Strafford Conservation Commission

Minutes

January 23, 2024

201 Justin Morrill Mem Hwy, 7PM

Micki Colbeck, Courtney Potter, Kate Bass, Kitty Mackie (virtual), Erin, Yunger, Anne Fayen

1. Approved minutes from November 28, 2023, meeting.
2. Healthy Rivers presentation update. Kate and Anne, have been working on it, and are getting more info on what to discuss. They booked the downstairs of Barret Hall 2/27 7pm. We will set up a donation jar to cover the $20 charge. Courtney will make posters. Discussed what they would talk about and what we think would be important. Simplified explanation of debris in the rivers, oxbows, meanders, and beavers. With some scientific data tied in. We think and hour talk with questions and answers afterwards.
3. Trails report. No update from Mike. Kate would like to know who owns the tower on Alger brook. Kate said that the trail looks good, and that Kitty (who maintains the Alger Brook to Pennock section) and Mike did a great job maintaining it this fall. Mike responded later that the tower belongs to Nate Hine from Blue Moon, and could at some point support a wind turbine.
4. Whitcomb Hill update from Steve Faccio via email: In regards to the use of motorized vehicles on Whitcomb Hill, Donald Graham, the town lawyer, felt that we should review the selectboard minutes from 2011 to see if there was discussion about terms of the gift. Donald also suggested we reach out to Chris Nye to see if he would be willing to speak to his parent’s lawyer, Cathy Richmond to see if she has a file with information about the intended restrictions of the land transfer. Steve has reached out to Chris Nye with no reply yet.
5. 2024 hikes and educational projects led by SCC members:

-Kitty and Micki will lead a hike on the Alger Brook road to Pennock section of trail at the end of May.

-Erin will lead a plant walk around her land in August.

-Mike and Micki will do two orchids walk, one in May to see the Yellow Lady’s Slippers and one in June to see the Showy Lady’s Slippers.

-Anne will lead a Pocket Park educational gathering in May, possibly exploring beavers or wild berries.

-Kate will lead a spring ephemeral hike up the Taylor Valley trail in May.

-Courtney will organize an outing with children and crafting with natural materials. Late July to beginning of August. Possible pressed flowers/plants.

-JT will again lead the grueling cross-town hike from start to finish. Time TBD.

-Steve may lead a local vernal pool hike. We need to confirm with him.

1. 2023 SCC Summary document circulated by Vermont’s Association of Conservation Commissions. We filled out the form together so Micki can submit for us this week.
2. Other business:

-Mallards are back at the Millhouse, we will ask Steve to get some scientific evidence /data to explain why feeding large amounts of wild waterfowl is not a good idea, especially in a time of highly transmissible bird flu outbreaks. Kate and Micki will follow up and speak to the person feeding them.

Anne talked about the sounds of gas-powered tools and the effects on the environment. Do a possible post about the benefits of not using the leaf blowers and other educational posts. Biggest tree competition.

1. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting 2/27 at 6:30 before the presentation at Barrett Hall basement.

Minutes prepared by CourtneyPotter