

Strafford Conservation Commission
28 January 2014

Present at meeting : Amy Metz, Tii McLane, Mike Hebb, Jared Jenisch, Matt Perry, John Hemenway, J.T. Horn, Steve Campbell, Steve Willbanks, Pete Fellows (TRORC) and Ellie Ray (TRORC)

28 January 2014 Meeting Minutes:

Actions:

- NEW/COMPLETE: J.T. email Ginny Barlow to make introductions for Taylor Valley Board Meeting in April
- NEW/COMPLETE: Tii get Wetlands report from Thetford (Li Shen)
- NEW: Amy review other landowners involved in Maple Hill Road Culvert project
- NEW: Mike speak with Rebecca regarding how she would like SCC to be involved with Ben Kilham talk at the library.
- OUT – Steve, get latest culvert survey from Jon Mackinnon
- OUT–Tii investigate VTRANS funding for wildlife crossing mapping.
- IN PROGRESS - JT - Check with Dave Paganelli regarding Forest Management Plan for Whitcomb Hill. 29 Oct - JT to schedule meeting with Dave. Email discussion ongoing.
- CLOSE ACTION (OBSOLETE)-JT - Talk to Kevin Peterson regarding ANR contact for culverts. Close action, Amy working with Ron Rhodes. Ron says the contact is Troy Dare Rural Fire Protection Program Manager (VACD)
- COMPLETE – SCC members read open space before next meeting to prepare for discussions about conservation projects in 2014 (i.e. Wetlands Inventory).
- COMPLETE– Amy send landowner listing to Joan Allen to invite to NRCS Jan 21 workshop.

Discussions:

- TRORC Grant from USFS State and Private Forestry – Pete Fellows and Ellie Ray attended as guest speakers. Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) recently was awarded a grant from USFS to help local communities encourage best forest practices. Pete explained that this was the second phase of a two-phased project. The idea is to document what Strafford is doing and identify our priorities for what we want to do in regards to Forest Stewardship. Pete was stating that Strafford is rare because in all of New England there are 18 Forest Matrix Blocks and Taylor Valley is one of them, thanks to John Hemenway and all the Taylor Valley landowners! We started to brainstorm ideas:
 - Opportunity funds to support state program match costs for landowners putting easements in place on their land, CREP, WHIP, EQIP, Trees for Streams, etc.
 - Class IV town road maintenance for private timberlands. Collaborative cost share approaches between the town and private landowners.
 - Current Use database – Document all lands in current use and the Forester they are using

- Ask Forestry Consultants like Paul Hardwood what priorities Strafford should have for forest management.
- Attend Taylor Valley meeting to learn from their successful use case. Pete F., Amy M, and Tii McLane would like to attend. John H says next meeting is April 7.
- Open Space Plan Projects – Wetlands Inventory: We would like to proceed with completing a Wetlands Inventory in town as one of the projects identified in our Open Space Plan. We will use the state as a baseline. Based on Mike H knowledge, he believes the state has documented about 95% of the wetlands in town and we have about 5% remaining. Mike H, Jared J. (our newest SCC member), and Tii M. have agreed to help with the inventory and will receive some minor support from Steve Faccio. We need to decide if we wish to perform the inventory ourselves or get a grant to have an outside consultant perform the inventory. Thetford is a good model and they have completed a wetlands inventory but received a 10K NH Mitigation Enhancement Fund (NH MEF) grant to hire a consultant. We may want to do the same. Tii will get the report from Li Shen (Thetford Cons Comm. Chair) so we can assess the quality of the report and understand what 10K buys us.

Steve Campbell attended the meeting as a representative from the Planning Commission. He states the language as written in the new zoning by-law draft is no development can occur on Class I or II state defined wetlands, or locally identified wetlands. Making sure we identify the local wetlands is extremely important for the Development Review Board (DRB) so they can quickly make a decision for new landowner development. They cannot afford to slow down the process by performing site visits or guessing what ecological values are found on the property. It is in our best interest to have this documented at the ready for the DRB.

- CT River Watershed Council Erosion Workshop – Tii and Amy Attended this workshop on Jan 21, hosted by Ron Rhodes from the CT River Watershed Council. Mary Childs (replaced Abby Willard) from the White River Natural Resource Conservation District was also in attendance. The meeting was an informational meeting regarding state programs for landowners with streams and erosion problems. Promoted programs were EQIP, CREP, and Trees for Streams. It was also a good meeting to connect Ron Rhodes who will help with the Maple Hill Road Culvert Project. Tii was also very pleased to here that there was funding to help with landowners logging their property and maintaining logging roads for both erosion and invasive species.
- Maple Hill Road Culvert Project – We have decided to move forward with this project but it has actually turned into a series of projects that we would like to keep separate because they will require different funding sources. So far we are able to work without a consultant and using the resources available to us that are free. Ron Rhodes (North Country River Steward, Connecticut River Watershed Council) and Mary Childs (Project Manager, White River Natural Resource Conservation District) are available to help us with grant writing to receive funds. The project includes landowner riparian buffer plantings and alternative drinking source for cows, a possible culvert replacement, and a possible dry hydrant replacement. Amy, Tii, and Ron will be conducting a site visit on Thursday Jan 30 to review the project details.

Amy reached out to the primary landowner involved with the project. The outreach was to inform the landowner of the status of the project and Amy will follow up with them through email to introduce the players and stakeholders involved. From that conversation it sounds like other landowners would be involved. Amy needs to investigate. Steve also mentioned if

the dry hydrant needs to be replaced a possible location would be the Miller Pond driveway (state approval would be needed). We do not know if the dry hydrant needs to be removed at this time.

- Trails – Mike states that the maintenance of the trails has been successful, now that he has help from Jared J. Mike noticed some moose tracks on Whitcomb Hill and quite a few bear nests. There has also been some vehicle activity that we need to take care of as vehicles are not allowed on the trails.

Rebecca from the library would like Ben Kilham to speak and asked if the SCC would sponsor. We are happy to do so as Ben is a fantastic speaker. Mike will be in touch with Rebecca.

- Old City Falls Update – Matt found a carpenter to do the outhouse work. Still having trouble finding a metal fabricator for the hood. Tii says if we continue to have trouble maybe we should think about redoing the entire roof and redesigning into a chimney. More discussion needed.
- Announcements:
 - UVLT Annual Gathering of Conservation Commissions – February 4th 7pm WRJ Center for Cartoon Studies (RSVP to Lorie Hood @ Lorie.Hood@uvlt.org)

Next Meeting Agenda: 25 February 2014

- UVLT Annual Gathering Report out
- Maple Hill Road Culvert
- Trails
- Old City Falls work preparation
- TRORC USFS Grant

Amy Metz (Co-Chair)

<_____, Recording Secretary>