minute length of Ollie Becker's drone aerial video might be too long for general consumption; David will see if Ollie can speed this up a bit.

No minutes were ready for review and approval.

Next meeting date will be on October 30, 5 p.m. on zoom

Submitted by Prudy Burt