

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
Northfield Town Forest Stewardship Committee
Minutes of March 19, 2024

- I. **ROLL CALL: All present**
- II. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.**
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 20, 2024 (approved 4-0-2)**
- IV. **UPDATES AND DISCUSSION**
 - a. **Membership Update:** Colin Blackmon was appointed to the committee at the previous select board meeting. Virginia Kunkel has submitted a letter of interest to join the committee and should be approved at the next select board meeting.
 - b. **Elect officers, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary**
 - **Chair:** Jeremy Whalen nominated by Russ, second by Nelson (5-0)
 - **Vice chair:** Russ Barrett nominated by Ray, second by Nelson (5-0)
 - **Secretary:** Ray Crowder nominated by Russ and second by Nelson (5-0)
 - c. **Shaw center update:**
 - Received quotes for July storm damage.
 - Received blazes for Norwich and Town property.
 - Andrew will flag Hawk Watch, Paine Mtn, Clark trails with plastic blazes.
 - NCC approved the purchase of the plastic blazes for TFSC trail marking and was from some of the funds raised at last year's Paine Mountain race hosted by Norwich cross country
 - Andrew is still working to establish rules for FTX on Norwich and Town land. Has sent plans to key people at Norwich.
 - Currently clearing trees from Norwich property
 - Norwich property is busy for the next several weeks with FTX trainings
 - Closing trails to bikes for mud season
 - Still chasing down local e-bike resource
 - Southbound trail on backside to be blazed.
 - Norwich has new ranger UTV.
 - Needs help with tree down near maintenance shed.
 - d. **Cheney field mowing schedule 2024:**
 - Time to advise town on desires for mowing.
 - 3-year plan.
 - TFSC needs map of mowing schedule.
 - Nelson may have a copy of map.

- Desire to limit spread of invasive species.
- Jeremy explains issues with mowing with tracked machine and need for rubber-tired machine. Using a different approach using zamboni approach could work for us as well.
- Committee requests advanced notice of mowing going forward.
- Russ to advise on contractor that does Dog River mowing.
- Nelson suggests skipping mowing this year to keep in line with the existing mowing plan.
 - Russ believes we may want to mow the first third this year, but does not think it is a big deal if it goes without this year.

e. Mud season closure

- Ray gives update on trail condition
 - Muddy on north facing slopes
 - Starting to dry out on south facing slopes
- Andrew is closing Norwich trails to MTB
- Cannot close Cheney due to being advertised for eclipse.
- Discussion on eclipse viewing areas. No totality expected in Cheney field.
- Better visibility at dog river park (20 seconds totality)
- High school will have (35 seconds totality)
- TFSC to advise on facts of best viewing areas
- Nelson proposes closing trails above Cheney field. Then phasing in access as the season comes in.
- Ray voices opposition to closing trails.
- Jeremy explains this is in line with the GMC guidance for trail access.
- Discussion around other localities approaches to trail management in the area.
- Nelson proposes recommending trail closure for all use above Cheney field until trails are decided to be dried out or May 30th.
 - Seconded Andrew/Ray
 - Passed unanimously.

f. HS trails working group

- Jeremy mentions getting a contractor (VYCC) out here and maybe could use ARPA funding.
- Asks about other projects for 2025
- Mention of water bars above beaver pond

g. E-Bike discussion

- No updates
- We want to have conversations this spring around allowing e-bike access in the area.
- April, June, or July are good months for having someone come talk about pros/cons of e-bikes
- Refresher on different classes of e-bikes
 - Would be good to have this again just before any of the April, June, or July meetings.

h. Solar eclipse viewing event in Cheney

- Discussed in mud season closure discussions.

i. Town Forest zoning designation

- NCC is asking
 - Designation of subdivision from 5 acres to 2 acres
 - Town Forest from low density residential to recreational designation or put in conservation easement.
- Jeremy gives update on happenings with Select Board directives for future zoning discussions.
- May be movement to push forward conservation easement.
- May be 2 open seats on planning commission

j. Joint NCC and TFSC meeting

- Scheduled for May
- Jeremy asks that we think of potential topics for future meetings

V. Public Participation (Unscheduled)

VI. Other Business

- April 17 10-1130a - Vermont Open Meeting for board members. Jeremy says to email him if interested.
- Nelson and Jeremy have been out to clear a trees
- Game of logging - training that may be covered by town
 - \$220 per person if we can get a group of 10
 - Ray, Nelson, Russ, Colin expressed interest in saw training
 - Nelson suggest reaching out to high school trail work group
 - Russ suggests road crews may be interested
- Colin to look into training with Forest Service

VII. Adjournment: 19:38