Natural Resources Committee  
August 13, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance  
Commissioners: Lynette Hamilton, John Whitman, and Andy Toepfer  
Staff: Kim Smith (and John Bennett joined the committee for other business)

The meeting was canceled due to weather; however, several commissioners did not receive notice of the cancelation. Those in attendance met to have a discussion. No decisions were made.

The meeting was called to order at 2:08pm.

1. Minutes  
   - The minutes of July 16, 2014 were deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

2. Potential educational/informational forums  
   - **Emerald ash borer (EAB):** K. Smith said that she had spoken with Jolene Hamilton who has interest but limited resources to assist with co-sponsoring the event. The Committee discussed targeting a specific and perhaps atypical audience such as owners of landscape trees. It was mentioned that there are multiple workshops per year on the topic of invasive species and there is no need to duplicate the same content. It was suggested that the forum take a practical approach that addresses how to plan for and adapt to the coming of the EAB, targeting road crews and town officials.
   - **Sustainable agriculture:** K. Smith stated that she had met with Susan McMahon about co-sponsoring a forum with the Community Development Committee and that the Natural Resources Committee is invited to take the lead in the effort. It was suggested that the forum shift focus from sustainable agriculture to regional agriculture to ensure inclusiveness. The Committee emphasized that co-sponsors from outside of WRC will be needed to assist in this effort.
   - **Bees and Bats and Habitat:** It was suggested that the event be part of an ongoing series of events held for Town Conservation Commissions to network and discuss common issues. Speakers could include individuals from the VT Center for Ecostudies to talk about bees and the VT Fish and Wildlife Service to speak about bats. Topics could include an update on the causes for population declines and how to address it.
• **Biomass:** It was mentioned that the forum could focus on maximizing biomass for sustainability and return on investment or it could address various perspectives on the expansion of the biomass industry. The committee stated that there is still a need for further discussion to identify the most valuable approach for the biomass forum. K. Smith contacted the Bennington County Regional Commission about co-sponsoring the event and received a favorable response.

3. **Update on projects/issues**
   - **CEDF Program Plan and Allocations:** The CEDF Program Plan was approved by the State with minor modifications. The largest portion of the Windham County funds will appropriate $1.6 million to convert schools and municipal buildings to biomass heat.

4. **Other business**
   - **J. Bennett joined the conversation for the following items:**
     - **Water Quality Standard review:** A committee member asked about the water quality standard review. It was mentioned that the comment period was short and the State has not made clear the significance of the change.
     - **303d list of Impaired Waters:** It was stated that the categories have been significantly changed recently.
     - **Stratton Resort:** Stratton Mountain has a remediation plan to address water quality in several streams that are failing to meet State standards. An annual meeting will be held soon.
     - **Haystack Mountain Resort:** Haystack Mountain received a notice of alleged violation for developments that are not included in the Master Plan. Significant issues that need to be addressed in the plan include the protection of bear corridors, water quality, wetlands, and deer habitat.

5. **Next meeting**
   - The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 10, 2014 at 2pm (second Wednesday of the month).

**Meeting adjourned at 3:22pm**

*Respectfully submitted, Kim Smith*