Windham Regional Commission Natural Resources Committee Minutes
October 24, 2019

Members Present: Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, Andy Toepfer, Linda Hecker, Everett Wilson, Kevin Stine, Bill Dunkel, John Whitman

Absent: Lise Fortin, Susan Hammond, Lynette Hamilton

Staff present: Margo Ghia

Public: None.

Presenter: None.

1. Call to Order
   • Meeting called to order at 5:01 p.m.
   • Action: Minutes from the July 25, 2019 meeting were approved, with a motion by John Whitman, seconded by Linda Hecker. Motion passed with one abstention by Kevin Stine.

2. Introductions
   • Gabby introduced new Natural Resources Planner Margo Ghia to the committee.

3. Additions or Changes to the Agenda
   • Due to the timing of the request in relation to the committee’s meeting schedule, added request for a letter of support from the Green Mountain Conservancy for their application to the VHCB for Phase II of the Deer Run Preserve Project.

4 Emerald Ash Borer
   • A new positive identification of EAB has been found in Londonderry. Margo shared a map of the current infested zones in the State of Vermont. Several towns in the WRC zone are now listed in infested zones.
   • Andy suggested that an informational field trip to an infected site be arranged with a State Forester. The visit would be for committee members and a few regional stakeholders. The committee would like Margo to follow up on this possibility.
   • Linda gave background information on the process that the Guilford Conservation Commission used to do their inventory of Ash trees along public roads. They worked with the VT Community Forestry Program to do a presentation for the Conservation Commission, Road Crew, and Town Officials.
• It was very important to have town and road representatives as a part of the discussions. While the GCC did the work on the inventory, the other parties were aware of and supportive of the process.
• They received a small grant to purchase iPads. While they used them, they also found that iPhones work and many people have those.
• Margo brought up the idea of a Community Forum for towns to learn about EAB and their options for addressing it. A suggestion was presented that there should be a panel that highlight different ways that communities have addressed it so that participants can look at lots of different possibilities and can bring back options for their towns. Margo was asked to pursue this idea.
• A suggestion was made that a separate meeting be held on EAB for the Road Forman. They are in a unique situation in having to deal with EAB now and in the future and it would be good to address issues specifically related to their jobs and concerns. Margo was asked to see if EAB could be a topic at a road foreman’s meeting over the winter.
• Andy suggested that we become a clearing house for information on EAB for Towns. Maybe start with an informational handout with a list of resources that could be given to Towns and Conservation Commissions.
• A few questions came up over the course of the conversation about EAB:
  • Does a map exist that shows EAB infestations in the broader region and doesn’t stop at VT borders?
  • What is the State doing on State Roads (such as Route 100)?
  • What is the policy of the National Forest Service regarding EAB?
  • Who administered the Purple Traps detection survey?
• The committee recommended the following actions for EAB outreach:
  • Informational handout with EAB resources to give to towns and conservation commissions
  • Community Forum
  • Road Forman Meeting
  • Site visit to an infected area to learn more about EAB, recommendations, and guidelines

4. Letter of Support for Green Mountain Conservancy
• Margo presented the GMC’s proposal for Phase II of the Deer Run Preserve.
• Action: John made a motion to provide a letter of support to the GMC for their VHCB application. Andy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Update on the Tactical Basin Plan
• The new Basin 12 is almost ready for public review. WRC will be hosting a few community meetings to review the plan.
• The committee would like to learn about the plan and then review the plan at upcoming committee meetings.
• Margo shared that WRC recently submitted a work plan and budget for the upcoming year of Tactical Basin Planning. We are waiting to hear about a final agreement.

6. Upcoming events
• Staying Connected Initiative presented at the Full Commission Meeting, October 29 at 6pm
• Halloween Spooky-walk! GRWA hosting, Oct. 30 at 7pm
• Moonlit Beaver Hike. GRWA hosting, Nov. 3 at 5pm
7. Public Comment

- Gabby encourages members to submit agenda items before a meeting if they would like to discuss something.
- Kevin shared recent activities that Trout Unlimited has been involved with including some electro shocking of the Heather Brook (300 feet, 87 fish) and Saxtons River (500 feet, 4 fish) to record fish populations. They also gave testimony during a recent public comment period where Killington Ski area was looking to do an inter basin water transfer. It is happening, but they are required to draw less water from the streams.
- John mentioned that the State has a new guide out: Acceptable Management Practices for Logging Jobs in VT (AMPS). It is available on-line as a PDF document.
- The next committee date is on Thanksgiving and the December date is the day after Christmas. It was recommended a Doodle Poll go out to check for possible new dates.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm, with a motion by John and seconded by Bill.