

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
Minutes of July 15, 2025

I. ROLL CALL

Ginny, Russ, Bill, Jeremy, Andrew, Ray came late.

Sam Schonberg from the public

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 17, 2025

IV. AGENDA UPDATES OR ADDITIONS

V. UPDATES & DISCUSSION

a. Introduction of New Member: Bill Dell'Isola

b. Shaw Outdoor Center Update

Field past the paintball shed got mowed a few weeks ago.

Mowing scheduled for August for the rest of the property.

Possible mulching around the paintball field tbd

2 more weeks of summer programming

Rook week is 8/16

Jeremy and Andrew anticipate getting in front of some of the cadre before the school year gets going

c. Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) Work update

Jeremy gives update that VYCC is finished with the trail bypass. He says they built well defined drainage. Renaturalization efforts were made to conceal the old section. Possible plans to move the butternut tree sign. VYCC has started working on clearing the beaver pond vista view. With remaining funds, two benches and a sign will be put in at the beaver pond vista. VYCC will be directed back to Garvey to clean up some additional drainage. Total project work completed - tree work on Garvey Hill, butternut junction reroute, beaver pond vista, and drainage work on Garvey.

d. Cheney Field Parking

Ginny pointed out that we did not have an official vote on parking in Cheney Field after water tank project wraps up.

Mobility task force chair has requested to speak at the next NCC meeting

Jeremy gives the floor to Russ in order to discuss the impacts of parking in the field

Recap - study done by VOREC/Ridge and Rivers looking for possible spots for parking for the town forest

DB&K did the study. They determined that street parking nor parking in the field would be viable.

They did note that accessibility to the Town Forest was an issue.

Jeremy reminds us that our directive is to protect the field environment. He hopes that the field will be returned to its original state after the construction is done.

What happens if we add a parking lot to the field. How does this help a person with accessibility issues enjoy the town forest?

Do we have to make ADA compliant trails? Should we?

The road is not wide enough for two cars to pass.

There are already issues with people misusing the field to have campfires.

There are questions about how this would change the way Norwich uses the field.

Bill adds perspective - this would impact conservation values of the forest. There would be no going back after this structure is put in place, and a disruption to forest habitat blocks.

Bill asks how ongoing maintenance would be funded.

Public participation - Sam Schonberg - indigo bunting - this person tried to take their elderly mom up to see these nests in the field. They recognized that the logistical and financial costs would be prohibitive. They were not able to make it up there to see. Is it fair to have this resource that some residents cannot utilize?

There is legal parking on Byam with restrictions of 250 ft from the gate on the public road.

Ginny reminds us that we have a town forest without any parking and does not think this is fair or equitable.

Bill asks what the NCC thinks about this. NCC has informed the Select Board that they are not in favor.

The Select Board advised the citizen to discuss with the NCC. They are on the agenda for the NCC meeting this month.

Motion - TFSC's stance is no parking in the field. We recognize it's not fair that we have this public resource that is not accessible. We support ongoing discussions to improve accessibility in the Town Forest. Ray puts motion forward - Bill seconds - 3-0-2 - passes.

e. Town Forest Plan

Robert Nelson is trying to update the old Town Forest Plan. He has done an inventory and has what he needs to put the plan together. Having this plan will be critical to ongoing efforts for easements and funding. Last plan was put together in 2010. We will keep trying to get an update.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

Sam is interested in being involved in the disc golf course if the opportunity exists.

Andrew recaps the situation up till now. Andrew has an intern that may be working on this project. Andrew offers to connect with Sam via email.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion about Lybrand. Norwich is still pursuing FEMA funding.

Ray asks what the mechanism is to have more community trail maintenance and construction. Jeremy says we would need to do more homework on how this is working in other jurisdictions.

Future Agenda Items

Ongoing trail workdays.

List of projects for VYCC or just general project for community workdays.

- Mowing/weed eating
- Water bars
- Dustin's Pasture site walk
- Moving the Paine mtn mile markers
- On Clark there are some 6x6s that could be cleaned up or turned into a bridge
- Old signage inventory
- Clean up tree with barbed wire
- Hawk watch vista clearing for student volunteer day
- VYCC invasive control?

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Russ motions to adjourn - Ray 2nd - 5-0-0