Natural Resources Committee
September 19, 2012 meeting
Approved Minutes

Attendance
Commissioners: Maggie Bartenhagen, Nicholas Bartenhagen, John Whitman, Andy Toepfer, Mal Herbert, Lynette Hamilton, Steve Skibniowsky, Jolene Hamilton, Edie Mas, Jenna Pugliese by phone

Staff: Dinah Reed.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:07 P.M.

Minutes - Draft Minutes of the August meeting were approved as written.

Discussion about Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) on Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont

- John Whitman started the discussion by providing a summary of the purpose and history of the AMPs. Every forester and logger in Vermont is aware of the AMPs and has a copy. If you follow the standards set forth, and you get soils in the stream, you’re not held liable. But if you don’t follow the standards and cause negative impacts to the streams, you are held liable – and typically it is the landowner who is liable. Andy Toepfer also provided background information. The Committee discussed and questioned various shortcomings to the revised version to include issues involving; new recommendations on culvert size, seeding along buffers, punishment standards, watchdog and reporting of negative practices being the responsibility of neighbors, maintaining of water bars, usage of spill kits, and weak or non-existent definitions.

- A comment letter will be sent to Gary Sabourin with the Committee discussion points.

- The Committee commends the staff at VT Forest, Parks and Recreation for forming a stakeholder early in the planning process and holding three public meetings to review the Draft revisions before it becomes a Rule and comes to a public hearing.

- The Committee is grateful to have Rick White with VT Forest, Parks and Recreation attends the Conservation Summit Roundtable on Sept. 26 to explain the Revised AMPs to the public at that meeting.

- Jolene Hamilton of Windham County Natural Resource Conservation District talked about the Skiddcr Rental Program that they run -- that they can be rented on a monthly basis.
Discussion about Conservation Summit Roundtable Meeting on Sept. 26th.
- Extend invitation to Southern Windsor region.
- Committee divvied up contacts to call, to get the word out about the meeting.
- Mal Herbert volunteered to pick up treats at Green Mountain Orchard.
- Suggestion was made to get Bio’s of speakers for doing introductions

Forestry and Energy Topic – presented by John Whitman
- Last year Legislation passed Act 170, which was modified to include Forestry guidelines.
- Smart Meters was melded into the Energy Act.
- Head of Natural Resources and Energy was working in Biomass. Group was interested in carbon sequestration.
- May – new Chapter occurred in the Energy Bill – with no public hearings, and was signed into law.
- Forestry community is very upset about both the process and content -- that the Bill is unworkable. It will potentially reduce the demand for wood products.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dinah Reed