

**Ashley Community Forest Board - Regular Meeting DRAFT Minutes**

Thursday 4-10-25, 6:00 p.m.

Morrill Library, Strafford, Vermont

In Person Participants:

ACF Board: David Paganelli, Kevin Gish, Michael Sacca (arrive 6:10), Erik Skarsten (arrive 6:16), Annie Penfield (arrive 6:20)

Public: Malcolm McShinsky

1. Call to Order at 6:10
2. Public Comments. KG introduced Malcolm as a Sharon resident interested in getting involved with the ACF.
3. Approve Minutes from 3-13-25 meeting. DP motioned to approve as published; MS seconded; approved unanimously.
4. Update on Forest Management Activity.
  - Close out activities – target is prior to 6/7/25. DP is hoping that the logger will be able to complete this work in May, but it is weather dependent.
  - Boundary Blazing – abutter permission letters mailed 4/2/25. Blazing is still planned for 5/1/25
  - Post-harvest improvement. There was discussion about the conditions of the logging area after the recent harvest. MS commented on extensive slash left behind, including on the loop trail between the main house foundation and the Sharon meadow. In addition to logger cleanup, the board can do some cleanup during workdays and possibly a workday with VLGS students.
5. Educational Programming and Work Days for 2025.

4/12/25 Twilight Walk with Michael Sacca, 7-9 pm (Confirmed)

4/19/25 Sam Brakeley: Trail Issues, 8 am (Confirmed). This is a date change from the previous schedule. Also, this is an ACF Board event, not a public event.

April (TBD), Tracking with Alden Smith (MS)

5/1/25 Volunteer Work Day – Boundary Blazing.

- Set gate, if we have time.

5/11/25 Twilight Walk with Michael Sacca, 7-9 pm

5/24 or 5/31/25 Birds for Teens with Silar Russ, 6-9 am (ES)

May (first half, TBD), Naturalist Walk with Jason Benoit (MS)

6/7/25 Birds with Kyle Jones, 5-8 am ?? (MS)

6/7/25 Post-Harvest Forest Management Tour with David Paganelli, 9-11 am

6/8/25 Tucker Mountain Forest tour with Tom Kidder, 1:00-3:00 pm (DP)

6/10 and 6/13/25 – Marking Forest Stand Improvement (DP)

6/14/25 Kids in the Forest with Meg Teachout, 9-11 am ?? (MS)

6/21/25 Solstice Sing with Becky Bailey, time TBD (AP)

6/24 and 6/27/25 – Implementing Forest Stand Improvement (DP)

6/28/25 Fireflies with Michael Sacca, 8-10 pm

7/11/25 Twilight Walk with Michael Sacca, 8-10 pm

7/19/25 Invasive Plant Work Day, time TBD (DP)

July TBD Poetry Writing with Ina Anderson (MS)

8/16/25 (8/23/25 rain date) Invasive Plant Work Day (ES)

August – Full mowing of Sharon meadow, trail mowed in Strafford Meadow

Other Possible Programs/Work Days:

- Ferns/Tree ID/naturalist with Tii McLane (MS) (this is doubtful)
- Tree ID late June or early July with Dan Healy (MS, KG or DP)
- Moths (July?) with Silar Russ (ES)
- Pollinators
- Invasive Plant Work Day with student assistance.
- Trail Day

MS mentioned a probable gift from Vital Communities to the Conservation Commissions of Strafford, Sharon, Royalton and Tunbridge. These are funds that originally came from the Alliance for Vermont Communities. MS is hoping that the Strafford and Sharon portions could be used for trail work at ACF.

6. Related Program Notice: Vermont Woodlands Association 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Field Day.
  - June 28, 8:30-3:30 at Clover Hill Tree Farm, South Strafford.
  - DP distributed an agenda for the event to all present.
  - The event includes morning and afternoon educational tours with many forest professionals and land owners.
7. Update on porta-potty. Sharon Elementary School (SES) currently is paying for a toilet at ACF, but the school is no longer using ACF. The ACF Board agreed that we do not need a toilet there; as such AP will cancel the toilet with Howe Enterprises effective June 1, 2025.

8. Review Draft Proposal for AMP Remediation. DP presented a written plan for the State required remediation work to be done. At our next meeting the ACF Board will request to cross the land of an abutter to access the trail off of Clifford Farm Rd. The work will involve an excavator extracting debris from the stream and then burying it, but will only be completed under dry, summer conditions. The Board was in agreement to move forward with this plan, pending access approval from an abutting landowner.
9. Confirm our intent to extend invitation to Deb Fisk to discuss Sharon access matters. Erik will invite Deb Fisk to our next meeting on May 8, 2025.
10. Election of Officers.
  - a. Appointment of At-Large ACF Board Member: AP moved to reappoint Michael Sacca as the At-Large Member; ES seconded; approved unanimously.
  - b. ACF Board Clerk: DP nominated Kevin Gish; AP seconded; approved unanimously.
  - c. ACF Board Treasurer: DP nominated Annie Penfield; KG seconded; approved unanimously.
  - d. ACF Board Chair: KG nominated David Paganelli; ES seconded; approved unanimously.

11. Other Business.

- a. The Treasurer discussed current checking account and certificate of deposit (CD) balances and suggested obtaining an additional CD using funds generated from the recent timber sale. AP motioned to work with the Strafford Town Treasurer to get an additional CD in the amount of \$20,000 at the highest possible rate; DP seconded; approved unanimously
- b. Educational/Agricultural History: As part of the mission of ACF, MS would like to see more emphasis on education, including the history of agricultural use of the land that is now ACF. There was discussion of a possible educational curriculum. ES mentioned that involving educators in the development of such a curriculum would give them buy-in and thus be more likely to be implemented. There was general agreement that we should try to generate more public engagement with the ACF.

7:40 Adjourn. DP moved to adjourn; AP seconded; approved unanimously.

Next meeting. 5-8-25 at the Sharon Town Office, Sharon, Vermont