

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, February 15th, 2024 6:30 PM – Zoom

Attendees: Jenn Grace, Bryan Dickinson, Dan Seeley, Jim McCartney, John Little, Sarah Lunn, Lindsey Wight, Wendy Scott, Cynthia Scott, Russ Ford, Jenn Grace, Susan Staples, Janet Lee (JAL), Hannah Volk, Pam Ploof, Olivia Witson, Joan Hildreth, Bill Hildreth, Hannah Mahar, Annette Goynes, Jackie Dias, Phyllis Utigard, and Jaclyn Comeau

Living With VT Bears: Jaclyn Comeau, VT Fish and Wildlife's Bear Project Leader and Wildlife Biologist presented to the UMATR Committee on the biology of Vermont's black bears, how to safely navigate interactions with bears, and what the state of Vermont have learned so far in their tracking of our bear populations. Highlights include description of preferred habitat by black bears, including heavy reliance on beech trees and heavy mast producing trees. Additionally, methods of managing human trash and property in order to decrease bear interactions were discussed: locking up garbage, not putting out garbage until the day it will be collected, and properly disposing of food scraps. This presentation was recorded and is available on UMATR's website and YouTube channel.

Welcome, greetings: Business portion of the meeting called to order at 7:36 PM.

Review of January Meeting Minutes: JG motioned to approve; SS seconded; Minutes approved with some grammar changes and addition of SS to film committee.

Updates on business from these minutes/notes: LW and SL will apply for scholarships for the River Rally for those who have expressed interest; Newsletters have been officially mailed out and posted on the UMATR website.

Event overview: Franklin County snowshoe: LW & SL hosted snowshoe with Nancy Patch for her final year as Franklin County's Forester on February 3rd along the Trout in Montgomery. 14 people attended, and overall it was a great event. Topics discussed during the walk included riparian forests, how rivers change in the landscape, and VT natural communities such as hemlock and yellow birch forests. Next snowshoe will be in Orleans County on March 8th hosted with Forester Jared Nunery.

Administrative: 2023 budget overages: where to spend the funds? LW went over several projects and activities that could be possibly used for the funds including: River Rally transportation, sojourn event and film, Sampsonville dam removal, 2024 events

- Lindsey's review: LW will connect with SS, JC, and WS to set a time aside to review
- Executive Committee: LW will write position descriptions. JAL is stepping in to be UMATR Treasurer. JC, SS, and WS will continue to serve their roles as President, Vice President, and Secretary respectively. Motion to accept the positions for the next term was motioned by CS, and seconded by DS. Motion passed unanimously.
- ECO Americorps member 2024/2025: Discussion around co-hosting an ECO Americorps position with MRBA. LW and SL explained potential projects for them including, but not limited to: completing mapping projects of UMATR rivers (access points, landowners, etc.), creating StoryMaps, helping LW and SL host events, education and outreach, and more. SS made a motion to host ECO Americorps member, RF seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2025 Budget and 2024 Workplan?: LW discussed three different budget options to discuss during the meeting. LW will send this out to the Committee, and also come up with different variations. Next meeting (March 21st) will be voting on the 2025 Budget. LW & SL will connect with JAL to discuss fundraising opportunities beyond the federal budget.

2024 Sojourn - budget, planning, goals: LW and SL will share more in upcoming meetings. Discussion of sojourn was moved to the next meeting (March 21st) due to lack of time.

Grants/Projects:

- **Tillotson Road Culvert:** Green Mountain Club has officially completed the project and submitted a final report to LW. LW will confirm the size of culvert completed in follow-up.
- **Montgomery Knotweed project:** Project is completed, and the knotweed brochure is complete. LW has copies in the office space if anyone would like to see. They saw successful results in their mowing practices and are seeing growth with the native plants planted over the mowed sections. Final report was received.
- **Enosburgh:** Town of Enosburgh Highway Dept was not able to complete their work on Stonehouse Road in 2023 due to running out of time and the impacts from the 2023 July Flooding. They asked to change the completion date to September 1st, 2024. DS made a motion to accept a new completion date. SS seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- **CHC:** Request from CHC to reframe their grant project to develop a wildlife tracking program which is planned to be hosted on their website and on UMATR's website. They have already received ½ of the money in the grant previous in 2019. LW brought forth their updated proposal with their plan to complete the updated project by 8/24. LW will send the proposal to the Committee following the meeting for review, and motion votes will be accepted through email.

2024 Upcoming Events: **Mar 9:** Orleans County Snowshoe 10am-12pm; location tbd; **April/May:** Salamander Night Patrols **May 13-16:** River Rally in Grand Rapids, MI. **June 6-12:** Sojourn Day Paddles. See website for the rest of the year's events.

Other Public Comment: Rasputitsa has been officially asked by Lowell to not go into their town for the event. LW will stay updated and communicate back to the Committee with new information.

Upcoming Meetings: March 21st via zoom - presentation on Native Tree Propagation with Intervale Center

Wrap up and adjourn: SS motioned the adjourn; JL seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.