



Randolph Community Forest

Sustainable forestry & traditional uses on 10,000 acres in Randolph, NH

Date: September 6, 2023

Location: Randolph Town Hall

Members Present: Mark Kelley, Laura Brockett, Nate Reid, Tim Mather, and David Willcox

Guests Present: Michelle Cormier, David DeGruttola from LandVest, Jeremiah Hawkins, Haven Neal, Joe Homer, and Shelli Fortin, Minutes

Mark Kelley called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

David Willcox was the alternate filling in for Walter Graff, who was absent.

I. Meeting Minutes

On a motion by David Willcox, seconded by Tim Mather, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 2023 meeting.

II. John Scarinza Memorial Ideas

Mark Kelley moved Item VII to the start of the meeting, as members of the Coos County Conservation Commission were in attendance to discuss ideas for the memorial for John Scarinza. A bench has already been installed in memory of John Scarinza. Laura Brockett advised that she met with Kris von Dohrmann and walked the area across the street from the Farrar Farm. This is a birding hotspot, and an educational area or kiosk could be created here. Joe Homer noted that there is a rail trail from West Lebanon to Concord which has signs along the trail explaining the history of the area. Something like this could be added to the list of things to consider here, especially as rail trails become more popular. Haven Neal asked if the Forest Commission has put together a plan and was advised that the discussion is ongoing, and the hope is to have a plan in place for next season. Mr. Homer and Mr. Neal advised that the Coos Conservation Commission will discuss the ideas at their meeting next week, and they are amenable to helping with funding and time. Mr. Homer noted that they have leftover bulbs that could be donated for landscaping. Michele Cormier asked if

the bulbs were native to the area and was advised that the list is available on their website.

David DeGruttola asked if the Coos County Commission would be willing to help with the removal of Japanese Knotweed, and they advised they could provide some expertise. This would be a multi-year process. Mr. DeGruttola advised that it is creeping toward the wetlands in the area.

Laura Brockett advised that she would be the go-between for communication between the groups for the memorial ideas. Ms. Brockett can participate via Zoom in the Coos County meetings.

III. Mowing on RCF Update

A. Brian Lamarre

Mark Kelley advised that he spoke with Brian Lamarre, who will be beginning the mowing process. Mr. Lamarre did submit an invoice for the mowing of the Farrar Farm.

B. Leo "Chuck" Jellison

Mark Kelley advised that Mr. Jellison won't begin until mid- to late-September.

C. Brad Waterman

Mark Kelley advised that Mr. Waterman is willing to do some small projects, such as hauling away the yurt and couch, along with work at the sign area near the Pond of Safety. Mr. Waterman has a walk behind DR mower that would be good for this area. Tim Mather agreed to show him where the trail is.

Michele Cormier advised that the Berry's asked about mowing to maintain the cross-country ski trails on the property donated to the Town Forest, and Mark Kelley advised this would be done.

IV. Financial Review

A. Invoices Received

Mark Kelley advised that he believes the invoice received from Brian Lamarre, in the amount of \$1,748, was already paid. Michele Cormier advised she would leave Linda Dupont a note to check on this. An invoice was received from Drummond Woodsum for legal work in the amount of \$1,130.50. These invoices were signed.

B. Payments Received

A check was received for fuel chips from the winter timber sale in the amount of \$108.28.

Mark Kelley advised that a check from NRCS for \$206,760 was received by the Randolph Foundation. The Forest Commission will apply for a formal grant from the Foundation, so that they can issue the check.

V. Forester's Report

A. Pond of Safety Bridge Project

David DeGruttola submitted an invoice for JML for the bridge work in the amount of \$125,700. The original quote was for \$125,000, and the additional \$700 is for five concrete blocks for the installation. Mr. DeGruttola advised that he also received the invoice from Dirigo for the bridges, which included an additional \$5,800 that was not in the original bid for rubber mats and adhesive. Mr. DeGruttola is drafting a memo to Dirigo, as he does not feel the town should have to pay this. Mr. DeGruttola will request a meeting with Dirigo in reference to the additional charges and concerns about the delivery of the bridges. Mr. DeGruttola noted that JML incurred extra costs for shuttling, and if there is a rebate from Dirigo, they could consider passing this on to JML.

B. Budget Review

C. Other Business

David DeGruttola advised that he met with NHDOT last Thursday to look at the two sites being considered for a wildlife crossing. NHDOT is leaning toward the Farrar tract. Mr. DeGruttola explained the significance of the birding area and that they do not want to compromise that. This is also a maple tap area, which they would not want to disturb. NHDOT would have to go into the woods about 100 feet for grading. It was suggested that the crossing be turned, so the grading would go toward the meadow instead of the woods. The project would also require patch cuts in the woods to attract wildlife, which would affect the maple tap lease. The other area being considered, near Bowman, would require the road to be raised 12 feet to allow for the crossing. David Willcox asked if alternate methods of preventing accidents were being considered, such as lighting. Mr. DeGruttola also advised that when they applied for the stream crossing permit, it was noted that there have been martin tracks in the area, which is a threatened or endangered species.

VI. Backcountry Ski Area Discussion

Jeremiah Hawkins was in attendance for the discussion about the management of the glades. Mr. Hawkins advised that he has talked to people in and out of town who would be interested in an informal board to manage the glade locally. Mark Kelley advised that they will be inviting Tyler Ray from GBA to the October meeting to review the agreement and discuss concerns. David Willcox noted

that GBA has done what has been asked, such as addressing issues with parking and the volume of traffic, and the MOU states that a 6-month notice is required if either side wants to pull out of the agreement. The question is whether the GBA model is consistent with the ethic of the Town. It was suggested that GBA continue this year and the Planning Board hold a public hearing in the spring to get input from the townspeople. Michele Cormier noted that it is reasonable to review contracts on a regular basis. Tim Mather will bring this information to the Planning Board at their meeting on September 7. Nate Reid noted that even if GBA was not managing the glades, that may not stop any advertising. The option of closing the glades for a couple years was mentioned, however they cannot stop people from using the forest. David DeGruttola mentioned that even if you change the group managing the area, it may not change the volume of people using it. It was noted that no matter who manages the glades, it will need to be an organization with some sort of structure.

VII. Third Stewardship Plan - update

David DeGruttola advised that once the stewardship plan is complete and the Forest Commission looks it over, it will go to the Planning Board for a Public Hearing. Then it will be sent to Forests and Lands for approval from the State. It must be submitted to the State by December 31. They have the grid design and layout completed, but due to a new inventory program, the plan has stalled a bit. Mr. DeGruttola advised that it should be complete in two months.

Mark Kelley asked about property behind Cote's new development which is 400-425 acres, and what the timber capital value would be. Mr. DeGruttola advised he would not be comfortable putting a value on the property, as the size, location, and timber are all components of the overall value. Mr. DeGruttola will speak with Haven Neal about the property.

Mark Kelley advised that the July bill from LandVest was received, but not printed. The Commission approved the amount of \$8,830.10, which is at the new rate, but they were not able to sign the invoice as there was no printed copy.

VIII. Other Business

A. Alternate Candidates

B. Webpage Updates

Laura Brockett advised that information about LandVest will need to be added. Information on backcountry skiing will also be updated.

C. Signs – Update

Laura Brockett advised that she has attempted to contact George at the AMC about the signs and has been unable to reach him. Mark Kelley will attempt to contact him. They will come up with a list of signs needed. It was suggested that a sign be placed on the Pond of Safety Road stating that no ATV's are allowed.

IX. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

The Board discussed the time for the meetings and decided to change the time to 6:30 pm instead of 7 pm. This will be posted on the agenda, and it was suggested that this also be included in the Blizzard.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Town Hall.