

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
Minutes of February 20, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm by Jeremy

I. ROLL CALL: Jeremy, Russ, Nelson, Ray and Andrew. Public: Colin Blackmon

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Approved December 5, 2023 (5-0) and January 16, 2024 (5-0)

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

IV. DISCUSSION

- a) Membership updates and 2024 expiring terms: Nelson Hoffman's term expires in March. Ken will send a letter in early March asking if he would like to be reappointed. Nelson indicated he would remain on the committee. Colin Blackmon attended tonight's meeting after expressing interest in joining the committee.
- b) Draft map for FTX training and approved areas: The committee has been creating a map to provide the Shaw Center Director and Town Manager with boundaries for FTX training. This map would expedite Norwich's approval of the use of the Town Forest for FTX training. Jeremy presented a draft trail map that designated training can't be conducted above the "pinch point" of the property lines just above the Paine Mountain/Lybrand trail split. Nelson commented that some guidelines, such as campfires and no shelter building, should still be set below that mark. Andrew felt that, additionally, Leave No Trace should be included. Russ asked if campfire building was part of the training exercise and if we should meet with an FTX training officer to discuss our concerns. Andrew was going to see if he could get an officer to join a future meeting.
- c) Discussed creating maps of the sensitive areas within the Town Forest using GIS. CVRP has the capability, and we will reach out to talk about overlying the maps from ANR mapping and the trail map. This document will be included in the Town Forest plan as an appendix.
- d) Summer/Fall trail running events: Jeremy recently met with Michael McGrane to discuss plans for upcoming summer/fall events. There will be two Norwich events on the Shaw Center property: a home cross country meet and Norwich will be hosting the DIII cross country championships. Michael also wants to host two public events on the Town Forest and Norwich trails. He will host a fall fun run again to raise trail maintenance funds for both properties. He also wants to bring back the Paine Mountain Trail Race to the summit. The TFSC supports both events and will pass on that there is proper insurance, good trail marking, and a trail cleanup after the event.
- e) High School trails group: the group composed of TFSC, NCC, and NHS students and staff met to discuss cleaning up and repairing the two cross-country trail loops (Varsity and JV). The hope is that it can be used for the high school to host a home meet again in October. The group is working to get a consult with VYCC to complete inventory work. The work with VYCC to get some work done. We also discussed hosting a community work day to do some cleanup.
- f) Discussed putting up a "No Camp fire sign" at an unauthorized reoccurring fire pit in Cheney Field. The Town Forest plan already has "Fires by permission only" signs up. This may be confusing to signage that indicates something else.
- g) Last year, the committee started discussing the use of E-Bikes on town trails. Discuss restarting that conversation and speaking with stakeholders that have approved E-Bike use and the impacts.
- h) Solar Eclipse viewing party: Jeremy attended a meeting to discuss a town-wide viewing party. The TFSC had suggested Cheney as one site but recommended another site within the town for accessibility. Concerns for Cheney are the large amounts of people in the field during potential mud season. Jeremy suggested putting up stakes and flagging to keep people on trail and with in a "viewing area" at the top of the field.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: 7:36 pm