

DRAFT HARDWICK CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
September 17, 2019 Meeting

Present: Jerry Schneider, Rachel Kane, Ben Pougner, Judith Ruskin, Nicole Davignon, Norma Wiesen, Judy Bellairs

Absent: Ken Davis, Renaud Demers

Guest: Michael Lew-Smith

Agenda and minutes from previous meeting were approved.

Michael Lew-Smith spoke to the group about conducting natural resource inventories (NRI). They can take many forms depending upon funding and what you hope to accomplish. They can be incorporated into Town Plans. The steps in conducting an NRI include looking at existing data, public information and field investigations. The Vermont natural resource atlas has a lot of information. Biofinder looks at areas of conservation priority. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources also has a lot of information. Data can be of limited value if it is outdated, from remote sources or not field verified. NRI's refine the data and make it more accurate for the Town.

First they do a land cover type assessment, then natural community mapping (wetlands, woodlands, wildlife/habitat). Landowner permission can be a bottleneck for field work. It is important to have a public event to get buy-in from the community. The consultant can develop a mapping tool for all local information. It usually takes 12-18 months to complete an inventory, and it can cost from \$15-\$18,000 for a full inventory. The firm can provide training and data forms so that citizens can help with the inventory.

Discussion: We need to look into fundraising opportunities. It would be helpful to invite Jens Wilke--whose job is to work with Conservation Commissions--to speak to us.

Updates: The Association of Conservation Commissions is having their annual meeting on September 28th from 8:30-3:30. Further information can be found here:

http://vtconservation.com/conservation_summit/

Rachel and Renaud kayaked a section of the Lamoille to scope out environmental concerns and trash. There is considerable erosion at Hwy. 16 and some knotweed along the way but no trash. So there is no need for a river clean-up. We should do another event when the water level of the river is higher. Judith, Jerry and Norma conducted another tree walk on the 18th and couldn't identify some of the trees. Residents are curious about what they are doing and it might be helpful to have badges or cards to hand out. We should put some pictures of our outings on the web page.

At our next meeting we should have a discussion of ideas for events.

Motion made and passed to have earlier meetings in the winter. **Beginning with the October 15, 2019 meeting our new start time will be 5:30 p.m.**

Action items:

Nicole: Research funding opportunities

Jerry: Write a letter to the editor for the Gazette informing residents about the tree walks

Rachel: Look for a link to a map of town-owned land

Judy: Check to see how much money we have and if we are paid members of the Association of Conservation Commissions. See about getting cards made for the Commission.