

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, May 15th, 2025 6:30 PM – Westfield Community Center

Attendees: John Little, Wendy Scott, Susan Staples, Russ Ford, Jacques Couture, Dan Seeley, Lindsey Wight, Sarah Lunn, Ruby Bratcher, Brian Dickinson in person, Jim MacCartney, Dean Pierce via zoom.

Meeting called to order: 6:33 PM

Review of March meeting minutes. CS motioned to accept the minutes. SS seconded. Motion passed.

Any business from the April minutes (not on agenda): None

Administrative business: ECO AmeriCorps program- Federal program cut by 41%, including the ECO program. RB in service until May 24th. Ed award should be pro rated but no staff to run this. DEC transitioning to temp employee, 35 hrs/week. Host site cost stays the same. Our FY25 fiscal year budget contained a line for Americorps, will need to modify budget when/if. Provide another “support” position?

PWSR update:

The current administration is looking to remove positions from org chart. The position won’t just remain unfilled, it will be removed. The 4 longest serving staff in program have / will retire. The hope is this will meet the reduction in workforce and save the jobs of younger staff.

DOI will throw energy/funds to visitors to Nat Parks. Lesser known areas will suffer hits. Hope for some indication relatively soon. The bill and rescission bill are making their way through process. FY 26 “skinny budget” shows NPS reduction by 30%.

Jim is leaving May 30th. Most likely person to support UMATR is Jackie Diaz or Emma Lord (she is going on maternity leave mid July). Jamie will share contact list. Helen is not going anywhere (they’ll have to drag her out).

Kayaks purchased from Umiak: 6 Wilderness Systems Pungo. Made a nice connection with Umaik.

Grants/Projects: The Celebration film - planning. - Summer screenings.

Brault’s event: raffle? paddle element? other expansion? Assign prep and day-of tasks.

July 26th BBQ: Board & BBQ with Braults- 10-12 optional paddle, 12-3 BBQ. Lane road to farm. JL, RF, WS (can be flexible) doing paddle JC on land. DS anywhere. Schedule shuttle. Have a donation box to support the org. Banner @ Braults- road signs before event?

Canoe rack at Big Falls. MRBA received funding to provide lessons.

Jay Land project update.

Management Plan review/update Scenic and Recreational review for each town

Have it as a line item on each agenda; chip away at assessing/updating it. Staff have reviewed the plan and will lead a somewhat guided review of it and see what are some things that we need to be doing (or have already done!).

- Natural Resources
- Historic and Cultural
- Scenic and Recreational
- Water Quality

Homework for next meeting: look at the Management plan for your town (pp 41 and 42) and be ready to give feedback about it. First ORV Outstanding Remarkable Values - **Scenic and Recreation**. Staff will send an email to the board describing what the assignment is.

Scenic + Rec introspective- read/ skim through the lens of your town- changes to your town, things accomplished, things to change/ add. Next: Natural resources. Digital pages 73-75. Hard copy pages 87-89.

2025 Upcoming UMATR Events –May 18: Annual Open House; **June 21:** The Celebration film premiere; **June 24:** Tubing on the Trout; **June 28:** Paddle Lessons; **July 9:** Guided Nature Paddle with BOTH County Foresters; **July 12:** Paddle-Pedal; **July 26:** BBQ at Brault's; **Aug 3:** Paddle & Picnic; **Aug 5:** Scenic Missisquoi River Paddle (with MRBA and VLT); **Sept 6:** Swimming Hole Clean-Up; **Oct 18:** WSFF - events are up on our website; be sure to secure your spot!

Other/Public Comment: General thanks and support for Jim and love for ECO situation.

Upcoming meetings:

June 19 in person - UMATR Office

July 17: in person - Westfield Community Center? Jay Land??

Wrap up and adjourn: RF motioned to adjourn, JL seconded, motion passed. Meeting adjourned 8:09pm