

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes**  
**Thursday, April 18th, 2024 6:30 PM – Hybrid Meeting at UMATR Office & Zoom**

**Attendees:** Dan Seeley, Jim McCartney, Sarah Lunn, Lindsey Wight, Cynthia Scott, Russ Ford, Janet Lee (JAL), Wendy Scott, John Little were in person at UMATR Office. Josh Blouin, Susan Staples, Scott Staples, Dennis Williams, Bryan Dickinson, and Sheila Goss via zoom.

**Vermont Moose Seminar Series:** Josh Blouin of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department presented on Vermont's moose populations including recent trends that have been studied during his time at UVM, and beyond while working with the state. Our Vermont Moose population has fluctuated throughout their presence in Vermont with the deforestation of the 19th century followed by unregulated hunting of populations causing an almost disappearance of moose in Vermont. As forests regenerated, so did the moose populations with 25 moose in Essex county only in 1960 to over 5000 across the state in 2000. Permitted hunts were started in the 1990s to tune populations, and in current years the threat to our moose comes from winter ticks. In 2017 - 2019, VT Fish and Wildlife and UVM conducted a moose study in which they tracked 120 moose across the state. Winter ticks have high mortality rates of young moose (younger than a year), and often cause death from blood loss. To help our moose, report sightings of moose covered in winter ticks or that appear sick to the VT Fish and Wildlife Department.

**Welcome, greetings:** Business portion of the meeting called to order at 7:22 PM.

**Review of March Meeting Minutes:** CS motioned to approve; RF seconded; Minutes approved with minor grammar corrections.

**Updates on business from these minutes/notes:** LW and JL will be attending the River Rally in Grand Rapids Michigan in May. They will also be presenting about the journey to becoming a Partnership Wild and Scenic River with JM on 5/15. JAL, SS, and SL have been added to the waiting list 😞.

**CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association) outreach activities - meeting and webinar:** SL and LW attended an all-state CISMA group meeting on 3/26 in Woodstock at which they met with other concerned groups about invasive species along our waterways and throughout the state. VT Trans attended and some forward momentum was made about conversions of invasives in right of ways. SL and LW presented on the MRBA Knockout Knotweed project and conservations were useful. LW and SL were also panelists for a Vermont Land Trust webinar on CISMAs and invasives on 4/15 and SL presented on knotweed as well.

**Administrative:**

- Website domains? vtwsr.org; umatrwildandscenic.org; ...umatrvt...? - JM suggested umatrwsr.org. Committee discussed the staying power of the current url. Committee suggested changing email and domain to what makes most sense for SL and LW. SL and LW will discuss internally.
- 2024-2025 Budget Discussion: JL motioned to approve, JAL seconded. Motion passed.
- Current/previous budget overages and where to apply those funds: WS motioned to use overage funds to fund film up to \$22,000 with focus on covering the Sojourn trip in June. CS seconded. Motion passed unanimously. WS motions to designate up to \$2500.00 to support the Sojourn trip in June. CS seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**2024 Sojourn - budget, planning, goals:** Subcommittee formed of JL and JAL that will help SL. SL will connect with JL about changing the paddling route.

**Grants/Projects:**

- **FCNRCD: Wildlife Tracking:** The grant program has been completed and LW has received their final report.
- **New Access Point in East Berkshire:** LW and SL will be meeting with Alex from NFCT in May at the new proposed access point in East Berkshire. The access point is being installed on Benoit's property near the Missisquoi Rail Trail bridge over the Missisquoi. Access point should be installed before the Paddle Pedal in July.

**2024 Upcoming Events:** **April/May:** Salamander Night Patrols?? **May 13-16:** River Rally in Grand Rapids, MI. **May 19th:** UMATR/MRBA Open House **June 6-12:** Sojourn Day Paddles. **July 13:** Missisquoi River Paddle-Pedal. **July 20:** Paddle Instruction Day. **July 25:** Guided Nature Paddle. **Aug 18:** Paddle & Picnic. **Sept 7:** Swimming Hole Clean-Up

**Other Public Comment:** JAL discussed a fundraising idea of having lunch and a tour of where we planted trees in Troy to Braults. Possibility of having it as a fundraiser. SL, LW, and JAL will discuss getting this going. Potential ideas include a paddle to Braults? SL and LW also announced that we will be hosting the PWSR meeting in October at Jay Peak Resort. Reach out to SL if you are interested in helping with that.

**Upcoming Meetings:** Meeting moved to May 23rd because LW and JL will be attending River Rally on May 16th. The May meeting will be at the UMATR Office on May 23rd, in person at 6:30PM.

**Wrap up and adjourn:** JL motioned the adjourn; DS seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.