Natural Resources Committee
Thursday, March 4, 2015 at 2:00 pm
In the WRC Conference Room
Meeting Minutes

Attendance
Natural Resources Committee present: Andy Toepfer, Lynette Hamilton, John Whitman, and Nick Bartenhagen
Visitors present: Bob Anderson
Staff present: Kim Smith

The meeting was called to order at 2:02pm with a quorum present and led by A. Toepfer.

Minutes
- The minutes of February 12, 2015 Natural Resources Committee were approved unanimously. (motion by J. Whitman, second by L. Hamilton)

Natural Resource Assessment
- The Committee discussed the major threats to the natural resource assets listed during the February meeting in order to demonstrate need for continued funding in an annual report on behalf of the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District.

Flow Device Installation Project
- The Committee discussed next steps for an initiative to assist towns with the installation of flow devices to reduce infrastructure damage caused by beavers. The Committee emphasized that it is important to establish early buy-in from town road crews to ensure project success. A brief introduction to the proposed initiative will be given at the March 25th Regional Conservation Commission meeting. It was suggested that the WRC reach out to the Town Road Foremen and Commissioners to determine where problems exist and interest in flow device installations.

High Meadows Fund Grant
- The Committee discussed potential implementation projects and sites for conservation in the Saxtons River watershed as part of a proposed High Meadows Fund grant application. It was shared that the Vermont River Conservancy has been interested in the Saxtons River watershed.

Proposed Amendments to Act 250
- K. Smith provided a brief summary of the proposed changes, primarily relating to: Updates to the Master Plan and Partial Review processes, rules to address the new Downtown Findings process for projects in Designated Downtowns, rules and updates to address the Board’s Jurisdictional Opinion Reconsideration process, and other proposed changes, to improve clarity
and statewide consistency. It was noted that the amendments are only minimally relevant to natural resources. The Committee was invited to submit any comments to the WRC by March 15 or directly to the Natural Resources Board by March 31.

Update on recent projects/programs

- **EAB Public Forum:** A Workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18 at 9 am. It was stated that an explanation of how to deal with hazard trees should be covered. Members shared that injection treatments are available and that moving firewood is a major vector for its spread.

- **Bees, Bats, and Habitats Forum:** K. Smith shared that she has been in contact with Dean and Jodi Turner in Swanzey, NH who are willing to present on the habitat needs of bees.

- **Forest Stewardship Initiative:** Comments have been submitted on Guilford’s draft Town Plan. Halifax will be reviewed next. Finalization of the draft report is still in progress. A committee member shared that it will be valuable to have the report available soon as a resource to help protect against legislative initiatives to undermine programs that support forest conservation.

- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure Initiative:** Comments have been submitted on Brattleboro’s draft Land Use Regulations.

Other business

- **Forester Licensing:** J. Whitman shared that the House Committee will be considering a new requirement that foresters become licensed in Vermont. There is a mixed response from foresters and others, including a question of the need for such a requirement.

- **USDA Paper on Forest Management:** J. Whitman shared a report entitled *Effects of Clear-Cutting, Patch Cutting, and Low Density Shelterwoods on Bird Breeding and Tree Regeneration in New Hampshire Northern Hardwoods*, which provides new recommendations on forest management.

Upcoming event

- There will be a Regional Conservation Commission meeting on March 25 at 5:30pm in Dummerston.

Next meeting

- Due to scheduling conflicts, the Committee tentatively agreed to meet next on **Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 2:00pm**. This meeting will be one week before the Committee’s regular meeting time.

Meeting adjourned at 3:26pm

Respectfully submitted, Kim Smith