

Ashley Community Forest Board - Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday 8/4/22, 6:00 p.m.

The Sharon Academy, Sharon

Attendance: Susan Hodges, David Paganelli, Erik Skarsten, Rob Stainton, Judith Falk, Greg Bagnato, Kevin Gish and Michael Sacca.

1. Welcome the Public - Input and Concerns - non tendered.

2. Stewardship Plan Development

- Process - 5 parts. Climate change will go in one of the sections. Ecology is pretty much complete. The Recreation and Public Use plan has been open for comments and is pretty close to complete. The following need to be included in the plan: Kiosk, signage plan, Right Of Way issue, trail plan.
 - Potential funding options through Vital Communities (Crowdfunding) for Kiosk. Application due
 - Kiosk - timber frame design. Kevin may Black Locust from the property to make the kiosk.
- Review Draft Education Plan (Erik, Rob and Michael). Needs a land acknowledgement. Could include programs offered that are not run through a school. Discussion of parameters for programs and schools on how they use the forest. Whether there are strict rules or more general rules that are used as a guide. Michael and Erik will coordinate communication of ground rules with local schools from the four towns (Sharon, Strafford, South Royalton and Tunbridge).
- Climate Change Adaptations (Susan Hodges)
No clear section in the Stewardship Plan for climate change. List of climate change adaptations: a higher standard of trail in particular to direct precipitation from thunderstorms and quick snow melt; minimize stream crossings - don't build a bridge or culverts; any crossings we make need to be minimal/temporary; try to maintain a complex forest structure - all of the species that are native to the forest need to be represented, we want multiple sizes, arranged horizontally in the landscape; maintain snags and cavity trees; treat the invasive plants (barberry) - initially probably requires herbicide, then hand pulling and buffer streams and wetlands (50 to 100 feet). Possibility of two reserve areas. One in the North and one in the South. Proposed program for next summer for carbon sequestration, storage and duration.

3. Walk with Andrea Shortsleeve on 7/22/21. She recommended not over developing the trails, keep change to the forest at a minimum. When harvesting pasture pines leave some for bat habitat. Will write a report by September.

4. Timeline for Completion of Draft Stewardship Plan and Public meetings.

- Potential Dates for Public Meeting to Introduce the Stewardship Plan for Public Input: 27th October by Zoom (recorded).
- Guided Walk on 2nd October Public Meeting.
- The Stewardship Plan could be online for public viewing: listservs and town websites.

Motion to adjourn: Michael Sacca. Second: David Paganelli.

Next meeting. August 18, 2022 at Justin Morrill Education Center 6:00 to 7:30.