Natural Resources Committee  
January 14, 2015 at 2:00 pm  
In the WRC Conference Room  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance  
Natural Resources Committee present: Maggie Bartenhagen (Chair), Nick Bartenhagen, Andy Toepfer, and John Whitman  
Visitors present: Marie Caduto (VT DEC) and Bob Anderson  
Staff present: Kim Smith

The meeting was called to order at 2:06pm with a quorum present and led by M. Bartenhagen.

Addition or removal of agenda items  
- There were no changes to the agenda.

Minutes  
- The minutes of December 10, 2014 Natural Resources Committee were approved with one abstention (motion by A. Toepfer, second by N. Bartenhagen).

Forest Stewardship Discussion  
- K. Smith updated the Committee on the Forest Stewardship Initiative. K. Smith is currently working with the Towns of Guilford and Halifax on the municipal outreach portion of the grant. Jeff Nugent has nearly completed the draft Forest Stewardship Report. The draft will be released for a 30-day public comment period. The Committee asked to have the opportunity to read the report prior to public release, if possible.

Deerfield Watershed Headwater Stream Management  
- K. Smith introduced the Deerfield Watershed Headwater Stream workshop, which will explore cooperative landscape management focused on addressing conservation of the headwaters of the Deerfield watershed in the face of climate change. A three-day workshop in February has been organized by USGS and UMass, Amherst, with participation from a broad range of stakeholders. M. Caduto described the history that led to the development of the project and its goal to explore how agencies and organizations work together to conserve the headwater ecosystems. Committee members identified economics and maintenance of infrastructure due to flooding as
one of WRC’s primary interests in issues relating to headwater streams. One of the biggest management challenges is encouraging collaboration between municipalities and organizations. Members noted that preserving forests in the headwaters is key to addressing stream ecosystem issues. Concern was raised about the merits of the project, but the Committee agreed that it was worthwhile to have WRC’s participation at the workshop.

Update on recent projects/programs

- **CEDF Modern Wood Heating Program**: The WRC has partnered as a sub-contractor on two competing MWH proposals: the Biomass Energy Resource Center and a local consortium led by the Sustainable Energy Outreach Network and Building Green.
- **EAB Public Forum**: Mark Whitmore has agreed to present without reimbursement. K. Smith is currently working on finding a date for the event in February.
- **Bees, Bats and Habitats Forum**: The Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center and the Pollinator Awareness Initiative have expressed interest in co-sponsoring an event and can likely provide a speaker on bees, which would be a less costly alternative to the VT Center for Ecostudies.
- **High Meadows Fund Grant**: An RFP has been released seeking proposals for multi-town collaborative, implementable planning projects that address flood resiliency within a watershed. The Committee recommended the Rock River, Saxtons River, West River, and the North Branch of the Deerfield as potential projects. The Committee approved of WRC’s involvement in the development of a project proposal.
- **Ecosystem Restoration Grant**: K. Smith stated that neither of the proposals that WRC submitted were funded. M. Caduto indicated that the majority of funding was allocated to Lake Champlain projects.
- **Shoreland Protection Act** – The WRC received notice about an application from landowners in Jamaica (Cole Pond) seeking additional clearing (to 51.6%), which exceeds the 40% maximum area standard. The WRC submitted comments, recommending that the VT DEC work with the landowners to develop mitigation measures.
- **Other items**: J. Whitman announced that there is a State-sponsored parcel mapping meeting in Rutland on February 3, 2015 to discuss funding and responsible entities for the upkeep of statewide parcel data.

**Next meeting**

- The Committee agreed to meet next on **Thursday, February 12, 2015 at 2:00pm**.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm**

Respectfully submitted, Kim Smith