

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, March 18, 2021 – Zoom

Attendees: Jacques Couture, Carol Hickey, John Little, Keith Sampietro, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Dan Seeley, Jim MacCartney, Russ Ford, Ari Lattanzi, Lindsey Wight and Luke Briccetti

Welcome/introductions; call to order: Meeting called to order at 6:34pm.

Review of the February minutes: DS motioned to accept the; RF seconded; minutes were approved as written.

Snowshoe events: The Enosburg 3/6 event was held at the Brownway Trail. 5 attendees enjoyed an interested and detailed tour of the property and the incredible conservation success story from County Forester Nancy Patch. The Big Falls 3/13 event was led by Lindsey, as Jared (Orleans County Forester) had an unavoidable conflict and needed to reschedule. 13 people attended and enjoyed exploring the floodplain forest and the overlook. Jared will lead another tour at Big Falls on 3/27. Lindsey will let the Committee know if there are open spots.

Troy Covered Bridge: Lindsey and Ari drafted a letter to the Town of Troy in regards to the funding that we are offering for the covered bridge effort/investigation. Committee approves the letter; Lindsey will send it out with the check. The town is currently accepting bids for planning/feasibility.

Ideas to pursue?

Amphibian Road Crossing event(s) – North Branch Nature Center directs a volunteer citizen science project where volunteers census amphibians on warm rainy spring nights during migration along road ways. NBNC has capacity to support one more group this year, and now is the time. There are currently no “crossing” locations in our region. Would be great to partner with conservation commissions. There is a \$300 set-up fee that covers NBNC time to create maps, provide training, and resources. Our responsibility would be to garner volunteers to do an hour or two of assessment at some of the identified sites. Concerns: can be somewhat spontaneous, is in the rain. Liability and safety concerns – wear reflective vests, headlamps, cones, signs, get volunteers to sign waiver. We should also post PSAs about amphibian migration. WS motions to fund; JL seconds; all in favor. Two local conservation commissions will meet next week; committee members will ask if they’re interested in partnering. Ari will follow up with Zac from NBNC.

Vince Franke from Peregrine Productions is interested in producing short films that feature important cultural sites along the rivers – had initially inquired during our River Community Grants window, but the timeline at that point was too short. Lindsey will keep an ear out for funding to partner with him on this.

Interested intern: Studying community and public affairs, policy, humans and the environment; interested in community engagement. School requires 120 hours. Could utilize her skills for engaging Lowell to pitch adding that section for designation; town programming – developing something that could be passed on and utilized year after year; helping to amplify what W&S is and increase our community involvement. Could also update our website and highlight our priority actions; help communicate those out. Suggest \$1500 stipend for the 120 hours. CS motions to hire her for 120 hours/up to \$1500. WS seconds; all in favor. Lindsey and Ari will have a conversation/informal interview with her and then write a position description.

2021 Events:

Wild and Scenic Film Fest – virtual. People are getting “zoomed out”, and if we’re targeting a summer event, it will be harder to capture and audience in the summer. Virtual fest is easier if you’ve established this event (like VNRC has), but we haven’t reached that yet. Also: if people attend the VNRC event, will they feel they have seen it already? Costly – could use these funds to fill several buckets instead of just this one? Plus we don’t know what will happen with COVID. Suggestion that part of the allure of a film fest is the social aspect of it, it’s hard to get excited about watching at home. Let’s talk about it during the April meeting, when we may know more about COVID.

Solstice On the River – idea is to encourage people to get on the river, and to provide resources to enable people to do so. “choose your own adventure”. Element of competition – most liked photo, most trash picked up, biggest fish... Have a few stations/tents where people can get swag and a pamphlet of the activities. June 20th (Sunday) – book Kurt to do a mini Bugworks (morning in O County, afternoon in F County?). Keith will do Let’s Go Fishing demos. Please provide input to Ari about activities and locations – she’ll send out the link for the current planning documents.

River Explorers Trip will be first week of Aug. Let’s also offer day paddles; at least 5.

Paddle and Picnic? Let’s hold off until we know more – it’s easy to pull this established event together.

Montgomery River Clean-Up – Sept 11.

Sunday July 11th do a paddle clean-up, at multiple locations?

Other: please provide Ari and/or Lindsey with a biography, so we can post all our town reps on our website.

Upcoming Meetings: April 15 via zoom. May 20th in person outside? Montgomery Pavillion?

Wrap up and Adjourn: JL motions; DS seconds; meeting is adjourned at 8:15pm.