

Mohawk Trails Woodland Partnership
<http://www.mohawktrailwoodlandpartnership.org/>
Forest Conservation Committee Minutes

Meeting date:

Wednesday, May 19, 2021, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting as allowed by Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker's Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provision of the Open Meeting Law,
G.L. c.30 sec.20

Note taker: Alain Peteroy

MTWP Committee Attendees: Chair Kate Lindroos Conlin, Alain Peteroy, Bob O'Connor, Shelia Kelliher, Larry Flaccus, Mark Phelps

Others present: Hank Art, Board Chair; Lisa Hayden, Agent; Glen Ayers, Public

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:33 p.m.
2. Review of meeting notes from 3/17/21. Vote to approve minutes, Mark Phelps abstained because he did not attend meeting.

3. Chair Kate Conlin: Goal of meeting to review mission and goals of the MTWP and Forest Conservation Sub-Committee.

Project Goals (from the 2015 MTWP plan currently posted on website, chapter 1 page 2):

Kate shared updated draft:

- *Conserve forest land in private ownership to protect the region's rural character and ecological resources and to support forest based economic development*
- *Increase funding for flexible Conservation Restrictions for private landowners for sustainable forestry, habitat protection, and/or passive recreation*
- *Conserve forests for the ecological services they provide including water quality protection, flood control, air quality improvement, carbon sequestration, and habitat protection*
- *Conserve forestland in private ownership to protect the region's rural character, forest-based economy, and ecological services through funding and outreach.*

4. The MTWP board and its sub-committees are reviewing the 2015 MTWP Plan still in place and in need of updating and editing to accurately reflect the mission and goals of the organization and each of its focus areas. The priority for this year is to update the plan to fully reflect the current mission of the MTWP. There was a suggestion to review the Plan to reflect the full MTWP region with each town having mission or focus update to reflect what is most important to that town (chap 8 page 4).

5. Bob O'Connor: spoke about the USFS Community Forest Grant Program
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/private-land/community-forest>

Currently ME/VT and NH have received a \$600,000 grant. The program could be used as a match to state grant programs such as the landscape partnership grant, conservation partnership grant opportunities. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/private-land/community-forest>

- **Eastern Region Regional Program Coordinator**, Neal Bungard.
- The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is also an opportunity for land trusts in the region.
- Ideas were suggested to develop a MTWP e-newsletter to introduce the MTWP to the region now that the board is active and there is a paid staff person, as well as possible woods walks with experts such as Paul Cantanzaro from UMASS.

6. Other ideas discussed:

- Review of lands under chapter 61 as a group to focus on for further conservation.
- Develop a grant and project spreadsheet to keep track of funding opportunities and needs.
- Outreach to local business, local wood business support.
- Note: please visit this website- <http://www.westernmasswood.org/why-use-local-wood/>
- Possible use of summer intern; it was decided we were not ready for that this season but perhaps next year, an intern from an environmental studies program at local colleges.
- Next board meeting is June 8th, via zoom.

7. Forest Legacy-prepare letter to send to all town board reps for support, Kate to draft.

8. Discussion: How this committee interacts with other committees?

9. Public Comment: Glen Ayers commenting on existing MTWP PLAN from 2015. Requested we consider holding public comment at start of meeting.

10. The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted 8/2/2021, *Alain Peteray*