Natural Resources Committee  
Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 2:00 pm  
In the WRC Conference Room  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance  
*Natural Resources Committee present:* John Whitman, Bill Dunkel, Kevin Stine, Liisa Kissel, Andy Toepfer  
*Guests present:* Marie Caduto  
*Staff present:* Emily Davis

The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm without a quorum present, and led by Kevin Stine.

1. Minutes  
   - *Action:* The minutes of January 11, 2017 Natural Resources Committee were approved (motion by Bill Dunkel, second by Liisa Kissel). Without a quorum there was a motion by John Whitman to approve these minutes during the March 8, 2017 meeting.

2. Update on current projects:  
   - *The Gorman property:*  
     Still no news from new landowner. Status of this project is the same as it was last month, and continues to be unclear.
   - *Saxtons River Watershed Collaborative and Aquatic Nuisance Control grant:*  
     Emily Davis updated the committee on the status of this grant application, which was submitted February 8 by Eliza Rudegeair of the WCNRCD. Emily, Marion Major, and Eliza collaborated on the initial project proposal and description for the grant, which is to address Japanese knotweed in the Saxtons River watershed. They proposed this grant to the Saxtons River Watershed Collaborative meeting on Feb 1st, and they refined some of the project details together. The team is excited about continuing to fund projects for the SRWC.
   - *Adams Brook:*  
     Emily Davis told the committee that there are new complications in the Adams Brook bed armor restoration project because of a new ERP funding structure from the DEC. Marie Caduto then discussed that the project will likely be funded in the first round of funding in the spring (of the next fiscal year), rather than the second round of funding that remains for this year. This will likely not change the project timeline anyway.  
     Also, WRC staff has been trying to reach out to the landowners for access consent. This has been challenging in the past, and so another entrance option to the site from the road may need to be explored more seriously.
   - *High Meadows Fund Phase 2 and Green River watershed:*  
     Emily Davis talked about the ongoing conversations between the WRC staff and the arts partners in this Green River watershed collaborative project, which will hopefully be funded by the 2017 High Meadows Fund. The letter of intent for that grant was submitted this week. Also, Emily mentioned that the project partners were accepted to attend the Leahy Summit 2017 in March, and that she will be finalizing the details of the final group of people attending this summit to work on refining the project scope.

3. Project implementation for 2017/2018:
The NR committee spent some time going over the short list of prioritized projects from the Basin 11 tactical basin plan, and discussed how it would fit in with the new ERP funding structure that Marie C. explained. The state would like to fund “on-the-ground” projects, meaning projects that are identified and ready to go (as opposed to studies or scoping). So, the committee discussed the following Basin 11 projects:

- **Williams Dam**: Marie wants to wait on this, needs to work on the broader conservation with the towns.
- **Water quality monitoring**: Marie is working on getting the monitoring teams in place in the Basin (West, Williams, Saxtons, Sacketts, E. Putney Brook). This may also take some time.
- **Rock River reclassification**: New WQ standards from state may mean different implications of reclassification to landowners. Emily said she wanted to pursue this, and will draft up an explanation of implications to be used as a resource for the towns.
- **River corridor easements**: Was a big priority item in the TBP, and should be pursued

4. **VT Clean Water Act and per parcel fee**:
Emily Davis started the conversation by giving the committee a report on some of the detail of Beth Pearce’s proposed per parcel/impervious surface fee to fund Act 64 (VT’s Clean Water Act) efforts over a 20-year period. The committee discussed some potential implications to landowners of the proposed fee, but without any details of how the fee would be tiered or structured, all discussion was theoretical.

The committee will look forward to details worked out in the legislature. In the meantime, they decided it was a good idea to carry on the discussion in a longer, more focused meeting with the WRC so that they may be able to produce a position for when the fee moves through the legislature. Emily said she would pursue organizing that discussion.

5. **Water Quality project inventory and tracking update**:
Marie Caduto showed the committee a presentation on the ARK project tracking database that she has been working on, and the RPC’s will eventually also populate (once they have access). The comprehensive database is intended to document all clean water efforts, and show progress over time as per the state’s requirements. Eventually the database will be a very powerful and helpful tool, but the task to enter all the required data is formidable.

6. **Update on regional resource maps for energy planning**:
Emily Davis updated the committee on the status of the energy generation resource maps, which were discussed at length. Much of the data given to the RPC’s by VCGI has been fixed, but the WRC was still waiting for data to create solar resource maps. The WRC at this time wasn’t ready to create maps for the towns, but did encourage the towns to use the Energy Atlas tool on the VT Energy Dashboard. This allows anyone to go and see that state’s mapped constraint and raw resource potential layers.

- **Next meeting**: Wednesday, March 8, 2017 (second Wed. of the month) at 2:00pm, or as determined.

*Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.*

*Respectfully submitted, Emily Davis.*