



# Randolph Community Forest

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

**Date:** November 6, 2024

**Location:** Randolph Town Hall

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

**Guests Present:** David DeGruttola from LandVest, Jeremiah Hawkins, and Shelli Fortin, Minutes

Mark Kelley called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

David Willcox, alternate member, was appointed to sit in for Walter Graff, who was absent.

- I. Review Minutes of October Meeting  
On a motion by Laura Brockett, seconded by David Willcox, the Commission voted to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2024, meeting as presented.
- II. Financial Review
  - A. Invoices Received  
Four invoices were received. Two from Landvest: one invoice from June in the amount of \$784.69 for monthly work, and one from September in the amount of \$5975.50, which includes overseeing the road work. An invoice was received for mowing from Chuck Jellison in the amount of \$2,400. Mark Kelley advised that an invoice was also received from Brian Lamarre for mowing, however the costs have gone up significantly and he will discuss this with him before approving it for payment.
  - B. Payments Received  
A payment of \$840.00 was received from Landvest for Bowman Treasure.
  - C. Financial Report  
Mark Kelley advised they will review this during the budget discussion.

III. Planning Board Article 19 Recommended Revisions

Tim Mather advised that the proposed changes will be brought to Town Meeting this year, and will include a provision that the Chair of the Randolph Community Forest Commission will not also hold the position of Planning Board Chair, and that no Activity Manger will hold the position of Chair of the Town Forest Committee. The other proposed change is the date for the budget for the Town Forest will be submitted on or before January 5, or before the Town's required budget hearing. Mark Kelley noted that he would like to see the Committee approve the budget at the December meeting, so that the Planning Board can hold a public hearing in January.

Tim Mather also advised that the Planning Board discussed the tax payments. Mark Kelley advised that they have paid three years of bills this year, which amounts to about \$9,000 per year for Jefferson, Gorham, and Randolph.

Tim Mather asked about the agreements with Activity Managers and was advised that June Hammond Rowan has the RMC agreement to review. Mark Kelly advised that the snowmobile club is not well organized, but this agreement should be simple. Two gates will be installed on Bowman Road, one to the left and one to the right, which will allow access for the grooming equipment for the snowmobile club. David Degruttola advised that he will work on the Maple Tap Lease, combining the original agreement with the two addendums into a single new contract, and updating the maps.

IV. Backcountry Skiing – Update

Jeremiah Hawkins was in attendance, and Mark Kelley noted that nothing has been updated concerning backcountry skiing. A public records request was made by Christian Eaton for any emails, discussion, or minutes relative to the glades. Mr. Hawkins noted that Mr. Eaton questioned how Randolph could close the area, and Tim Mather noted that the Community Forest is for the community, it is not National Forest. David Willcox noted that the easement requires the land to be open to the public, however they only have to provide access, not parking. Mr. Hawkins advised that they held a maintenance day, which went well, and they found the missing litter. Mr. Hawkins recommended a sign at the beginning of Randolph Hill Road notifying skiers that the parking area is closed.

V. Forester's Report

David DeGruttola advised that five loads were shipped from the salvage cut before the books closed in October, and this is what the check was for that was

just received. This includes salvage from the Farrar tract. Mr. DeGruttola noted that the work on the motor that broke down was covered by warranty.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that Clint Savage contacted him to see where they would be working this winter, and he was advised that they would be off of Bowman Road, and will be taking a break on the Pond of Safety Road.

Mr. Degruttola advised that he was contacted by Jacob DeBow, the Wildlife Biologist for NH Fish & Game, concerning the wildlife opening on the Potter tract. It is recommended that the opening be 5-7 acres in size, and that they mow the center every year and the edges every three years. This will provide different habitat for different species, including sedges for pollinators.

Mr. Degruttola also advised that he will be getting contact information for someone to help with the eradication of Japanese Knotweed on the Farrar Tract.

Mr. Degruttola noted that they are continuing the marking and layout of the current timber harvest.

Mark Kelley advised that he was contact by a dog sled racer, George Cook, who would like to plan a race this year. Mr. Degruttola noted that if it is on the weekend, crews will not be working. Tim Mather suggested that the race be advertised on the website or in the Mountain View, as people in the community may be interested in watching. It was also suggested that information about the parking area being closed this winter, as a result of the public meeting, also be sent out in the Blizzard so that residents are aware.

#### VI. 2025 Budget Process

Mark Kelley reviewed the proposed 2025 Randolph Community Forest budget, starting with the Income accounts. Kelley noted that due to the weather, the actual income received for Forest Product Sales was \$99,000 rather than the \$115,500 budgeted. The 2025 budget is estimated at \$75,000 since they are doing a smaller job. David DeGruttola noted that they are allowed to cut 3,600 cords annually, and that sawlog prices are good and stable. Pulp prices remain low. If the price of oil goes up, they can also try to push into the firewood market. Maple Lease Income is budgeted at \$31,000, for a total Income line of \$166,000.

David DeGruttola proposed adding \$4,000 to the Grants and Gifts budget, as there may be a grant available from NH Fish & Game to assist with the cost of

the wildlife opening. The Town has received funds in the past from this grant program. It was also suggested that Kelly Eggleston at NRCS be contacted to see if they have any funds available to assist with this project.

In reviewing the Expense accounts, David DeGruttola explained what Timber Sale Administration and Timber Sale Layout cover for expenses. Road Maintenance will be used to fix culverts at the end of Randolph Hill Road and on Jimtown Road. The bridge on the Shankar property was discussed, and it was noted this may be part of the snowmobile system. It was noted that Road Maintenance has not been billed for the work done by JML yet. The total Forest Products Expenses is budgeted at \$47,000 for next year, up from \$41,300 this year.

Legal Expenses is budgeted at \$2,000.

For the General Maintenance Budget, Coop Road Forest Service, which is the Pond of Safety Road, is budgeted at \$10,000. Boundary Line Maintenance was over budget this year, but they have caught up with the boundary line work and will begin maintenance on the transects. Parking Lot Maintenance is budgeted at \$1,000, down from \$5,000 last year. Gates is budgeted at \$12,000 for the gates needed on Bowman Road. A gate is also needed on the Farrar tract at the gravel pit. Brush Cutting is budgeted at \$20,000, but this may be able to be adjusted down when we see what this year's budget is. It was questioned whether this needs to be done yearly, and it was noted it depends on the area. The total General Maintenance is budgeted at \$50,000.

Nothing is budgeted for the Farrar Farm Site 4400 line. It was noted that the future of this building is under consideration and an estimate for repairs has been requested.

Stewardship is budgeted at \$10,000 which includes a \$7,500 installment, the second of four payments. It was noted that this may not need to be budgeted at \$10,000, however David DeGruttola advised they may want to keep this line at \$10,000, in case any amendments are needed.

Education and Research is budgeted at \$3,000, which includes Forest Day. Web Maintenance is budgeted at \$1,000. Nothing was budgeted for Small Grants, however money could be moved in the budget if needed. The 4440 line for Farrar Farm Site is budgeted at \$5000 for the Japanese Knotweed eradication. Habitat Planning is budgeted at \$2,000 and will include expenses for the road crossing. Habitat Improvement is budgeted at \$30,000 and includes the wildlife

opening and scarification for softwood seeds. It was suggested that they mow the log landings to add to wildlife openings. The biggest cost of the openings is stumping. David DeGruttola suggested chipping some of the limbs to get it out of the way.

Grant Writing is budgeted at \$1,000, Mapping at \$2,500, and Meetings and Consultants at \$10,000.

Trail Construction and Trail Maintenance are budgeted at \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively. The RCF Commission pays the cost of construction and maintenance for the trails that it has requested the RMC build, and all others are the responsibility of the RMC. It was suggested that the Commission could help the RCF with any trail issues that they cannot handle on their own. Conservation Easement Monitoring is budgeted at \$2,000. Payments in Lieu of Taxes is budgeted at \$10,000 and includes approximately \$1,000 to Jefferson, \$100 to Gorham, and \$7,000 to Randolph. This number should be increased to include the Timber Tax. David DeGruttola advised he can generate the number for the Selectman, and suggested it should be increased by \$7,500.

Mark Kelley advised he will update the proposed budget for the December meeting.

VII. Other

Mark Kelley shared the current Randolph Community Forest Interpretive Trail brochure, and asked if they should create a task force to review this and make suggestions. Kelley questioned whether the brochure should be reprinted, or if the trail should be continued. It was noted that only negative feedback about the trail has been received, as it needs to be maintained.

VIII. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm by general consensus.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Town Hall.