



# Randolph Community Forest

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

**Date:** April 2, 2025

**Location:** Randolph Town Hall

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

**Guests Present:** Paul Jadis, David DeGruttola from LandVest, Jeremiah Hawkins, Edith Tucker, Steve Logue, and Shelli Fortin, Minutes

Mark Kelley called the meeting to order at 6:28 pm.

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

- I. Financial Review
  - A. Invoices Received

One invoice was received from LandVest, for \$4,900.00.
  - B. Payments Received

A check was received from LandVest for the Bowman Treasure in the amount of \$6,002.31.
  - C. Financial Report

Mark Kelley advised that they are in good shape, with no outstanding invoices. Income is down about 20%, however David DeGruttola advised there is still more revenue coming from saw logs.
- II. NCRS meeting with Kelly Eggleston and Elise Lawson
  - A. Culvert Inventory and Status

Ms. Eggleston noted that she may be able to help with culvert replacements and a few areas were discussed, including the upper end of Randolph Hill Road and Jimtown Road. There is a possibility of 50% funding, and this would be a 2026 project. Elise Lawson advised that there was a culvert

inventory done, and David DeGruttola advised he believes he does have this, and Ms. Lawson can send a copy if he does not.

B. Riparian Buffers – Farrar Farm Israel River

Ms. Eggleston noted that they could help by putting in some big hemlocks at the washout where the bench was. This will also improve fishing. This would be planned as a 2027 project.

C. Wildlife Openings

This is another project that Ms. Eggleston advised they could help with.

D. Alder/Aspen Regeneration

David DeGruttola noted that off Deer Fly Road there are some aspen cuts that have started to regenerate. They could do a patch cut, but the soils are wet. Mr. DeGruttola noted that there were some locations, including Jimtown Road, that they could mow with the brontosaurus.

E. Vernal Pool Buffers

Elise Lawson advised she will walk to see if any buffers are needed. David DeGruttola noted that if there is a pool they are aware of, they do buffer it. Laura Brockett asked if there was a minimum size required before it was added in as data, and Mr. DeGruttola advised it is not so much about size but how it is functioning. Mark Kelly noted that Ms. Lawson offered to organize a day for the Forest Commission members to join her to go out.

F. Invasive Species Removal

It was noted that they do not have the volume required for assistance with Knotweed, and David DeGruttola will contact the person from Lancaster that does this. It is important to begin dealing with it when it is emergent.

III. Major Project Planning

A. Wildlife Transect Clearing – Campbell

David DeGruttola advised that he will contact Mr. Campbell about this.

B. Two Gates – Estimates

Mr. DeGruttola advised that has contacted four companies and is waiting on estimates.

C. Potter Tract – Bronto Work and Scarification Project

Mr. DeGruttola advised that he will need to site the project with Jacob DeBow from NH Fish and Game. Mr. DeGruttola advised that there may be some commercially viable wood there. Mr. DeGruttola noted that the area by the rail trail may not have enough topsoil for a viable opening in that location.

D. Map all Mowing

Mark Kelly advised he is working on the maps for mowing and will consult with Mr. DeGruttola to finalize this before meeting with the contractors.

E. Wildlife Projects with Elise Lawson

Mark Kelly advised that Ms. Lawson will attend the next meeting to discuss projects.

IV. Forester's Report

Mr. DeGruttola advised that they were able to get the tower site cut before April 1.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that there is still some timber revenue expected from the Little Ledge sale. Mr. DeGruttola noted that they will close the cut as soon as they can get in with the excavator. While the excavator is there, they will also rough out the road for the tower and close out the Bowman cut.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that JML has been hauling gravel for the power company, and asked to spot some at the Farrar tract gravel pit, as the trucks have been having to wait. Mark Kelly advised that this would be allowed, and JML advised they would get an insurance certificate and offered to haul away the old culverts for them.

V. Backcountry Skiing Update

Jeremiah Hawkins advised that the Randolph Society for the Advancement of Backcountry Skiing met recently and came up with several ideas to open the glade parking area next year. It was suggested that they set a maximum capacity for the parking area, such as a 20 car limit, with 10 spaces for residents and 10 for visitors. Other suggestions were to return local control to the community, and to not over-promote the area. The importance of signage was discussed, with signs to indicate where and how to park, driving etiquette, and backcountry skiing etiquette.

A gate was suggested for the entrance to the parking lot, however maintenance would be an issue. A member asked if a chain could be used instead of a gate, and David DeGruttola cautioned against using a chain, which is a liability.

David Willcox asked if someone from the RSABS would be at the lot, and Mr. Hawkins advised that they would not be, they would rely on signage. Mr. Hawkins noted that he is hopeful the closing of the parking area sent a message this past winter, and that people will be respectful.

Paul Jadis stated that he believes the recommendations are perfect, as it addresses all the problems, except for those that disregard the rules.

Mr. Hawkins suggested that it be a quiet opening, with no announcements or posts, and Laura Brockett noted that since the glades were never closed, just the parking area, no announcement should be needed.

Mark Kelly noted that the Gorham Town Manager did allow parking at the end of Jimtown Road to access the glades from there. Several in attendance shared concerns about the skiers hiking in on the snowmachine trail.

Plowing at the parking area was discussed. It was suggested that the barriers be removed to allow the town road agent to plow. Tim Mather noted that there is money set aside in the budget for parking.

A parking pass for local residents was discussed that could be put on vehicles. Edith Tucker asked about people who rent houses, and if they could use the area as residents while renting. Many members felt that resident passes should be for residents only, not renters, but that it could be discussed at the hearing.

Mr. Hawkins asked what the public sentiment was concerning the area, and Mark Kelly advised they have not yet held a public hearing, as they wanted to have a plan in place before holding one. Mr. Kelly noted that he did not receive any phone calls or letters with complaints this year.

Laura Brockett shared concerns about the area being overused in the summer in years to come, similar to the issues they have now.

When asked about an MOU with RSABS, it was noted that any activity manager agreements would go through the Planning Board. The Commission was unsure if they will pursue an agreement for the area.

#### VI. Other Business

Edith Tucker shared concerns about the name "Community Forest Road", noting that it is confusing and should simply be called Jimtown Road.

Mark Kelly noted that they received a letter from the Keene Mineral Club asking to visit the Crystal Mine. Mr. Kelly forwarded the letter to the Presidential Gem and Mineral Society, who will handle the response and visit.

Mr. Kelly advised that a thank you letter was received from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests for their donation.

Mark Kelly advised that Julie Renaud Evans from the Northern Forest Center would like to plan to visit each of the Community Forests and requested to start with Randolph. Ms. Evans suggested a tour in May. After discussion, the Commission recommended that it be held in June, after the roads are open. David DeGruttola suggested that they are looking for a broader view than just timber harvesting; such as wildlife management, hiking, and the maple tap lease. Laura Brockett suggested Rollo Falls and a walk to the maple lease area. Mark Kelly suggested that they purchase small bottles of syrup to share with those who attend. Mr. Kelly shared the sample labels that were designed for the Randolph Forest Commission to use as gifts. Mr. Kelly will get a price for the bottles of syrup.

Mark Kelly advised that the deadline for the next Randolph Mountain View is May 1. It was suggested that something be included from the Forest Commission in each publication, and an article about maple sugaring was suggested for this issue.

Mark Kelly requested that members think of ideas for Forest Day this year. Laura Brockett suggested the wildlife biologists that attended a recent Commission meeting. Edith Tucker suggested the iNaturalist program again.

Paul Jadis asked about the timber cuts, and if any of the timber could be available for residents. It was noted that there was a lot of small wood left from the salvage cut. David DeGruttola noted that it could be allowed if residents only take wood they could carry, however they should not be allowed to do any cutting on forest property due to liability. The USFS allows people to take dead and downed trees with a permit.

Paul Jadis advised that Gorham is still asking for \$6,500 for the repeater site, and the Selectboard is not in favor. They are already providing the land and the work to get the site ready. The money has not been appropriated, as it was not brought to their attention before now. Mr. Jadis asked if the Forest Commission had funds available for the project. Mark Kelly advised that the Town will be getting a payment from the Forest Commission for timber taxes from the timber cut, which the Town had not planned on. This money could be used for the project if the Selectboard agreed.

VII. Review Minutes of March Meeting

On a motion by Laura Brockett, seconded by Nate Reid, the Commission voted to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2025, meeting as presented.

VIII. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 pm by general consensus.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Town Hall.