Natural Resources Committee  
May 18, 2011 meeting  
Approved Minutes

**Attendance**
Commissioners: John Whitman, Jenna Pugliese, and Maggie Bartenhagen; Staff: John Bennett

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.  
The Chair noted that there was not a quorum present. Members in attendance agreed to continue with the Agenda and seek ratification of any votes at a subsequent Committee meeting.

**Minutes** - draft Minutes of April 20 meeting approved unanimously as presented.

**Video presentation**
The Committee viewed and discussed the video presentation Vermont’s Working Landscape: Keeping it Vital prepared and distributed by the VT Council on Rural Development.

**Reports**
The Chair reported on H.56, the energy bill, and potential implications (what?) for natural resources, and on legislative consideration of the Use Value Appraisal Program.

H.56 expanded/improved group net metering and introduced a simpler application process for small individual net metered system CPG approval. There were also efforts to unify across utility companies the way that net metered customers are paid for energy that they generate. It appears that the payments for excess energy generated may have been increased, but that wording was complicated and we'll perhaps have to wait until it has been digested by the utility companies to be able to understand the implications.

Legislative action regarding UVA was tabled until next year, but there was an amendment to a separate bill that created a mechanism for removal from the UVA program for properties that received certain permits. This new legislation came out of the blue at the last moment as a component of a bill that was not understood to be at all related to UVA and which did not receive the deliberative consideration that was going on in parallel for the UVA-specific legislation. Moreover, the legislated removal was described in terms such as "automatic" which seems to have given the UVA administration some unhappiness by suggesting that they have little or no basis for interpretation and consideration of specifics of individual cases.

**July meeting date change**
The Committee agreed to change the date of the July meeting from the 20th to the 13th.
**Blue Heron Hydro Scoping**
The Committee reviewed draft Comments on the FERC Scoping document, informed by staff attendance at FERC Environmental Site Review visits and FERC Scoping public meeting. The Committee suggested amendments 1) articulating support for renewable energy hydro projects, provided environmental impact concerns were adequately addressed and 2) noting that the WRC had filed Comments on both projects at previous stages in the FERC licensing process.

**Grant possibilities**
Staff reported on potential grant applications: by WRC to Deerfield Enhancement Fund for SGA update and Corridor Plan development on the North Branch Deerfield River and to state for § 604b pass through funds for an undeveloped shoreland GIS evaluation of the West River; and by NRCD for state Ecosystem Restoration Grant to remove bridge abutments from the Rock River.

**The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

John Bennett