



Randolph Community Forest

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

Date: October 2, 2024

Location: Randolph Town Hall

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

Guests Present: June Hammond Rowan, Planning Board Chair, David DeGruttola from LandVest, Jeremiah Hawkins, Brad Meiklejohn, and Shelli Fortin, Minutes

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

I. Northern Forest Center

Julie Renaud Evans of the Northern Forest Center provided a copy of their annual report to members. Ms. Evans advised that the Northern Forest Center proved support to forest based businesses, outdoor recreation, and assists towns with the stewardship of town owned land.

Ms. Evans advised that she is working on a project to connect members of seven community forests, which encompass approximately 30,000 acres of land. Communities invited to participate include Errol, Milan, Gorham, Randolph, Bethel, Woodstock, and Rumford. The first meeting will be on October 22, 2024, at 4:30 pm, at the Town and Country Inn in Shelburne. This meeting will be a chance for members to meet each other and share basic information about each of the town forests. They are hoping to plan another meeting in January to discuss climate resiliency and how the community forest plays a role in community resilience. In May they are hoping to visit some of the community forests. This is an opportunity to learn collaboratively.

Ms. Evans noted that there is about 400,000 acres of town owned land between NH, VT, and ME.

David Willcox asked about the definition of a town forest, as Shelburne was not included. It was noted that the land in Shelburne is not town owned or

managed, however Ms. Evans will double check this as Mr. Willcox stated the Town of Shelburne does participate in the management of the Riverlands.

The composition of the various town forests was discussed, noting the different stands and ages, along with different soil types. When asked about a name for the collaborative group, Ms. Evans stated that she had a few ideas, but nothing had been chosen yet. Ms. Evans will send an email to members of the Commission with information about the meeting, so that they can RSVP.

II. Review Minutes of March Meeting

On a motion by Laura Brockett, seconded by Tim Mather, the Commission voted to approve the minutes of the September 4, 2024, meeting as presented.

III. Financial Review

A. Invoices Received

Three invoices were received. One from Drummond Woodsum for legal consultation in the amount of \$50.96. One from Elise Lawson of Watershed to Wildlife for the iNaturalist program in the amount of \$675.00. One invoice from Landvest in the amount of \$561.01 for monthly work.

B. Payments Received

There were no payments received.

C. Financial Report

Mark Kelley noted that they had budgeted \$136,000 for expenses, and have spent \$42,000 so far. The total of both accounts is currently \$485,000. Mr. Kelley suggested that the amount held in the grants and gifts accounts, \$282,024.25, be invested so that more interest can be earned.

On a motion by David Willcox, seconded by Laura Brockett, the Commission voted unanimously to invest the amount in the Grants and Gifts account, so as to earn a better interest rate.

IV. Backcountry Skiing Update

June Hammond Rowan advised that she received a call from the new Granite Backcountry Alliance director, who advised that the Crescent glades have been removed from their website. The Commission asked where questions concerning the glades should be addressed, and it was decided the Town Hall, and Linda should be made aware of the information. Laura Brockett suggested that this information be sent out to residents in the Mountain View Blizzard.

The Commission discussed plowing the parking area this year. Laura Brockett noted that some residents will be upset if the lot is closed, as the parking area is used for snowshoeing and backcountry skiing. Options for residents were discussed. Jeremiah Hawkins suggested the option of parking passes, and clearing one section of the lot for use.

On a motion by Laura Brockett, seconded by Tim Mather, the Commission voted unanimously to close the parking lot at the glades this winter.

Signs were discussed and Jeremiah Hawkins will send a draft to the group. It was suggested that a sign be placed at the beginning of Randolph Hill Road stating that the parking area is closed.

Jeremiah Hawkins noted that a small group will be doing some maintenance at the glades. Mr. Hawkins asked about management of the glades, and Mark Kelley advised that there will be no activity manager this year, and they will have to do an RFP for next year. The Randolph Society for the Advancement of Backcountry Skiing would be welcome to submit an RFP at that time.

V. Forester's Report

David DeGruttola advised that the road work was completed, and came in under budget. Mr. DeGruttola will have an invoice from JML for \$18,867.19 for the Commission once it has been reviewed. Mark Kelley asked about the washout on Jimtown Road, and it was noted that this was not done.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that the gate at Bowman was moved, which will allow for more parking.

Mr. Degruttola advised that they equipment has arrived for the salvage work on the Farrar tract. They should received a stumpage check in December for this.

Mr. Degruttola advised that he will work on identifying an area to plan for a cut that can be finished in one winter.

The log landings being used for wildlife openings was suggested. Mr. DeGruttola will look at this.

It was noted that the survey company has been working on Route 2 the last few days doing work for the Wildlife Crossing.

Mark Kelley noted that he was contacted by an abutter who has land along Ingerson Road in Jefferson, who gets water from a well point off of Forest Commission land on the back side of their home. After discussion, the Commission agreed that giving water rights to the land would be the best way to handle the issue. The town attorney will be contacted for guidance. Any issues with the well would be the responsibility of the abutter, and not the town.

VI. 2025 Budget Process

Mark Kelley suggested that the budget be discussed at the November meeting, so that it can be sent to the December Planning Board meeting. This will give time for the Planning Board to hold their public hearing in January, and submit the budget before the Town Meeting. Mark Kelley passed out copies of the budget for the members to review.

A map of planned projects was distributed to members. The Commission reviewed projects, and noted some are still a work in progress. The wildlife opening on the Potter tract was discussed, and David DeGruttola advised he is planning to go out with NH Fish and Game this fall to get approval. This would allow them to plan to cut this winter, which will generate revenue to pay for the cost of removing the stumps. Knotweed control will be prioritized for next year.

When asked about the culvert that was overflowing, Mark Kelley advised they were going to give it one more winter to see if it is a problem again. It was noted that this road is used infrequently for a group of water users to test the water.

June Hammond Rowan noted that the Planning Board is looking at amendments to the Land Use Ordinance, including the budget process for the Forest Commission. Ms. Hammond Rowan also suggested that the Planning Board Chair not be allowed to be the Forest Commission Chair, and that Activity Managers also not be allowed to be the Chair of the Forest Commission.

The Fuller lease was discussed, as there is no signed copy available. This will be re-done, and the Planning Board also needs to approve it. David DeGruttola advised he has the original and the addendums and will rewrite it for the Commission's review. The agreement with RMC was also discussed, as there are no rates stated for the trails that they are commissioned to maintain, which include Crystal Mine and Rollo Falls. Mark Kelley suggested that they review

one agreement per month. Copies of the agreements will be sent to members for review. The Fuller lease will be reviewed first at the November meeting.

VII. Other

Mark Kelley advised that Ben Phinney send a note about a woman who is available to speak in September of 2025 about old growth forests.

Mark Kelley advised that Brochu has several trees available to buy, and it was suggested they wait until spring to do this. A water bladder can also be purchased to water the tree. It was suggested that a student working on their Capstone project for GHS might be interested in helping with this project. The trees will be planted in memory of Roberta Arbree.

It was noted that Jennifer Scarinza is now in charge of Project Learning Tree for the Timberland Owner Association.

Brad Meiklejohn updated the Commission on the proposed Wildlife Crossing.

VIII. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:19 pm by general consensus.

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