

106 Shearer Road – Walking Path

DEW Construction LLC. Submitted as additional information to the Inland Wetlands Commission. May 12, 2021.

General Description: A conservation easement is held by Steep Rock Association on a portion of the land in which the walking path and sitting areas are proposed. The pond was dredged and other restorative work was done in the area under a separate application a few years ago. No work will be done directly in the pond. The existing non-native stone steps will be removed. Rather than disturb the natural habitats of the hillside, the proposal seeks to enhance it and secure its longevity. There is also a bulging rise by the pond's edge. We propose shaving down the curve of the bald rise at the pond and installing stepping stones with topsoil and grass in between to prevent further erosion and runoff. Finally, temporary wooden benches (made from our felled trees from last summer's storms) around the existing terrace.

Reasons for Project: Installation of stable walking path and seating areas leading down to pond with mitigation of erosion:

Over the past few years, the walking paths from the field to the pond have become quite difficult to negotiate due to erosion. Visitors often have trouble with footing and the sometimes slippery steep climb. Soil erosion has increased on the hillside, making it difficult to establish grass, and consequent runoff has worsened, causing rivulets of muddy soil on established paths. To address these issues, we propose installing meandering steppingstones, spaced far apart with grass in between. This new path made of native stones, and flush with the surrounding earth, will help to anchor the natural contours of the hill and preserve any further loss of the hillside's undulation. It will also mitigate the pitch for the safety of all, both old and young, and make it a more gradual and manageable climb. Our intention is not to disturb the natural topography of the hillside, but instead to assist its preservation by designating a single footpath and stabilizing the areas around it. We intend also to soften the rise near the pond and anchor the soil and grass with a few steppingstones there to prevent further erosion and runoff. Finally, we propose placing temporary wooden benches made from downed trees of last summer's storms around the existing terrace at the pond.

Project Timeline: The timeline for the project depends on weather conditions; however, the following can be estimated as reasonably expected:

The entire project will take approximately six weeks, and will be executed in three stages:

- Preparation Phase (2 days)
- Active Work Phase (3-4 weeks): includes mobilization, excavation, grading, and laying of stones for walkways
- Restoration Phase (1 weeks) All disturbed soils will be stabilized. Native plants and seed will be added along steps in order to anchor soils. Landscaper Kit Lundberg will oversee this phase and perform maintenance as needed.

Construction:

Best Management Practices for performing the proposed work will be applied. All sediment and erosion controls will be in place before the commencement of the work. Nick Tsacoyannis, the WEO will be informed of the start date in order to inspect the erosion controls. Sedimentation and erosion control measures will be supplemented as needed during construction. The best time to perform the work is when the ground is expected to be dry. This will reduce the possibility of ruts as well as to help prevent the disturbance of excess soil.

The equipment to be used is an excavator, which will be inspected daily for leaks. The path will be cleared according to the plans submitted with the application. Mr. Willenbrock will notify the WEO immediately if any unforeseen problems arise. Any work near the pond, including the installation of the wooden benches will be done by hand. After construction, sedimentation and erosion controls will remain in place until the disturbed areas have been stabilized with vegetation.

Future Maintenance:

Should a special maintenance schedule be deemed necessary, it will be developed in accordance with the conservation easement agreement with Steep Rock Association and the Inland Wetlands regulations of the Town of Washington.