Natural Resources Committee  
Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at 2:00 pm  
In the WRC Conference Room  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

*Natural Resources Committee present:* Maggie Bartenhagen, Chair, Nick Bartenhagen, Lynette Hamilton, Munson Hicks, Jim Olivier, Andy Toepfer  
*Guest present:* Marie Caduto (VT ANR DEC)  
*Staff present:* Kim Smith, Andrew Nguyen (AmeriCorp)

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

Minutes

- The minutes of October 14, 2015 Natural Resources Committee were approved unanimously (motion by A. Toepfer, seconded by N. Bartenhagen)

Introductions

- With several new individuals present, attendees introduced themselves.

Vermont Clean Water Act

- K. Smith described the water quality initiative grant and the scope of activities, including educational programming for municipalities, town support on town planning and land use regulation documents, and support on tactical basin planning. K Smith also described the Vermont Clean Water Act’s associated municipal roads stormwater general permit, which will require that towns inventory, assess, and develop a plan to address water quality issues caused by roads and other infrastructure. There was concern that it could be difficult for some towns to complete the inventory due to limited computer savvy of some towns. It was shared that paper data sheets were available in addition to a newly created ap for recording road inventory data. It was shared that the Clean Water Act’s required agricultural practices are similar to the previous standards, except that they will no longer be voluntary. A committee member suggested that agriculture and road requirements should be presented together to municipalities. It was also recommended that non-municipal stakeholders also have opportunities to be appraised of the new regulations. It was requested that K. Smith keep the Committee updated on new legislation on forest and agriculture-related issues.

Draft Tactical Basin 11-13 Plan

- M. Caduto introduced the purpose, goals and scope of the State’s Tactical Basin Plans as compiling water quality data and assessing each river basin. The Basin 11-13 Plan identifies impaired/stressed surface waters and outlines 61 priority projects to protect and restore the region’s water resources with the goal of completing them within the plan’s 5-year cycle. There was discussion of a high priority project to reclassify waters from Class B to Class A(1) to provide
protection to surface waters that have excellent quality. Reclassification requires public support from affected towns as well as ANR before they can be approved by the Legislature. M. Caduto invited the committee to offer feedback on the draft Plan including any gaps in resources important to protect before November 30, 2015.

River Corridors
- K. Smith shared that VT ANR has released maps that define river corridor areas as required by recent river corridor legislation, which has been passed to protect these areas from development. The corridors have not been mapped for watersheds less than 2 square miles, which instead have a required 50 foot buffer from the top of bank. This creates a number of challenges and ambiguities for towns. The State is still working out the new requirements and how it will be implemented by towns. It was recommended the WRC assist towns by providing information to them as it becomes available. M. Caduto suggested that the Committee invite John Broker-Campbell to speak at a future meeting.

Wind Tour
- K. Smith reported that she had been in contact with Melissa Belcher from Meadows End about setting up tours at the Lempster and/or Sheffield sites and solicited interest from the members about attending. The Committee agreed that M. Belcher could coordinate the tour(s).

Update on recent projects/programs
- Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge draft conservation plan: One comment was received from an Executive Board member that the WRC should take a strong position in defense of the towns’ position. The comments were submitted on November 13.
- Flow Device Installation Initiative: A. Nguyen shared his research on several potential beaver initiative grant opportunities.
- VT Watershed Program grant: K. Smith reported that WRC was in the process of developing a grant application to conduct a public process in collaboration with Marie Caduto for the reclassification of excellent surface waters from Class B to Class A(1).
- Saxtons River Watershed Collaborative: The land management workshop held in October was successful.
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Initiative: The WRC held two Green Infrastructure workshops on October 14 and 22. This wraps up the Green Infrastructure grant project.

Other business
- None.

Next meeting
- The Natural Resources Committee decided not to meet in December unless time-sensitive matters arose in the meantime. Unless otherwise determined, the next Natural Resources Committee meeting will be Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 2:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:48pm

Respectfully submitted, Kim Smith