

MINUTES

Education, Outreach, and Research Committee

Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts – January 11, 2024

Committee Members in Attendance: Marybeth Chichester (Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Chair); Hannah Poplawski (Rowe, Notetaker); Hank Art (Williamstown); Greg Cox (Hawley)

Staff/Board Present: Board Chair Dicken Crane (Windsor); Russ Richardson (Massachusetts Forest Alliance); Lisa Hayden (NEFF, Admin. Agent); Kate Conlin (NEFF, Coord.)

Public Attendance: Andrew Fitch, North Adams City Councilor

Call to order, welcome, and introductions: 5:03 p.m.

Public comment, chair moved up:

- A. Fitch, North Adams city councilor and employee at Lever, Inc., is interested in connecting a trail across the state for hiking. He has hiked much of the Mohawk Trail from Boston to Williamstown.

Hannah will share Rowe-Heath trail connection funded through the WP/EEA grant program.

- R. Richardson – remarks on the global market for understory medicinal plants such as ginseng, (bringing this knowledge from his time in Appalachia) and how it could stabilize property ownership in the Partnership region. Interested in opportunities for outreach.

Approval of December 12, 2022 minutes:

- Motion by H. Poplawski, seconded by H. Art, all in favor.

EOEEA grant: Winter-spring event series planning – landowner goals forum; estate planning forum; forest walk on climate-smart practices

- As part of a regional grant that NEFF applied for with Mass Audubon for support in implementing the earmark funds for climate smart forestry practices, a three-part series of landowner events will be held on (1) goals planning, (2) estate planning, and (3) a woods walk where planning and implementation of climate smart practices will be discussed. The first event will be held virtually March 7, 6:30-8:00 p.m. and will provide guidance and facilitation to brainstorm different stewardship goals for land and will be a companion to the DCR booklet resource.

Partnership need for a logo – discuss ideas, process, and options

- Following feedback from Board leaders, previous logo options were not the right fit. Cider House Media has quoted \$1,000 to provide three options.

- H. Art – Berkshire Community College and Greenfield Community College have studio art courses, as well as Williams, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Hampshire College, and Smith. The WP could have a contest with a \$1,000 prize. We could also reconsider designs developed by Agent staff and have them as line drawings.

- D. Crane emphasized that the logo must make clear a connection that represents a “partnership” between the woodland and the community, or the concept of people among the trees. He saw an interesting one that was a woodcut style of a handshake between a gnarled human hand and gnarled tree limb – we should reinforce that this is about a partnership between the forested landscape and the community within that forested landscape.

- M. Chichester – plenty of logos are not image based. The Board should compile logos that they like as an example to guide the contestants.

- G. Cox encourages us to involve the high schools as the student body lives within the Partnership region and it could be a great way to get students involved in the mission of the Partnership.

- Agent will prepare a one-page ask for what the WP needs, create a list of how to disseminate, and bring back for review at the next meeting.

Agent update: website; outreach to Savoy, Colrain, and Hancock; future webinar speaker list; one-pager – next steps

- Cider House Media is designing both the new WP website and the Virtual Forest Center, which we are working on with Mass Audubon. The VFC will share climate-smart forestry resources for municipalities among other resources and for broader audiences. A draft version of the WP website was shared on the screen. K. Conlin will share the draft link with the committee for their input which can be incorporated into edits.

- L. Hayden – Savoy and Colrain outreach is ongoing. Colrain will have a special meeting in the spring before their town meeting vote to learn about the WP. Hancock individuals have reached out with interest about their town joining the Partnership. Agent needs to follow up with the process approved at full board meeting and set up a meeting.

- G. Cox - recommends reminding Colrain Select Board to make sure it is included on the town meeting warrant. He volunteers to come to Savoy for outreach.

Discussion of Committee goals and expectations; drafting of charter; review of Partnership Plan related to Committee priorities:

- M. Chichester recommended moving this discussion to the next meeting. She encourages everyone to review the Partnership Plan as it will guide our goals and projects – and asked for this topic to be put on the next agenda.

Winter Board meeting & scheduling next Committee meeting(s):

- The Winter Board meeting will be held February 29, 6-8pm, fully virtual. Scheduling for next committee meeting will be done offline.

Any item(s) not anticipated within 48 hours – none

Public comment – None additional (see above).

Adjourn - 6:11 p.m.