

## FREEMAN'S STATEMENT ON THE IPCAR PRESERVE April 24, 2014

I agree that it is important to be clear about what the goals or objectives of management are. But I think that a lot more needs to be said about goals. In what follows, I will identify what I think are the important goals. Then I will discuss what that implies about management options. And I have some suggestions for next steps and implementation

I will come down against Option 3 - regeneration harvest; and I will recommend something that is sort of between Options 1 and 2.

The funding source apparently established the objective of maintaining the preserve in perpetuity for outdoor recreation. The Forester's report has this to say about objectives: "Providing recreation opportunities is a priority for this property, along with maintaining an aesthetically pleasing and healthy forest. Soil and water resources, along with wildlife habitat values, should be protected with any activity." Outdoor recreation can mean a lot of things from snowmobiling, cross country skiing, Frisbee-golf, to hiking and birdwatching. I think that most of us would agree that this site is best suited for hiking, wildlife observation, birdwatching, and the like. This means that of the 8 values listed in Table 1 of the Report, 4 are complements in the sense that they come together: aesthetic/spiritual value; recreation use; wildlife habitat, and forest health.

Just what does "forest health" mean as a value? The Forester's report has this to say about forest health: "forest health is often defined as growing trees that are vigorous, free of insects and diseases, ... of desirable (a.k.a. commercially valuable) species, .... This definition frames health in terms of human (economic) values for wood products. Forest health can also be defined on an ecological basis. Dead, diseased, old, and slow-growing trees of all species naturally occurring on the site are part of a healthy forest from a biodiversity perspective." If "economic value from timber sales is not included as an objective, then this first definition of forest health must be rejected as well; and forest health must be defined and evaluated on an ecological basis.

A forest with a diversity of age classes and species best serves the four values identified here. And Option 3 (regeneration harvest) is the worst option from this perspective.

The discussion of advantages and disadvantages of the 3 options in your report is unbalanced. For option 3, it lists as an advantage "new wildlife, especially birds." But it does not mention that the new forest will be much less suitable for flying squirrels and many bird species, for example, kinglets, woodpeckers, and forest warblers. Another disadvantage is that opening up the forest floor increases the risk of alien species, especially Japanese barberry.

The Report also makes much of the increases fire hazard if nothing is done. I think that this is overemphasized. This is not southern California in the middle of a prolonged drought. We have higher humidity along the coast and relatively fewer ignition sources such as lightning strikes and campfires I also understand that the two foresters from the Maine Forest Service who visited the site in 2011 were not especially concerned with fire hazard.

We have at least two other mature spruce forests in the Town - the north end of MacMahan Island and the Ledgemere Preserve. I understand from talking with the people managing these sites that they are having some blowdown; but they are not contemplating anything like a regeneration harvest. In the case of the Ledgemere Preserve, they are doing nothing and on MacMahan they have someone getting the logs on the ground so that they start to rot.

Bottom line: I urge the Commission to adopt as the management objective creating a stand with a more diverse age structure and greater species diversity. Consistent with this, you should reject the regeneration harvest option.

This leaves Option 1 (doing nothing) or Option 2 (selection harvest on a very limited scale to minimize the risk of extensive blowdowns). If you choose Option 2, I urge you to engage a professional forester with a background in managing conservation areas to mark trees for removal. I have a couple of names if you are interested. One is Jack Witham, Director of the Holt Research Forest in Arrowsic and President of KELT. Also limited clean up operations should be done as in the case of MacMahan.

Granted that this will cost money on a continuing basis. I suggest that you seek a grant from a private foundation; and you could also solicit contributions from Town's people who share this objective. This could be modeled after the way private funds were raised for the Town Wharf rebuilding effort a few years ago. (Contributors were given "Honorary User" stickers.)

I also think that you should get a second opinion from a professional forester with a background in managing conservation areas. This person should be asked only to provide an evaluation of the options; you don't need another inventory of harvestable trees. My impression is that you have been unduly influenced by MS Brusila's emphasis on an economic definition of forest health and on the fire danger.

The site was described to me by a person with a background in forestry (Tim Vail) as a prime example of a mature forest in transition. It should be kept that way.