

Meeting Minutes Thursday, October 7th, 2021: Bakersfield Fire Station, Bakersfield, VT

Attendees: Paul Stanley, John Little, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Craig Cimmons, Sarah Lunn, and Lindsey Wight; Ellen Fox joined via Zoom.

- 1) Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.
- 2) We opened the meeting by introducing Sarah Lunn, our new ECO AmeriCorps member. Sarah grew up in Georgia, VT and is a long-time ski patroller at Jay Peak. She graduated from UNH with a plant ecology focus.
- 3) PS motioned to accept the minutes from our September meeting as written; CC seconded. All in favor.
- 4) Events: Sarah and Lindsey conducted a river clean-up with 17 Sheldon 8th graders on September 20 – arranged by Joanna Jerose! Only cleared about 0.7 miles upstream from the 105 crossing before the Sheldon school, but pulled a bunch of metal scrap, including a 50-gal metal drum!

Sarah and Lindsey also participated in a BioBlitz, organized by the Franklin County NRC and held on campus at SATEC and up in Hard'ack with BFA students. This 3-day event (Sarah assisted at 2, Lindsey at 1) had students trying to find 1,000 species and use iNaturalist to record them. Despite some bumps, this was a good event; the partners involved thought it would be good to learn from this and offer it again – though perhaps in the spring so as not to conflict with the Lake Lessons program that typically occurs in the fall.

- 5) Budget: John Cote gave Lindsey notice that he was closing his business; we are working on transferring the internet service to MRBA and W&S – it will be \$88/month. John is asking for more money for rent. Discussion about pros/cons of current space, and possibilities of finding another office space. John will check with the owner of the old Dick and Pam's and Wendy will check into spaces in Enosburg. Continued discussion about whether or not to have an office (could we get by with just a storage space?) – it's very good to have an office for Lindsey to collaborate with the ECO AmeriCorps members (also, we are supposed to provide this under our agreement with DEC. But this could potentially be co-working space, or something less formal. Lindsey will have a conversation with John Cote about these thoughts.

Administrative/Communications position: Lindsey feels like she needs to better assess our current finances, so will put this off until next month's meeting. Some discussion about part time workers – they run the gamut, so we can most likely find someone to do whatever we need (10hr/week, 20+, more...?), depending on our finances. It is true that it's easy to underestimate how much we need done, or else how long things will take.

- 6) Grants: CVNHP – submitted a preproposal to facilitate a series of films highlighting the Abenaki relationship with the river. If we are granted the funds, they won't come until next October. We re also partnering with Peregrine Productions (made the NEBI film, and also paddled and did a short film with John Little for LCBP a few years ago) to apply for a W&S grant to kick off this series along the Orleans County portion of the river, with the Nulhegan band.

LCBP – applying for funds to keep the knotweed project going – probably a modest amount, just to keep the research aspect of our treatment sites going (mostly covering labor). This will be “matched” with the funding we received for the FERC relicensing project to address knotweed near the Enosburg, Highgate, and Swanton dams.

We also have funding from the DEC (set amounts for a variety of activities) to work with our communities and do Tactical Basin Planning work.

- 7) Special projects: researching/connecting with the river in Canada – assign to Marlena on a consulting basis. WS proposes that we earmark \$15/hour for 20 hours of work to this effort; JL seconds; all in favor.

North Troy Farm and Forest project: Ellen updated on this project – VLT staff have toured the property (Britt, the farm programs director, and Kerry, the new NEK projects director); they are excited about the project. Ellen has asked VHCB to fund the appraisal, so that we can take the next steps in moving this forward (they are expecting a good amount of money coming from the ARPA). She has received a positive, with some reservations, response from partners at VHCB (and others) – one of which centers around who will own the forested part of the land (it would make sense to have it be Town land, but North Troy is unlikely to want it all). More visits upcoming/more possible partners: Pete Emerson from VTFWD – has been working to acquire streamside land (so may be able to be State-owned). Also Pete suggested connecting with VT FPR about expanding Big Falls to include some of this parcel (Ellen reports that they don't have a ready fund for this). Another possibility = the Forestry Program through UVM ext/Sea Grant is interested in setting up an agroforestry home base in northern VT (maybe next year?). Rural Edge – would like to have a near-village housing project in their pipeline (they are currently looking at least 3 years out); would be a great fit for native & farmworker housing. Another interest: demonstration pieces for climate change-resilient practices and research.

Our role: MRBA is the sponsoring organization... could potentially become the owner??

- 8) Membership – because we sent out the newsletter digitally, our donations are down this year.

25th year celebration/fundraiser: Craig talked to Jay Peak folks. The cheapest time to rent JP space is May and early June – but that is conference season, so we should book it now. The International Room (above Provisions on Tram Side) is likely the best space for us. JP is trying to secure big-name bands – of the sort that will draw a thousand or two people. So we could pick a day with a music event already happening and pair our event with that. Or we could get a local band that we could hire (Craig will ask JP folks for local suggestions with a good following). Seems like it would be a good idea to do a band that will give us a portion of the ticket sales.

- 9) Upcoming:

October 26/27 – tree planting in Lowell

October 27 – Tactical Basin Plan meeting in Westfield, with other topics – forum style (any suggested topics?)

October 29 – small-scale tree planting in Montgomery

- 10) Other business?

- 11) Next meeting will be at the Enosburg EMS Building, with a Zoom option (if wifi is available there).

JL motioned; CS seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:28pm.