Natural Resources Committee
Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm
In the WRC Conference Room
Meeting Minutes

Attendance
Natural Resources Committee present: Maggie Bartenhagen, Chair, Lynette Hamilton, John Whitman, Steve Skibniowski, Andy Toepfer, Nick Bartenhagen
Visitors present: Melissa Belcher
Staff present: Kim Smith

The meeting was called to order at 2:04pm with a quorum present and led by M. Bartenhagen.

Minutes
- The minutes of April 1, 2015 Natural Resources Committee were approved unanimously. (motion by Andy Toepfer, second by J. Whitman)

Collaborative opportunities with Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center
- Patti Smith was unable to join the meeting. K. Smith informed the Committee that Patti is particularly interested in initiatives relating to beavers, wetlands, and vernal pools. The Committee expressed interest in seeking opportunities in which the activities of BEEC could dovetail with those of the Natural Resources Committee. The Committee would like to invite P. Smith to attend the next Natural Resource Committee meeting.

Flow Device Installation Initiative
- K. Smith provided an update on the beaver initiative, including inquiries into grant opportunities. Chris Bernier, VT Department of Fish and Wildlife, has been contacted about the initiative and is supportive. While this initiative does not clearly fit into most existing grant programs, there are some potential grants, where, if framed properly, grantors might consider providing funding. Additional inquiry is needed. BEEC could be a valuable partner in this program.

Invasives Collaborative
- K. Smith shared that the regional planning commissions (RPCs) received a letter from the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the House Agriculture and Forest Products Committee requesting that the RPCs convene informants to discuss the threats and management of invasive species. The Committee asked that K. Smith seek additional information from Representative Carolyn Partridge about the vision and intended outcomes of this initiative.
Draft ERAF 17.5% Guidance Document

- K. Smith reviewed the new rule amendment that outlines municipal requirements for receiving the state share through the Emergency Relief Assistance Fund, which took effect in October 2014. To receive the maximum amount of 17.5%, towns must either enroll in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System and adopt a bylaw that prohibits new structures in the Flood Hazard Area or Adopt River Corridor protection standards that meet ANR criteria. The Committee was supportive of any steps taken to curb development in river corridor areas and to mitigate existing development.

Update on recent projects/programs

- **Bees, Bats, and Habitats Forum**: The forum will be held on Friday, June 12 at 5:30pm.
- **Vermont Watershed Grant**: WRC has released an RFP to assess and develop a plan to remediate a portion of Adams Brook that was inappropriately bed armored following Irene, causing the stream to flow below grade.
- **High Meadows Fund Grant**: A review committee has reviewed the applications and made recommendations to the High Meadows Fund Board for a final decision, which should be made at the end of the month.

Other business

- **604b Grant**: The WRC has decided not to pursue the 604b grant for 2014 and 2015.
- **CT River Streambank Erosion Meeting**: Next week a meeting will be held to discuss erosion concerns in the Connecticut River caused by activities of FirstLight Power Resources. FRCOG is submitting a licensing complaint with FERC to address non-compliance issues.

Next meeting

- The next Natural Resources Committee meeting will be **Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 2:00pm** or as otherwise determined.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25pm

Respectfully submitted, Kim Smith