TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
Minutes of October 20, 2026

I. ROLL CALL Jeremy Whalen, Russ Barrett, Dylan Alsbach, Bill Dell'Isola, Ginny Kunkel, Ray Crowder

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 15, 2026

Passed 6-0-0

IV. AGENDA UPDATES OR ADDITIONS

Bill: Cooperative Invasive Species Management (CISMA) – Bill proposed working to form a Central VT CISMA collaborative to control invasive species. Knotweed is established in parts of Cheney Field, along with other invasive plants in the Town Forest. A CISMA group could help bring collaboration and control of invasives in central Vermont. Jeremy suggests it is something to bring up to the NCC, as the invasives go beyond the Town Forest and into the Northfield community.

Community resources are available to help reduce the costs of invasive species working groups. Is Northfield interested in forming a CISMA? To be a continued discussion with the NCC.

Ray: Flagging left on trails, presumably from the trail races a few weekends ago on Paine Mountain Trail. Jeremy will talk with Andrew

V. UPDATES & DISCUSSION

a. Shaw Center Update

Events Outlook

1. Trustees visiting the outdoor classroom 22 OCT 1-6p
   AROTC FTX 29 OCT- 1NOV
   MCW and Ranger FTC 6-8 NOV

Current Projects/Update

1. Still need a map of where the new trail signs go. Andrew will call Colin this week and see if he has it. I would like to have my students dig some holes before the snow, but it might end up being a next spring/summer project
The skill trail will be wrapped up in December. Wood and Wood is going into production for our signs, I may pre dig for the main sign soon
Leaf blowing trails front and backside and brush cutting some of the steeper spots on the ski trails.
Mowing on the Norwich side complete and I believe Cheney is completed to what the budget allowed

Future Projects

1. Drainage improvement for skill trail
Architecture has a design class where they are looking to build a modular pavilion in the field where the green trail crosses. More details to come
Bringing back a project I started 3 years ago, a public orienteering course on the mountain. I have someone working on the map this winter and will have a beginner course for scouts and classes and a longer for those wanting a longer course or to practice before military training.
Working with Tom and Mary in town to see if there is public funding for recreation things like a pavilion outside the SOC, signage for the disc golf course, tree work on the old upper and lower stage coach trails

Stats:

Trail Day in September had 3 of us. Worked on a small section of the orange trail.

Disc Golf September Impact Report: 19 rounds played, 11 unique players, 2 new players
Skills Trail Total Usage for September 952

b. Cheney Field Mowing

Mowing was completed at the beginning of October. This was the first time in three years the field was mowed, due to construction and other complications. Mowing was difficult in parts of the field, mainly the north side of the field. There was some established, larger brush that made that area difficult to mow.

TFSC will discuss future mowing plans over the winter in consideration of the Audubon report.

Thank you to the town for hiring out to mow the field. The town usually assists but didn't have the time this year to assist.

c. Cheney Field Pilot Day

Bill gave an update on the pilot day. On October 7, nine residents from Four Seasons were brought up to Cheney Field by members of the NCC, TFSC, and Walkability groups. The residents really enjoyed the hour or so they spent, many of whom had never been up there.

Possibly another day planned for next season

d. Northfield VMBA Chapter Update

No updates this month

e. Town Forest Easement Update

No updates this month

f. Audubon Assessment Report

TFSC to dig into this over the winter in Jan or Feb. A mowing plan is an expected deliverable.

g. Dustin's Pasture Boundary Marking

Russ, Ginny, and Ray Kunkel spent 4-5 hours marking the boundary. Not much left to do. The forest seems to be in good shape up there.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

None

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion about beaver pond and hawk watch vista clearing. Benches at Beaver Pond are showing age. The bench should be brought out and cared for over the winter.

Remaining ARPA funds: the town reached out about spending the remaining ARPA funds (approximately $2,200). Jeremy spoke with NCC Chair, Town Manager, Friends of the Winooski and VYCC. We all agreed using the remaining funds for the River Walk trail project would provide the best benefit to the town. Friends of the Winooski had secured funds to hire VYCC, the town funds will help provide an additional 2-3 days' worth of work on this project next spring.

The Dark Sky project will speak to the NCC during the December 9th meeting.

The TFSC will not meet in December 2026 due to the upcoming holiday.

The TFSC meetings will be virtual going forward throughout the winter months

The TFSC remembers Ruth Rutenberg of the NCC and all the conservation work, including the many tree grants and plantings she coordinated throughout town. She will be missed.

VIII. ADJOURN

Called at 1857 - 6-0-0