



Randolph Community Forest

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

- Date:** January 8, 2025
- Location:** Randolph Town Hall
- Members Present:** Mark Kelley, Laura Brockett, Tim Mather, and David Willcox
- Guests Present:** David DeGruttola from LandVest, Jeremiah Hawkins, Chris 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 December Meeting
On a motion by Laura Brockett, seconded by Tim Mather, the Commission voted to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2024, meeting as presented.
- II. Financial Review
 - A. Invoices Received
Four invoices were received. Two from Landvest: one invoice from December in the amount of \$1,629.50 for monthly work, and one for the second installment on the Stewardship Plan for \$7,500. An invoice was received from White Mountain Lumber for \$49.63 for hardware for the signs. An invoice was received from Drummond Woodsum for legal work on the Well Easement Agreement with the Ashley's in the amount of \$556.64. The Forest Commission will be reimbursed for the cost of the agreement by Mr. Ashley.
 - B. Payments Received
Two checks were received from Landvest in the amounts of \$4,218.28 and \$5,308.14 for stumps.
 - C. Financial Report

Mark Kelley advised that this year they were \$35,000 below budget, due to some work not being done that was planned. However, they did pay the taxes that were in arrears.

Kelley advised that the 2025 Forest Commission Budget was approved by the Planning Board and he will get it to Linda for the Town Report.

Kelley advised that the end of year balance in the Revolving Fund was \$150,000, and the Gifts and Grants account has a balance of \$282,000.

III. Town Report RFC Report

Mark Kelley will draft a report to send to committee members, who are welcomed to add to it. Kelley advised he will get this to Linda by next weekend for the Town Report.

IV. 2025 Major Project Planning

A. Wildlife Transect Clearing

Elise Lawson will be contacted to see what her preference is on time, then they will be able to reach out the person who will do the work to get a contract drafted.

Mark Kelley advised that they will try to get the wildlife biologist from NH Fish and Game to come to the next meeting to discuss things they can plan in the forest.

A question was asked about the Wildlife Crossing, and if this is still being considered. David Willcox advised that he heard that the federal grants were awarded to locations in Maine and Massachusetts as part of the pilot program. Mark Kelley will reach out to the committee that was working on this to check the status.

David DeGruttola noted that he has spoken with Jacob DeBow, who is willing to come speak with the Forest Commission about the beaver issue, and possibly relocating them to another area.

B. Two Gates

Mark Kelley advised they are planning to have two gates built. One for immediate use, and one to have for future use. David DeGruttola advised that he will get estimates for these for the next meeting.

Mark Kelley asked about the washouts on the road to the warming hut, and Mr. DeGruttola advised that this should be the responsibility of the snowmobile club. Kelley suggested that they have their annual meeting with the snowmobile club in March to discuss the work that needs to be done.

C. Knotweed Control at Farrar Farm

This work is planned for early spring when it begins to sprout. Joel White of Lancaster will be contacted to see if he is available, as he was recently licensed to do this work. David DeGruttola advised that a licensed contractor should be used for work on the Community Forest.

D. Potter Tract – Bronto Work and Scarification Project

David DeGruttola advised that he is waiting on a call back in reference to this work. It is planned for both the right-of-way and the Potter tract. Mr. DeGruttola advised that he will meet with NH Fish and Game to choose the location for the wildlife opening.

E. Jimtown Logging Road

David DeGruttola advised that as soon as the snow is off the ground, they can assess what needs to be done and where, which will allow them to estimate a project cost. Mark Kelley noted that they will also need to check the culvert again on the road to the reservoir. Mr. DeGruttola advised that they may be able to use cement barriers and timber mats in this area, or a stone ford crossing with riprap. Mr. DeGruttola asked Tim Mather if a stone ford crossing would be an issue for the Randolph Ramble, and Mather advised it would not be a problem, as they use the trail not the road.

F. Map of Mowing

Mark Kelley advised that they will need to work on a map of the mowing, so that they can determine who will be mowing, and what they will be mowing. It was noted that roadsides are done in September or October, but they can start the roads earlier to allow for hiking and biking in the summer.

G. Wildlife Projects with Elise Lawson

Mark Kelley advised that they will review the wildlife projects with Elise Lawson at the February meeting. A trail on the property donated to the Community Forest by the Meiklejohn's was suggested, which could connect with Durand Lake. David Willcox advised that this area is wet, and bog bridges may be needed. The trail could be mapped out this year, and constructed next year. Kelley noted that they could contract with the RMC

for this trail. Willcox advised that for Rollo Falls and Crystal Mine, they brought in a specialist to lay out the trails.

V. Forester's Report

David DeGruttola presented the map for the next timber cut, named Little Ledge, which was approved by the Planning Board some time ago. This area was done in patches when last cut, and nothing was done in between. They will do some thinning, and cut some of the ash which is declining in value. They can start this cut as soon as it is approved by the Forest Commission. Mr. DeGruttola advised that he will need signatures on both the Intent to Cut and the Stream Crossing Permit. Mr. DeGruttola advised that he is required to do an endangered species check, and the last known observation of Philadelphia Panic Grass was in this area in 1944. Mr. DeGruttola reached out to the botanist for the State of NH, and was advised that because of the time of year, the timber cut would not be a problem. The biologist noted that the grass, in all probability, was nearer the road, and the polygon on the map is just an area of possibility.

On the Farrar tract, Mr. DeGruttola advised that Fairpoint has raised the lines, but they are still not high enough to drive under. JML has a couple of cable skidders, and they may try to do the cut that way. Mr. DeGruttola advised that there are about three loads of wood in the salvage area.

On a motion by Laura Brockett, seconded by Tim Mather, the Forest Commission voted unanimously to move ahead with the new timber cut on Little Ledge, and to allow Mark Kelley to sign any documents related to this.

David DeGruttola advised that he will send a digital copy of the timber cut to the Forest Commission members.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that the Intent to Cut will need to be signed by Joe Daly of LVTC first, and then by Mark Kelley, before going to the Town.

VI. Backcountry Skiing

Mark Kelley advised that the signs are up and seem to be working. Kelley advised that the Town did receive a letter from someone who rented property on Randolph Hill Road, who was disappointed to see the parking area was closed. Kelley advised them that the glades were still open. Tim Mather noted that a few people did approach him about the wooden sign, stating that it did not look very professional.

VII. Other

Mark Kelley suggested that the Forest Commission provide articles for the Randolph Mountain View, and requested that members think of topics or pictures to include, to keep residents updated on what is happening in the Forest.

David Willcox also suggested that they start brainstorming ideas for Forest Day. Mark Kelley suggested this could be done with Elise Lawson at the February meeting.

Tim Mather advised that Jamie Maddock had questions about the radio tower that is planned, asking whether there would be noise from the generator, or any lighting. Mark Kelley advised that this project is in the Selectboard's hands, however he will reach out to Chief Cloutier to check on the status of the project.

Laura Brockett advised that the Northern Forest Center will be meeting at the Town and Country on January 21st. Members were advised to RSVP if they are able to attend.

VIII. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:16 pm by general consensus.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Town Hall.