Natural Resources Committee  
Thursday, February 12, 2015 at 2:00 pm  
In the WRC Conference Room  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance  
Natural Resources Committee present: Maggie Bartenhagen (Chair), Nick Bartenhagen, Lynette Hamilton, and John Whitman  
Visitors present: Bob Anderson  
Staff present: Kim Smith

The meeting was called to order at 2:05pm with a quorum present and led by M. Bartenhagen.

Minutes  
• The minutes of January 14, 2014 Natural Resources Committee were approved unanimously (motion by J. Whitman, second by N. Bartenhagen).

Deerfield Watershed Headwater Stream Management  
• K. Smith shared that the workshop was productive and will hopefully lead to future collaborations in the Deerfield Watershed. Modeling tools and databases will be developed as part of this initiative to improve access to regional information.

Natural Resource Assessment  
• The Committee compiled a list of natural resource assets, specifically sites of significance in Windham County, on behalf of the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District for annual reporting purposes.

Flow Device Installation Project  
• B. Anderson explained the ecological and social benefits of beavers and suggested that the Natural Resources Committee could initiate a program to assist municipalities in installing flow devices designed to prevent beavers from clogging culverts. A new version of the *BMPs for Resolving Human-Beaver Conflicts Manual* (by VT F&W Department) is scheduled for release during spring 2015. During the discussion, the Committee agreed that they were interested in undertaking such an initiative. It was suggested that a presentation could be given at a Full Commission meeting, that the revised manual could be distributed to towns if appropriate, and WRC could seek funding to assist a town in covering construction costs as part of a pilot project.

NVDA and Possible Wind Development Proposal  
• K. Smith stated that there have been several events recently relating to industrial wind development that the Committee should be aware of: the Northeastern Vermont Development
Association (NVDA) recently announced a resolution that proposes to amend their regional plan to discourage future industrial wind development. The NVDA proposal is based on a wind study that included 6 Propositions. Iberdrola is in the queue with ISO-NE for installing wind turbines equaling roughly 98 MW of power in Windham/Grafton and 30 MW of power in Readsboro/Searsburg. J. Whitman shared that an Australian study was recently released that found corresponding data between noise complaints and sound measured in an inaudible range. Industrial wind may be an issue that will need to be revisited in the coming months.

Update on recent projects/programs
- **Forest Stewardship Report**: Comments have been received and the report is being revised.
- **CEDF Modern Wood Heating Program**: The CEDF has not made a final decision on the grant recipient for the Modern Wood Heating Program.
- **EAB Public Forum**: Jim Esden, Mollie Klepack, and Bob Everingham have agreed to speak. The event will be held on March 18.
- **Bees, Bats and Habitats Forum**: K. Smith has contacted several people about speaking about bees; however one has not been finalized. The Committee discussed options and alternatives.
- **High Meadows Fund Grant**: No letters of interest (optional) were submitted in the Windham Region for the High Meadows Grant; however there continues to be some interest in submitting an application and K. Smith is in communication with Saxtons River and Winhall River towns about possibly collaborating on a grant.

Other business
- **Yucca Mountain**: WRC recently received a letter from Dan Schinhofen from the Nye County Board of County Commissioners seeking a letter of support requesting that the federal government complete review of the Yucca Mountain License Application. The Committee agreed that the issue should be taken to the Executive Board.
- **ERAF River Corridor**: The WRC has just received notice that the State may require that towns adopt a River Corridor overlay in their zoning in order to take advantage of State assistance through the ERAF program. There is considerable concern that the cost and time requirements for towns to establish these overlay districts is prohibitive.
- **USDA Connecticut River Grant**: NRCS announced that $10 million has been awarded to the Connecticut River Watershed to cleanup Long Island Sound. The details are yet to be released.
- **Wilmington Permit Application**: The WRC recently received a notice about a permit application to convert a right-of-way in a wetland buffer into a formal driveway to provide access a new house. The Committee suggested that it is an issue for Project Review and more info is needed.
- **Forester Licensing**: J. Whitman introduced a current discussion about whether foresters should be licensed in Vermont.
- **Readsboro Bank Stabilization Project**: J. Whitman provided an update that the bank stabilization project for the buyout properties will require an Archaeological Study.

Next meeting
- The Committee agreed to meet next on **Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 2:00pm**.

Meeting adjourned at 4:27pm

Respectfully submitted, Kim Smith