

Town of Monkton
Town Forest Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025, 6:30pm
Monkton Town Hall & via Zoom

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

Guests: Stephen Pilcher

Callie called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

- **Reviewed Agenda** - no changes
- **Public Comment** - none offered
- **Regular Business**
 - Jessica moved the minutes of March 5th, 2025 as written. Molly seconded. So moved (6-0-0).
 - John moved the minutes of March 19th, 2025 as written. Jessica seconded. So moved (6-0-0).
 - Jaime moved the minutes of March 22nd, 2025 as written. John seconded. So moved (5-0-1). Jessica abstained (not present at the meeting).
- **Interim Management Plan**
 - Mud-season stone, trails, etc. Old Airport Rd. parking is drying out.
- **Management Plan draft**
 - We need to update signage by late April and add a mention of turkey season in May.
 - Community feedback, plan updates - discussed several areas of community feedback from the past couple of weeks and how the final draft of the Plan should be updated:
 - The Vision statement was adjusted to focus more on people and recreation.
 - Hours of Operation - will be open 24 hours rather than dawn to dusk. Quiet hours added from 9pm-7am.
 - Dogs - after an extended discussion, the committee agreed to add a specific off-leash option. Dogs must be on-leash or wearing an electronic collar that effectively allows the dog to be immediately recalled. Dogs must remain within the sight of their owner and under their control. Owners are expected to exercise good trail etiquette and must have a leash with them to further manage trail interactions and protect wildlife.
 - Bikes - extended the season to be from November 1st to April 1st after further data on rare reptile sightings was obtained; winter trail grooming allowed by permission to improve fat biking conditions.

- Hunting - no change to seasons. Hunter safety/education workshops are encouraged, to bring user groups together to share information and understand each other's experiences/concerns while promoting safety. Concerns about 3 months of continuous hunting seasons in the Fall were discussed. This is slightly mitigated by not allowing hunting between Old Airport Rd. and Hardscrabble Rd., where homes are almost entirely within 500'. We expect that a trail loop will be created in this 30-acre zone, with access from both roads, allowing for a 30-45 minute hike separated from hunting.
- Trapping - no changes made.
- The committee discussed clarifications we have received on the right of a municipality to act as an owner of land, with the same rights as an individual or private organization. Municipalities cannot restrict a hunting or trapping season townwide or create a new kind of season, but on land they directly own and control (such as the Town Forest or Morse Park) can exercise the same ownership rights as a private owner. The Vermont Supreme Court confirmed this authority in the case of Hunters, Anglers & Trappers Ass'n of Vermont, Inc. v. Winooski Valley Park Dist., 2006 VT 82, 2, 181 Vt. 12, 14, 913 A.2d 391, 394 (2006). The decision can be found [here](#).
- Foraging language was clarified. The Kaolin Dam was mentioned under proposed improvements. The MTFC will adopt a best-practice for mowing to address concerns about property maintenance and the rare reptile found on the property in the warmer months.
- **John moved to approve the Monkton Town Forest Management Plan with the changes as discussed and with wording to be updated in the Plan by Callie, Jaime, and Molly. Molly seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (6-0-0).**
 - Timeline
 - The subcommittee will have changes completed by Friday and will post the document for the community with a summary of changes and also send it to the Selectboard for discussion at their meeting on Tuesday.
- Other Business - postponed
- Set next meeting date(s):
 - Wednesday, April 16th, 6:30pm

Jessica moved to adjourn at 10:03pm. John seconded. So moved 6-0-0.