

**Town of Monkton**  
**Town Forest Committee**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, October 30th, 2024**  
**7:00-9:00pm, in-person and on Zoom/Phone at Town Hall**  
(Approved: TBD)

**Members present:** Callie Brynn (Chair), Jaime Schulte (Vice-Chair), John McNerney, Jessica Demeritt, Pete Dufault, CJ Buzzy, Molly Parren

**Members absent:** None

**Guests:** Bob Heiser (Vermont Land Trust), Caitlin Cusack (Vermont Land Trust), Tammy Parker, John Peters (New Haven), Deb Gaynor, Debra Sprague (Planning Commission), Ann Miller (Conservation Commission), George Lawrence (Addison; Addison County Bike Club board), Alan Hebert (Bristol; Addison County Bike Club board), Jim Andrews (Salisbury; VT Herp Atlas), Kate Kelly (Hinesburg; VT Herp Atlas), Robin Hopps, Aaron Seymour, Tim Steele (Bristol), Jadson Yaggy (Bristol), Annmarie Altadonna, and Tricia (who attended online).

**Purpose:** to discuss Mechanized Recreation with regard to the Town Forest Management Plan process.

The meeting began at 7:00 with crackers/cheese, Halloween candy, etc. One participant was on Zoom.

- There was a short overview of the status and timeline of the project. We are working on community engagement today about aspects of the future management plan for the property. Callie introduced that the various activities/uses of interest for the town forest will be considered through a framework of their Social, Ecological, Financial, and Legal/Risk impacts and opportunities.
- Bob Heiser discussed the Conservation Easement that Vermont Land Trust will hold and that it protects pedestrian uses, including hunting, fishing, & trapping, although municipalities can limit or prohibit these if there are safety or resource concerns. Motorized uses are not allowed under the easement (with some limited exceptions), although snowmobiles can be an exception at the discretion of the town.
- Mechanized uses, including bikes, snowmobiles, and horses (bio-mechanized) need to have a plan to manage the impacts of the use and have community support.
- Jaime introduced the interim management plan, covering the time from the purchase until the long-term plan is ready (in the May 2025 timeframe). Mechanized uses will not be allowed during the interim period, because the community has not completed the process of decide which mechanized uses it might include, mapping go-forward trail networks, etc.
- We did a round of introductions next.
- Community Engagement Survey results on bikes, snowmobiles, and races/events were reviewed. There is some net positive support for bikes, a 50-50 kind of response on races/events, and substantial opposition regarding snowmobiles.
- Molly described what we have learned about the presence of Eastern Ratsnakes, a threatened species that cannot be injured/trapped/killed, in an area that includes the future town forest. The

committee will need to consider how to minimize the conflict between human uses and wildlife in various forms. Vernal pools and dogs are not a good combination, for instance.

- There was an exercise where participants wrote on large sheets of paper in response to questions such as how trail conflicts between pedestrians and bikes might be addressed.
- The group discussed the questions and more topics for an extended period after the exercise, spending time on what kinds of bike trails are of interest (simple trails preferred on this property, not machine-made), experiences with trail conflicts, the concerns about ratsnakes, etc. Regarding races/events parking and lack of facilities is a concern.

The meeting concluded at approximately 9:20pm. More detailed notes will be sent to participants who left an email address on the sign-in sheet.

Minutes taken by Jaime Schulte.