

MRBA Meeting Minutes Thursday September 7th, 2023: MRBA Office

Attendees: Craig Cimmons, Wendy Scott, Kate Donlon, Paul Stanley, Brian Jerose, Ellen Fox, Lindsey Wight, Linda Stanley, and Cynthia Scott via zoom

- 1) Meeting called to order.
- 2) WS motioned to accept the August meeting minutes, PS seconded. All in favor; and the minutes were accepted.
- 3) Event overview: Unfortunately, ANM's River Celebration was canceled this year. Some presenters had backed out and then the state reported that mosquitos bearing Eastern Equine Encephalitis had been found at Mac's Bend.

Enosburg Community Water Walk happened on September 5 – members of the Enosburg Conservation Commission joined us for a walk along Giddings Brook on property owned by Ben and Rita Pothier, from the Eburg/Berkshire town line and south. The stream has been identified as being impaired. The purpose of the walk was to evaluate what was needed if anything to improve the water quality. DISCUSSION: should we do more of these types of walks? It's a good way to connect with folks who live along these brooks, and to invite neighbors (kind of the model that Cold Hollow to Canada uses for their Woodlots Program). Rather than making them 'public' events, need to work with groups, and be sure to let them know what to expect: buggy, brushy, mucky. Would be good to offer a mix of easy walks and bushwhacks.

Other good ways to connect with our communities: selectboard meetings. Priority discussions should include road work. Ditching, picking up trash, etc: are towns doing these things? Would be good for our staff to sit down with the Better Roads folks. Also identify all the Road Commissioners and build a relationship with them.

4) Administrative business

- Board members looked over the August Warrant. No questions; BJ motioned to accept; PS seconded; the August Warrant was accepted.
- Budget to Date: Lindsey reviewed.
- Welcoming our newest staff member: Sarah Lunn! (she started work this week, but she's away at a UMATR-related workshop for a few days).
- Office phone update: there is now a landline: 802-933-3645. Board approved the number change, rather than investigating if we could try to switch over the old cell number (may not be possible).

- 5) Projects: Stream Wise assessments - connecting with landowners who have streams on their land. What state are they in and what makes a good stream bank? What can be done to improve the streambank? MRBA is focusing in headwaters; have completed one so far in Troy. We are also looking at properties along Dunn Brook and in the Lowell headwaters.

LEAP internship – One of our summer interns is still helping out with a few projects and is interested in continuing to work with MRBA.

Lake Lessons 2023: Approx 8:30am-12 on September 18th, 20th, 22nd, 25th, 27th, 29th – anyone available to volunteer?

6) Grants update: LCBP Nursery Grant. Review of some ideas for creating a tree nursery in N Troy - looking at the property owned by the Village. The school has done some road maintenance for access; there are current easements that guide the use of the property; there is some concern about infrastructure creation on the property - could we do temporary “buildings” (shipping containers, etc?). Also would be good to do some soil sampling to determine if the soils are depleted.

Flood Resilient Communities Fund: Sleeper Pond Dam removal, in Newport Center – the design will be available by January.

Good news from the High Meadows Fund, which is now the Daybreak Fund through Vermont Community Foundation: they are likely to continue the resilience projects for another two years (likely \$15,000 a year).

7) 2023 events: October 31?: Knotweed Bonfire event. - date may change based on other in-town activities. Quebec visit/get-together? DISCUSS NEXT MEETING

8) 2024 event priorities. DISCUSS NEXT MEETING

9) Organization Planning: Priorities. DISCUSS NEXT MEETING

10) Other business: Wendy brought up the idea of a local book group meeting at the Office, every third Wednesday evenings (likely 6:30-8:30 from September – May. Talk with John?

Lindsey mentioned that Bumble Bee Bistro has offered to do a donation event, offering a percent of food items as a donation to MRBA (i.e. \$4.00 for each biscuit and gravy sold will go to MRBA).

Paul mentioned a connection with Tyler Knapp, formerly with Agency of Ag and now working in NY, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program - he met with FCNRCD and Franklin Watershed Committee to discuss landowners and how environmental aspects work to heal controversy (i.e. around Lake Carmi). Would like to also zoom with us, maybe during the October meeting?

11) Next meeting - October 5, 2023: MRBA office.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31pm.