

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, February 17th, 2022 6:30 PM – Zoom

Attendees: Kiley Briggs (presenter), Jacques Couture, Cynthia Scott, John Little, Dan Seeley, Russ Ford, Wendy Scott, Carol Hickey, Ellen Fox, Bethany Remmers, Jamie Fosburgh, Annette Goyne, Ben Gabos, Cori Rockefeller, Dea Devlin, Dean Pierce, Diane Leary, Julia Pupko, Kate Wettergreen, Lauren Weston, Marilia Muschett, Sarah Lunn, Lindsey Wight

- 1) **Wood Turtle Conservation in Working Landscapes:** Kiley Briggs of the Orianne Society gave a 30 minute presentation on wood turtles. Summary: Kiley Briggs provided an in-depth presentation on the biology and habits of the endangered wood turtles. Wood turtles are sometimes found in our area in their habitat close to streamlands. If a wood turtle is seen, they can be recorded as an observation to the VT Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (vtherpatlas). Raise awareness that turtles may be out there and to leave them alone if spotted. Be wary of turtle crossings near riparian buffers, and install more buffers. The presentation was followed by a Q&A with questions from participants about turtle biology and ways that we can further protect them.
- 2) **Business meeting called to order at 7:17.**
- 3) **Review of the December meeting minutes:** DS motioned to accept the minutes; JL seconded; minutes were approved as written.
- 4) **Grants update:** Town Infrastructure 2022 - UMATR received one additional application from the town of Berkshire to replace a culvert on Marvin Road. This will be a full replacement of an old culvert that no longer allows fish passage. CH made a motion to accept. WS seconded. Vote passed all in favor.
 - Currently have \$30,000 allocated to split between three town infrastructure grant requests for \$5,000 each; what shall we do with the rest?
 - \$5,000 for Sampsonville dam remnants removal effort – previously approved.
 - \$5,000 for RCG: Mussel inventory: Phase 2 – previously approved.
 - \$5,000 for RCG: Exploring Our Cultural Waters Film project
 - Discussion around whether or not to fund the film project. WS made a motion to fund the project. CS seconded. Vote passed all in favor.
 - Additional discussion of likely regional partners: Abenaki Helping Abenaki, Nulhegan elders that are assigned to this region (Ellen knows how to contact).
- 5) **FY 2023 Budget:** Discussion followed by approval vote. JL made a motion to accept; CS seconded. Vote passed all in favor.
- 6) **2022 Upcoming Events:**
 - a) February 19th, 2-4 PM, Snowshoe Hike with Franklin County Forester Nancy Patch, along the Trout River in Montgomery. Will be meeting in Therese Begnoche's property behind Grampa Grunts. Currently 26 people have registered.
 - b) March 12th, 10 AM - 12 PM, Snowshoe Hike with Orleans County Forester Jared Nunery. Location will be at the Starr property in Troy.
 - c) **Speaker Series:**
 - i) March 17th: Jeff Parsons will give a presentation about Mills and Historic Structures along our rivers.
 - ii) April TBD
 - iii) May 19th: Birding, Bridgett Butler
 - d) June 12th, Sunday - Paddle and Picnic
 - e) July 16th, Saturday - Paddle/Pedal with NFCT

- f) Other Events:
 - i) July? - Paddle instruction and tour
 - ii) August - Paddle instruction and tour
 - iii) Fall - wild and scenic film festival
 - iv) Naturalist paddle?
- 7) **Other/Public Comment:** EF gave an update on the Troy Forest Project. The Town has applied for EPA funds to plan for recreational economies. Will also request NPS support through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program for land management planning assistance. BR shared that there is significant funding available that can be used for the River Road Covered Bridge replacement construction. There will be a match requirement, though this will likely not be able to be federal dollars. Long timeline; there will be opportunities for us to assist with this effort.
- 8) **Upcoming Meetings:** March 17th, Zoom. Beginning meeting with presentation by Jeff Parsons.
- 9) **Wrap up and adjourn:** WS made a motion to adjourn, CS seconded, vote passed all in favor.