

**Peterborough Open Space Committee Minutes**  
**September 11, 2017 Meeting**  
**Fremont Field Conservation Land**

Present: Ed Henault, Debby Kaiser, Anne Huberman, Joel Huberman, Francie Von Mertens ; John Kerrick, Conservation Commission

For its September meeting, the Open Space Committee met at the Fremont Field town conservation land for a workgang joined by John Kerrick, Conservation Commission.

The property's front fields are managed as wildlife habitat with a focus on milkweed and other wildflowers that support insect pollinators at a time when concern about pollinator decline is growing—including monarch butterflies whose caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed.

As part of a good neighbor policy with the farm family that maintains an organic hayfield across the street, an annual workgang plucks milkweed pods before they open and cast their seeds to the wind.

A good number of monarch caterpillars were found, a good sign after several years of few to none.

Also noticed: some large black, white and red moths that in a week or so increased to hundreds (thousands?) hovering over the field. They were New England Buck Moths (Google-determined) that lay eggs on meadowsweet, found in clumps at Fremont. The species follow an extreme boom/bust annual cycle determined by spring weather conditions. Oddly, the boom population explosion has not been reported at Fremont in its 25-year history as town conservation land with a popular trail through buck moth habitat.

Contact with caterpillars can result in a rash, but caterpillars remain in meadowsweet, eating their leaves. Contact with humans unlikely.

/fvm

