

**MINUTES**  
**The Executive Committee**  
**of the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts**  
June 6, 2025, 3 – 4:30 p.m. – Virtual via Zoom

**Committee Members Present:** Dicken Crane – Windsor (Board Chair); Art Schwenger – Heath (Board Vice Chair); Alain Peteroy – Franklin Land Trust (Clerk); Rhonda Anderson, Ohketeau Cultural Center; Russ Richardson – Massachusetts Forest Alliance; Robert O’Connor – MA EOEEA;

**Absent:** Chris Cozzaglio – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (Treasurer)

**Staff:** Lisa Hayden – Admin. Agent

1. **Call to order and welcome:** 3:03 p.m.
2. **Approval of May 9, 2025 minutes:** A. Schwenger moves, R. Richardson seconds; R. Anderson abstained, all others in favor.
3. **Vote to enter Executive Session for preliminary screening of candidates to interview for Indigenous-focused Natural & Cultural Inventory as part of National Heritage Area feasibility study (M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(a))**  
Chair D. Crane entertained a motion to enter executive session for purpose of preliminary screening of consultant candidates for the Indigenous-focused inventory and this discussion in open session would have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified candidates. The Committee will return to open session after this item. A. Schwenger made a motion, seconded by R. Richardson to enter executive session, which was adopted unanimously by roll call vote.  
**Return to public session:** A. Schwenger made a motion to return to open session, seconded by R. Anderson and adopted unanimously by roll call.
4. **Initial discussion of 3-year fundraising plan from consultant Stephanie Schilling who will attend Annual Meeting**  
Feedback was welcomed on the draft 3-year fundraising plan funded by a Catalyst Fund grant. Board members liked the plan, thought it was achievable and feasible. BARR foundation is good prospect for grants. Plan was succinct and it was a good summary of next steps. Plan for Stephanie’s visit starting on 6/24-25 is to visit LEVER with Jeffrey Thomas, tour Mt. Greylock with Dicken Crane, Holiday Brook Farm in Dalton with Dicken, Hall Tavern Farm in Charlemont with Jay Healy, stopping at Franklin Land Trust to talk to about land conservation with Alain and Emily Boss. Suggestions for her to try to meet with Indigenous partners and BNRC visit may also be scheduled.  
  
B. O’Connor noted importance of thinking about how to fundraise without competing with Board member organizations - and how will Partnership implement the plan? One idea is to create a Friends of the Forest group for local membership. A legal question remains whether Partnership Board as a public body could create a subsidiary 501(c)3 to raise funds, as the example with the MA Forest Trust. The public body structure likely came about because of the relationship with the member municipalities.

5. **June 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting:** taking place 6-8 p.m. at Greylock Glen Outdoor Center in Adams with dinner at 5 p.m., agenda to include fundraising plan update, public safety survey update, natural heritage area planning.
6. **Overview of EOEEA grant application “Voices for the Forest”:** grant was submitted by L. Hayden and NEFF on behalf of the Ex. Com. for May 15th deadline including educational programs for local schools and a theme focusing on video storytelling to promote the region’s identity and Partnership’s mission.
7. **Agent update:** EOEEA and NEFF contract update. Two state grants due to close June 30, the Collins Center emergency services study with Municipal Finance Committee, and a grant focused on implementing practices and landowner events. Board members want improved communication regarding funding grant applications, expenditures, structure of requests and annual budget. Future changes should include board review of budgets. EEA grant for \$75,000 was submitted with review by D. Crane.
8. **Other updates:** Connie Carpenter has left the USFS so she will no longer be their representative on the Partnership board. Updates on June events include June 12 webinar as part of Henry Art’s series, “How Do Forests Grow?” for the EOR Committee, and a June 19 talk by R. Richardson in Shelburne on “Forests Beneath Our Knees” on forest plants. There was comment that FIA plots indicate 20% of Massachusetts forests are emitting carbon due to die-back, suggesting more trees are dying from disease and stress than logging, and this could be topic of a future event.
9. Items not anticipated: none
10. Public Comment: none
11. Adjourn at 4:40 p.m., motion made by A. Peteroy and seconded by A. Schwenger, unanimously approved.

-Respectfully submitted Alain Peteroy, Clerk, 7/1/25