

Minutes
Buffalo Mountain Steering Committee
Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Members Present: Brendan Buckley, Eric Remick, Renaud Demers, Leif Goldberg, James Kelley, Andy Gilbert, Joe Nudell, Margery Prevot, Julie Sullivan, Rachel Kane, Sue Rivard, Marie LaPré Grabon

Members Not Present: Paul Cillo, Lucien Day, Dylan LaFlam, Tyler Buswell

Advisory Members Present: Hannah Redmon, Jack Travelstead

Guest Present: Jon Szalawicz, Trails Tech Specialist

Agenda Item #1: Eric moved to approve the minutes from the July 28th meeting and Julie seconded the motion.

Agenda Item #2: There were no changes to the agenda.

Agenda Item #3: There were no public comments.

Agenda Item #4: Jon was invited to the meeting by Leif to brief the committee about trail building and maintenance. Jon, in his role as a trails technical specialist for the Appalachian Mountain Club, works with the Craftsbury Outdoor Center and advises small community land trusts who want to provide public access their land. In this capacity he would offer his knowledge and expertise if the Buffalo Mtn Committee has a plan. He would like to steer the committee away from mistakes made when installing and designing trails that incur more costs. He advised to not using logging roads as trails, do not have trails that are too steep or too flat, and they should be interesting... and that bicycle and pedestrian trails can overlap. The intent of Jon's focus when designing trails is efficiency . He stated that multi-use trails are harder to accomplish. Brendan ask if there was a difference between summer and winter trails. Jon said the ground is frozen in the winter and with summer trails you need to consider the impacts on vegetation and erosion. Jon spoke of the need for annual maintenance on trails e.g. cleaning out drainage ditches etc. Sue asked for an estimate as to how much it costs to build a trail. He replied that a project he worked on, that took 8 weeks, was \$100,00. Jack reported that Wolcott spent \$200,000 for 5 miles and that included a 5 car parking lot. Eric asked if a class 4 road could be integrated into a trail. Jon emphasized not to repurpose a road. Rachel asked what the main problem is in repurposing logging roads. Jon replied those roads are too steep, water is an issue, and they are built in a straight line which makes them boring. He said designing trails is more complicated than most people anticipate. Brendan asked if Jon would walk the land with us before we have a plan and Jon replied he would be happy to do that after the 1st frost or 1st snow. Hannah stated the committee has a one time budget for professional trail work. Joe Fox, from Barnett, was mentioned as someone who may be able to help find financial resources for future trail work.

Jon emphasized the committee should have a clear idea of who the audience is and what they want for trails. Eric described the use of volunteers that maintain the Hardwick Trails. Sue asked if volunteers need to be trained. Yes, was Jon's reply...someone needs to be in charge and he offered his help. Jon can answer more questions as soon as we know what kind of trail the committee wants.

Item #5: Hardwick Trails Summary; Program and Budget.

Andy presented a slide presentation of "trail maintenance and costs" that he and Dylan prepared re: the Hardwick Trails. This was a 2 part presentation and he described the early history of the Trails re: 20 kilometers for cross country skiing and 15 kilometers for single track trails. The board has just added another 7/10's single track trail. Sue asked if, in the future, the Trails could be self sufficient. Andy replied that maintaining 20 kilometers of ski trails presents many challenges, and it's hard to tease out the monetary costs for maintenance since the Trails uses all volunteers to help with maintenance of their trails

Please see Hardwick Trails Program and Budget on the committee Google page for the presentation, detailed information and graphs.

Agenda Item #6: Hannah asked the committee to review the Management Plan template, run thru all the activities listed in the Recreation section, and decide on each item with a yes/no/ needs further discussion. Hannah has shared the results of this conversation below.

Management Plan Recreation Section Notes August 11th
Buffalo Mountain Town Forest

Hunting:

Hunting is allowed.

Points to revisit: Blinds by permission of SB in accordance with State regulations. Game cameras by permission of SB.

Fishing:

Fishing in accordance with State regulations is allowed in the Forest.

Trapping:

Revisit this and get more input from Fish and Wildlife and the public. No matter what, include in management plan requirement for SB permission, per VT state law.

Foraging:

Limited collection for personal use allowed, permission of the SB for other uses.

Dogs:

Current dog ordinance: Dogs have to be under voice control, leashed, or contained. Note that dogs must be leashed on the LVRT.

Recommend for BMTF: Dogs must be leashed on Buffalo Mountain Town Forest for safety of all dogs and visitors to the Forest.

Horses:

Horses are allowed on BMTF.

Bicycles (including Mountain Bikes and E-Bikes):

Mountain bikes are permitted on the connector trail. Proposals for future mountain bike trails may be made to the pertinent committee.

Backcountry skiing: Backcountry skiing is allowed on BMTF. Any cutting of timber or flora for the benefit of backcountry skiing must be approved by the Town of Hardwick and completed in concert with the BMTF Forest Management Plan.

Snowmobiles:

Snowmobiles are permitted on the existing VAST trails, as conditions allow. Snowmobilers must adhere to VAST guidelines with respect to trail closures due to conditions.

All-terrain Vehicles and other motorized recreation:

ATVs are allowed on the VASA trail. ATVs must adhere to VASA guidelines with respect to trail closures due to conditions.

Public Events and Gatherings:

Public events are allowed with the permission of the pertinent committee. They must not restrict general use of the public to BMTF. Small events do not require permission (size TBD).

Camping:

Revisit. If yes, consider permit.

Bonfires and cookouts:

No fires.

Swimming:

Swimming is allowed where feasible, at the risk of the swimmer. No lifeguards or other life saving equipment will be provided.

Sledding:

Allowed. No vegetation trimming without permission.

This document is also available on the committees Google page.

Agenda #7: The committee agreed the results of the survey need to be made available to the public. We need to be available for conversations with and ask the towns people etc for their thoughts re: survey results. Some people when completing the survey wrote that they wanted receive updates via emails. It was proposed and agreed upon that we would be a presence and possibly have a booth at the Hardwick Farmer's Market at Atkins Field. Rachel reminded the committee that this should be done before Sept 17. Margery will contact Kate and Haley to make sure this is doable on August 28th. September 4 was suggested as a backup date. There was agreement that cider could be provided and perhaps a raffle i.e. a gift for farmer's market. This presence at the market will need to be advertised.

Agenda #8: The committee did not address this item which was to be a discussion of management plan drafting to date, due to time.

Eric moved that the meeting adjourn, Jack seconded the motion.

The meeting ended at 7:58 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for **6:00 p.m. on September 25th** at the Parker Ladd Room, Jeudevine Memorial Library.

Respectfully submitted by Marie LaPré Grabon