

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Town Forest Stewardship Committee**  
**Minutes of October 17, 2023**

Meeting called to order at 6:02

I. Roll Call

All present with the exception of Blake

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Colin to approve the minutes of September 19, 2023, second by Russ. Motion carries 5-0-0

III. Public Participation (Scheduled)

None

IV.

a. New member:

Welcome Andrew Padilla, recently appointed by the Select Board

b. Shaw Center Update:

- Andrew is in the process of leaf blowing the Shaw trails and putting up colored blazes to better delineate the trails on the mountain, after which he'll bring those colors back to VOREC for inclusion in the trail map. Once trails on the front side are blazed trails on the Eastern slope of Paine, headed back towards Kingston will be blazed.
- Trail regulation/ethics signage is being put together by NU to be printed at 12" x 18", which Andrew will be posting at all entrances to the Shaw trail network. Also, they are producing signage to be mounted during training exercises alerting the public to training activities and that live fire is not a part of the activities.
- Over 300 students participated in FTX activities this past weekend. The approval process for future requests needs to be recomunicated with ROTC staff at NU. Communication should run through the director to a member of the TFSC and the Town Manager in one email.
- Andrew is actively dealing with removing unsanctioned trails at the Shaw.
- Andrew is considering submitting further VOREC grants to potentially fix Lybrand, create an easier way up the mountain, and rebuild the pump track.
- NU has submitted an application to FEMA to have Slate Ave rebuilt which has been approved pending an estimate to rebuild the trail to previous conditions. Andrew is working to determine whether drainage improvements can be a part of that project budget.
- Parking at the Shaw is still a potential project for this fall but coordinating with the Town Manager to determine whether permitting is needed has been difficult.
- Andrew is looking to post the front side of the Shaw as a Safety Zone to prevent shooting on the property and exploring the potential for posting the property as No Hunting in the future.

c. Wayfinding Signage, Allowable uses, E-Bikes

- Nelson and Ray provided the TFSC with some background information on the different classifications of E-Bikes, and potential pros and cons of allowing them on municipal lands.
- The Shaw Center is allowing Class 1 E-Bikes (no throttle, pedal assist, speed-limited to 20mph), which many users are already using, including for regular maintenance of Shaw trails by Andrew and work-study students.
- There are concerns around the mix of pedestrian and traditional cycles on the trails and motorized bikes and the potential interactions on the trail.

- There is already E-Bike traffic on Paine, likely of all types, throttled and pedal-assist.
- This conversation will need to continue throughout the winter and is not a decision to be taken lightly. Depending on the definition of "motorized" the TFSP would potentially need to be amended if E-Bikes were to be allowed on municipal land.

d. Town Forest Plan, Wildlife management considerations for Cheney

- Jeremy is still cataloguing recommendations within the State wildlife management recommendations and is having a conversation with one of the State's wildlife diversity biologists, hopefully on-site to determine the most suitable uses for Cheney from a conservation perspective.
- Additionally, Jeremy is looking into potential updates to the TFSP for larger land management considerations with respect to wildlife conservation.

e. Ski Trail proposal update

- Russ met with the state botanist to look at the Male Fern in the vicinity of the proposed ski trail. New areas were identified where ferns had not been seen previously.
- The botanist flagged the locations for the ferns, and specified that any activity needed to stay 20 feet away and should take place after mid-October to prevent any damage to the plants. Additionally, she provided us with a map specifying the locations that needed to be avoided.
- Joe Z was on site for the conversation and so he heard the instructions in-person.
- In addition to specifying work time, there will also be a limitation on the size of material that can be cut or removed (no greater than 5" DBH), and that a member of the TFSC needs to be present for the work.
- The town manager has the authority to approve the request. The NCC was informed of the conditions placed on approval at the last meeting and had no objections to them. With the conditions met, Jeremy will let Jeff know that approval should be granted for Joe to proceed.

f. VOREC grant update

- Another invasive pesticide application has been performed at the Hawk Watch, as well as girdling some of the remaining taller trees so that they will fall naturally over time.

V. Public Participation (Unscheduled)

None

VI. Other business

None

VII. Motion to adjourn by Colin, second by Russ, 5-0-0