

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of February 29, 2024**

1. Roll Call: David, Russ, Ruth, Jeremy, Debbie in attendance.
2. Members of the public: Taylor Litwin and Samuel Puddicomb, Friends of the Winooski joined the meeting to discuss the Lake Champlain Basin Program Grant. Friends of the Winooski could assist the NCC in applying for this grant. The West side of Northfield is a “disadvantaged” area qualifying us for this grant.

**Jeremy moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ruth to move forward with a Lake Champlain Basin Program grant with the help of Friends of the Winooski. Motion passed unanimously.**

Ideas and suggestions for this grant were: increase river access, focus on the upper streams feeding the Dog River, include Mad Dog Trout as a partner, include watershed education. Friends of the Winooski will send the RFP for the grant to us.

3. VOREC grant update: We did not receive another round of funding. The new maps will debut at town meeting. On-line websites such as Trailfinder and All Trails now feature the Paine Mountain Trails.
4. Approval of minutes of January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting: Jeremy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ruth. Unanimous.
5. Town Forest Stewardship Committee:

Jeremy reported that there are 2 vacancies on the committee at present. Colin Blackman is submitting a letter of intent for one position and the hope is to identify a High School student to fill the other vacancy.

The group is creating an FTX map to clearly show where training exercises are allowed. Fires have been a problem. An FTX officer was invited to join the next meeting to discuss these issues. The regional planning commission may be able to help create a GIS map.

Mike McCrane, the NU X-C coach, wants to hold the Division III championships on Paine Mtn with up to 14 teams participating. He also hopes to restart the Paine Mtn trail race and sponsor other community events.

Ray is reaching out to other communities to find out how they handle Class 1 e-bikes on their trails.

6. Town Select Board and Zoning Bylaws:

The Select Board returned the proposed zoning bylaws to the Planning commission and directed that the 5 acre minimum parcel size be reinstated. It is not clear who should work on the plan for town forest protection. NCC does have a working group to examine options for a conservation easement. Russ reported other town forests are designated as a forestry reserve, or conservation districts. It was suggested we reach out to Steve Fitzhugh, chair of the PC to discuss.

7. Solar Eclipse Viewing Events:

The Brown Public Library is planning an eclipse viewing event in Memorial Park. The TFSC is planning a viewing event for Cheney Field with a plan to minimize impact by routing people through a corridor up to the top of the hill where the tree line is. An informational table on the Common will have maps of the Town Forest for people to pick up to navigate to Cheney Field.

Glasses have been purchased to distribute to both groups.

8. NMHS Trails Work Group

David, Jeremy and Mo plan to meet with Judy Knapp again. They would like to have VYCC help inventory the trails and design a trail maintenance plan. Volunteers would initially do the work until a grant could be obtained in the future.

9. 2023 Tree Planting Grant: Is this grant closed out?

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Debbie proposed using up to \$500 from the NCC budget to purchase trail markers to enable Andrew Padilla to continue to blaze the trails in the Town Forest. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jeremy. Discussion took place. The x-c coach at NU did donate \$300 of the proceeds from the Paine Mtn trail race to the NCC to support trail maintenance. Vote unanimous to approve this motion.

11. SCHEDULING AND TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

During the months of march, April and May, NCC will meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month (not the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday). A joint meeting of the TFSC and the NCC will take place at the May meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Zuaro

Clerk, NCC