

MRBA Meeting Minutes Thursday August 3rd, 2023: MRBA Office

Attendees: Craig Cimmons, John Little, Sarah Cushing, Paul Stanley, Kate Donlon, Brian Jerosse, Cynthia Scott, Lindsey Wight, and Sarah Lunn

- 1) Meeting called to order at 6:37pm.
- 2) BJ motioned to accept the July meeting minutes, CCseconded. All in favor; and the minutes were accepted.
- 3) Event overview: River clean-up on July 8th (Enosburg-Sheldon) was great; some new and some returning volunteers - VERY hot; not as many tires (as 7 years ago), but some big ones. Storytelling event in St A on July 19th was well attended; beautiful evening of entertainment and some good networking. North Troy Community Water Walk on July 25th was unfortunately not well-attended, but good connection with someone affiliated with the school about how the school uses this property. Intern-led river clean-up on July 26th (Westfield: Loop Rd to Lane Rd) was very well attended! ECO AmeriCorps members and some Jay Peak employees - but lesson learned to ALWAYS scout a section of river; the flood made some unexpected changes!

Our boats are not great for beginners; may be time to see if we can sweet-talk a canoe company.

Idea hatched during the second clean-up: a program (geology related?) at Kennison's Quarry in Westfield.

Discussion related to clean-ups: would be good to bring some sort of "barge" for tires.

4) Administrative business

- Board members looked over the July Warrant. No questions; PS motioned to accept; SC seconded; the July Warrant was accepted.
- Phone comparisons/discussion: It would be good to have stronger internet at the office, which would probably be good to group with a landline. John will speak to his providers. Some discussion of network concerns: our financial information (and UMATR's) could be a security concern with shared network?
- Lindsey provided a read-out of what bringing Sarah on will do to our budget for the remainder of the year, and next year.

- 5) Projects: The LEAP internship program wrapped up at the end of July. However, we do have additional funds, so we will likely keep in touch with the interns and have them do some more project-based activities this fall. Could they continue doing maintenance at tree-planting sites?

Stream Wise assessments: we will conduct 4 of these on private lands in the headwaters of the watershed; one large-scale parcel will be done in the next couple of weeks; still working to identify the other 3 parcels.

- 6) Grants update: St Albans Museum has received (with Sarah's help) a large E&O grant from LCBP to fund Lake Lessons 2024. They also (again: thanks to Sarah) have a small grant from LCBP and a Watershed grant for Lake Lessons 2023 - coming this fall!

- 7) 2023 events: August 26: ANM River Celebration in Swanton 10-2pm. Sept 5: Enosburgh Community Water Walk. October 31?: Knotweed Bonfire event. Quebec visit/get-together?

Landowners along Giddings Brook: SC's niece lives there and has beaver activity behind their house.

8) Organization Planning: Priorities

Discussion point that is relevant: How do we currently spend our time? What are some current projects?

- Knotweed: could we maybe suggest some best locations for harvesting for human consumption? There could be a market for knotweed that could impact its prevalence.

Address knotweed or stop worrying about (it's everywhere). Is it taking time away from something else? Discussion about pros/cons: one big pro is that this work has brought a broader acknowledgement of our organization - Sarah L gets frequently contacted about this work.

- Writing grants (a necessary task)
- River clean-ups
- Tree plantings

Other things that are upcoming or could be focus points?

- Post-flooding: archive some of the articles that have been shared (thanks Corrina) - would be good to re-share them semi-often to keep things relevant, remind people about flooding and how to combat it/become flood resilient
- Woody-debris additions to help slow water down
- Beavers

9) Other business: PS reports that the Conservation Districts/NRCS have a good display at Field Days. SC noted that Boyden Farm seems to be doing things in sync with the river, rather than fighting it; could be a good site visit/case study to highlight?

10) Next meeting - September 7, 2023: MRBA office. [JL will be in Ireland!]

Meeting adjourned at 8:18pm.