

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
Northfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of August 28, 2024

1. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:01 with Russ, Debbie, Jeremy and David in attendance.
2. Public Participation (scheduled): none
3. Minutes of the July 24, 2024 meeting were approved on a motion by Russ, 2nd by Jeremy. Unanimous.
4. Additions to agenda: Purchase of “no fire”, signs and RTP grant
5. Discussion items:
 - A. Night on the Common is 9-17 from 5:30-7:00. David will email members not present about attending. Maps of Town Forest could be available and orders for trees could be taken. Debbie will email VOREC group for additional volunteer help.
 - B. Friends of the Winooski received a grant from the Champlain Basin Program to assist NCC develop future clean water projects.
 - C. ARPA grant & youth trail project: The Select Board approved \$40,000 for youth trail projects at the school and trail improvements in the Town Forest. The SB would like support evenly distributed between school trails and TF trails. VYCC (VT youth conservation corps) is interested in potentially working with NCC on these projects. David met with Superintendent Fedders who supports and is grateful for the help restoring the school trails. The school may also reinstate the ECO program offered by the North Branch Nature Center.
 - D. Conservation Easement for Town Forest: Next steps
David has talked with the Trust for Public Land (Kate) and the VT land trust (Mead) about a conservation easement. Berlin CC may be interested in conserving land also. A working group consisting of Russ, David and Laura Hill Eubanks (Debbie is an alternate) exists but has not met. It's time to have this working group reconvene and potentially meet with Kate and Mead to discuss options. It may be possible to include NU in conservation discussions.
 - E. Update on Conservation for Northfield News:
David spoke to Kim Abare at the Northfield News. He feels quarterly updates are a reasonable goal. He will draft an update based on suggestions the group offered; Fall trail-work days on 10-5 and 10-12, Dates of hikes Russ will lead in the town forest and NU Shaw center, the youth trails program and a photo of the recent birding walk sponsored by the VOREC grant.

6. Updates

- A. Tree Grants: Ruth needs the number and type of trees for planting in the town forest. Russ will attend a Select Board meeting to inform them of this tree planting. Ruth is currently receiving requests from the community for trees to plant. We will create a priority list to follow to allocate trees.
- B. TFSC Update: The top priorities for this group in the coming year are to reroute the trail near Butternut Junction to avoid the vernal pool and to reroute the Lybrand trail that washed out with flooding. Russ suggests elevating the trail by 70-80 ft. to access an old road that has a reasonable grade. If trails are rerouted, they will be subject to the approval process for new trails. Colin Blackmun is organizing trail work days 2X per year. Dates coming up are 10-5 and 10-12. Fires have been held in Cheney field. "No fire" signs may help discourage fires if posted.
- C. Update on VOREC Summer Programming
The yoga hikes have been very popular and the September hike is full. The Southern VT Natural History session on, "whooo's that" was well attended with 60 participants, we are hoping to offer another hike with the bird diva in the Fall.

7. Other Business

- A. RTP (recreational trails program) grant opens in October. David emailed Tom Davis to let him know that NCC/TFSC is interested in making an application to support the goals identified for trail restoration.
- B. Russ would like approval to buy signs stating, "No Fires". On a motion by Jeremy, 2nd by Debbie, Russ is authorized to spend up to \$50 to procure signs stating, "no fires". Unanimous.
It was suggested that the fire problem be conveyed to the NU/Northfield task force.
- C. Fall Hikes Schedule:
Russ is planning on hikes to take place on:
9-14 or rain date 9-15 Kingston Rd. entrance to TF
9-21 and 9-28 leave from Medical Center
10-5 Scragg Mtn hike Waitsfield to Northfield involving car shuttle
10-19 Middlesex forest or ridgeline hike
Russ will be posting this schedule on FPF soon. Thank you, Russ!
- D. Boundary marking on the Dustin's Pasture land is planned for the Fall. Several volunteers have already agreed to help.
- E. Knotweed in Cheney field is of concern. This might be a focus for volunteer effort or align with replacement of the water storage tanks located there.

8. Adjournment at 7:23 by motion of Russ, 2nd by Jeremy. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Zuaro