

MINUTES
The Education, Outreach, & Research Committee
of the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts
January 30, 2025

Present: Hank Art — Williamstown (Chair); Hannah Poplawski — Rowe (notetaker); Greg Cox — Hawley; Rick Peltier — UMass Amherst, Public Health & Health Sciences Faculty; Rhonda Anderson — Ohketeau Cultural Center (3:06 p.m. join)

Absent: n/a

Staff: Lisa Hayden – Admin Agent.; Kate Conlin – Coord.

Call to order and welcome - 3:01 p.m.; Land Acknowledgment read. Public comment to be added to the end of the agenda.

Approval of December 18, 2024 minutes - R. Peltier moves, G. Cox seconds. Comments: it would be helpful to have dates of various events put into the minutes themselves; the line about “education planning in North Adams is needed” the lines following that statement be indented, so it’s clear that those are items pertaining to North Adams. All in favor.

Collins Center public safety study upcoming listening sessions – promotion - Three listening sessions to be held. First is this evening, 1/30/25 (fully remote). K. Conlin hand-delivered flyers throughout the region last week and had positive conversations.

Promotion/event planning of Brian Donahue’s *Slow Wood* - Donohue is confirmed for a “Log Lunch” at Williams College (weekly talk and lunch given during the school year) on September 19, 2025. 100 people max for the venue. Folks from the community might not be able to get in. Talks are compressed and questions/discussion are limited. The Partnership wants to host a book reading later that day. Williams College Bookstore is a possibility as well as the Student Union. H. Art will follow up with Sarah Gardner, Deputy Director of Co-curricular Programs and Community Engagement, and Lecturer in Environmental Studies at Williams to see about scheduling a space on campus.

Review of H. Art’s Draft Forest Outreach Series (spreadsheet/calendar of annual plan for events) - Appreciation of forests as ecological systems, in interaction with humans. The main topics of Hank’s outline: How Does a Forest Grow? Basic Forest Ecology; The Indigenous Forests of Our Region; Sustainable Forestry Management; Forest Health; Forest, Forestry, and Carbon; Forest and Forestry of the Future.

Discussion of the proposed series of education forums included:

- Forestry of the future – Mass Audubon Forest Climate Resilience Program as potential presenter/town climate plans.

- Forest health is a very captivating topic for deedholders and more often than not is what prompts management. DCR forest health “walk and look” sessions at state parks – could this be hosted in the Partnership region?
- Harvard Forest, DCR, UMass, UVM involvement.
- Indigenous component is important, as these forests were heavily managed by Indigenous Peoples for millennia. Forest health threats as they relate to Indigenous cultural use.
- *Forest Health* as a topic is large enough to become another category on the plan of topics.
- Continuing series that the Partnership sponsors in an ongoing way – with a planned calendar. H. Art volunteers to introduce topics at events. Some events may be in the field. Room for conversation and questions.
- Video can be shared via social media, newsletter.
- Next steps: H. Art will integrate suggestions from today into a series sketch and launch for the spring, potential for a working group.

Cultural Mapping workshop planning - Funding from a USFS grant to support this. R. Anderson will have a meeting with L. Hayden and K. Conlin in the coming months.

Review of Virtual Forest Center: <https://theforestcenter.org/> - not discussed due to time constraints. Feedback is always welcome to Agent staff.

Review of Woodlands Partnership website: <https://woodlandpartnership.org/> - not discussed due to time constraints. Feedback is always welcome to Agent staff.

Review of Ten-Year Plan for both direction and suggested updates - suggestion to send notes to K. Conlin and L. Hayden for compiling, perhaps sent a month or so before the annual meeting to the Executive Committee.

Agent update: Name change legislation success and next steps; Fundraising consultant; newsletter

- About to sign a contract with a fundraising consultant.
- Suggestion to add WP grants awarded to the back side of the Annual Report.

Scheduling next Committee meetings March-June 2025

February – offline – H. Art will send some dates he is available to K. Conlin.

Public comment – none

Adjourn - R. Anderson motions, H. Poplawski seconds, all in favor. 4:09 p.m.