

Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 5th, 2021: Pine Cone Snackbar, Berkshire, VT

Attendees: Paul Stanley, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Mike Manahan, John Little, Craig Cimmons, Marlena Valenta and Bailey, and Lindsey Wight

- 1) Meeting was called to order at 7:03pm. We opened the meeting by discussing the Headwaters Soiree; it was a good event and brought some new connections. Had ~58 attendees. The planning crew has received good feedback from attendees; we will be working on next steps and following up with some of the things that were discussed during the event. Need to compile the survey answers; do another River Reporter, more communications – follow-up email to attendees to keep the energy going. Some helpful suggestions: a PA system – some people were easy to hear, others less so; the speaker line-up was good, as was the crowd control; the food and location were both excellent. Could we do this model in other areas throughout the watershed – get more of our towns together and communicating. We do hope to visit all the towns more regularly. Also want to do a comparison of NRPC and NVDA, so that we can better see where we can fill in any gaps. May try to highlight this in our next River Reporter. “Workshops” – pay for the town administrators times to get them to participate (clerks, zoning administrators, etc) – “breakout sessions” about topics that may have come up during the Soiree. Q&A mini panel with NVDA/NRPC?
- 2) Thanks to Marlena for all the time, effort, miles, and more that she poured into the Soiree, and for her service as our intern this summer. Marlena will be finishing up a few items for UMATR and then returning to school at the beginning of September. She mentioned that she is taking fewer courses during her final semester this fall, so could have time if there are remote tasks we need assistance with.
- 3) Review/approval of both the June and July meeting minutes.
- 4) LEAP internship – Kendra Pepin and Anthony Plante each served ~68 hours and dabbled in a lot of things, including: plant identification, water sampling, knotweed surveys, river soils assessment and clay harvesting, GIS, public events, creating public handouts, edible plants, rain gardens, fascines, harvesting willow, harvesting saplings, also – somewhat more significantly: planting, tree survival surveys (both formal and informal), planting plans, and landowner outreach. We will be asking them to complete a survey to get feedback and improvement suggestions for next year.
- 5) ECO AmeriCorps member Sarah Lunn: grew up in Milton, is a long time volunteer ski patroller at Jay Peak, BS in biology from UNH, heavily involved in the outdoors and volunteering, has done tutoring and was in a club that did science nights at a local elementary school (near UNH).
- 6) Discussion: Commitment to DEI/Abenaki – the Board feels that at this time there is not a need to formalize our commitment, just to use our actions to show it. Let’s be sure we continue regular communications with the ANM, or see if our semi-regular attendance at the Tribal Council meetings would be of any assistance.
- 7) 25th year celebration/fundraiser – let’s do our next meeting at Jay Peak and Craig will see if he can get one of their events folks to come and advise us.
- 8) Administrative assistant position? Lindsey sent around a draft position description. Suggestions: Better (more attractive title): Communications Coordinator. Instead of ‘no more than 10’ – could we afford 10-20? Lindsey will look into the budget and see what we can afford for hours. Add to duties: tracking volunteer hours. Suggested dollar amounts: \$16-\$22/hour. Might Marlena be interested in such a position? And one more concern: legal to have this position (and all of our positions) as a contractor? Lindsey still needs to explore this for all our ‘staff members’.

Lindsey will bring the affordable hours and a more formal position description to our September

meeting.

9) Volunteer hours from Board – please submit your Jan-June hours to Lindsey

10) Upcoming: August 7 – Missisquoi Paddle Pedal;

August 7 – Knockout Knotweed Ice Cream and Invasive Species event 1-4pm at Riverwalk Park;

August 28 – ANM event at Swanton 10-2pm, Clean-Up Paddle before – Louie’s Landing to Mac’s Bend. Should we ask Keith to bring boats? Also, the Tribe needs ‘lead paddlers’ for the War Canoe.

11) Other Business – Brodie has left the Conservation District, and is now working for the Agency of Agriculture. As is Silas Rainville.

There is continuing discussion of a Pay for Phosphorus Reduction program for farms.

Could we create some sort of partnership with a solid waste district, for clean-up events? Arrange better drop off; make things more seamless? Who is the head of the SWD?

12) Next meeting – September 2, 2021 – at Jay Peak

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.