

Town of Monkton
Town Forest Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 16th, 2024, 6:30pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
(Approved: TBD)

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

Members absent: None

Guests: Sue Stasny (Conservation Commission Co-Chair)

Call To Order - Callie called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

- Reviewed Agenda
- Public Comment - Sue noted that the Conservation Commission would like to support the management plan process.
- Interim Management Plan
 - Interim signs are up in four locations. Need a few more which are being worked on this week.
 - Some individuals have had difficulty locating access points. We received one email about a person parking on Cedar Ln, which doesn't offer access. It might help to have some kind of sign at the entrances on OAR and Hardscrabble. Could have a couple of photos of the access points on our website and some kind of "Monkton Town Forest" sign visible from the roads.
 - Plowing for the winter - will look at options, possibly in connection with OAR.
 - Need a plan for parking and possible grants for that work. There was a suggestion from an area resident that town forest parking be only on Hardscrabble road. The committee and the easement holder (Vermont Land Trust) believe that having parking on OAR is important for good public access to the western part of the town forest. There is additional work needed to improve parking at different locations.
 - Trapping request - we got a second expression of support for trapping and are clarifying if it is a request or just input to the committee.
- Long-Term management plan
 - Mech. Rec, Timber, Hunting summaries
 - Still need to send these summaries to participants from the sessions
 - Recap 12/4 Hunting & Trapping follow-up meeting
 - The session on the 4th was moderated by Marilyn Cargill and went well.
 - Sue will help us continue to gather how other town forests approach hunting & trapping.

- Review plan framework
 - Reviewed the plan template from Vermont Land Trust.
- Community input timeline
 - We will establish a schedule by our meeting on the 6th that describes the steps through to management plan approval.
- TWC collaboration
 - Callie met with the The Watershed Center board and had some updates to share. They are excited about the Monkton Town Forest and think it would be simpler to have some consistency on uses and policies. TWC allows deer and game bird hunting, but not other seasons. They do not allow trapping on most of the property. It would be good to coordinate on trail connections.
 - We will walk with members of the TWC board at some point soon to consider trail connections across the Bristol border.
- Other Updates
 - Thank you's - we'll join with VLT in sending a thank you card to contributors now, and will also consider whether to send something more personal as we get closer to the celebration in the Spring.
 - Press
 - Callie and Jaime met with a reporter from the Independent and John and Jaime talked with a reporter from WCAX. There is other media interest as well in the new Town Forest.
 - 2024 Committee report/Town Meeting Day
 - We will finalize our committee report at the meeting on the 6th.
 - OAR Maintenance
 - The Selectboard has a subcommittee that is prepared to work with a subcommittee of the residents on Old Airport Rd. to reach an agreement.
 - UVM Field Naturalist - Fall fieldwork follow-up
 - The report is still coming and will be reviewed in the management plan process.
- Review of Minutes from 11/20 and 12/4 - postponed to next meeting
- Set next meeting date(s):
 - Monday, January 6th 7:00pm virtual meeting only via Zoom

Adjournment: Jessica moved to adjourn. All were in favor (7-0-0). Adjourned at 9:06pm.

Minutes taken by Jaime Schulte.