

Buffalo Mountain Town Forest Steering Committee

Tuesday, July 28, 2026

6:00 pm

Location: Parker Ladd Room, Jeudevine Memorial Library

Committee members present: Joe Nudell, Dylan LaFlam, Sue Rivard, Renaud Demers, Leif Goldberg, Danny Hale, Brendan Buckley, Tyler Buswell, Margie Prevot, Eric Remick, Andy Gilbert, Paul Cillo, Julie Sullivan, Rachel Kane

Committee members absent: Lucian Avery, Marie LaPre-Grabon, James Kelley

Others present: Jack Travelstead, Hannah Redmon, Opie Upson

Meeting minutes

Meeting with called to order by Brendan at 6:05 pm. Brendan pointed out that with 17 people on the committee, individuals should keep their comments brief so we can complete our business and end the meeting at 8:00 pm. Paul agreed to take notes in Marie's absence.

1. Minutes approved

- Moved by Eric and seconded by Julie to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2026 meeting as drafted; unanimously approved.
- Moved by Dylan and seconded by Danny to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026 meeting as drafted; unanimously approved.

2. Changes to the agenda

The committee agreed that it would make more sense to switch the order of items 5 (Timeline review) & 6 (Management plan sections overview).

3. No public comments

4. Community survey results

Hannah reviewed a slide presentation (Buffalo Mountain Community Survey Results) she prepared that provides a summary of the 279 survey responses. Committee members can access the presentation and all of the survey response data on the committee's website.

Since the survey included responses from Hardwick residents and non-residents, Joe suggested breaking out survey response data by these two groups. He also suggested exploring patterns in the responses that may identify subgroups that might provide a better understanding of what the data show. He will work on these two analyses.

Sue noted that since hunting and trapping cannot be prohibited according to VHCB's policy, there wasn't much the town could do about survey results that indicated opposition to these activities. Tyler expressed concern about danger to pet dogs if trapping was allowed, though the committee generally agreed that dogs should be required to be leashed. Discussion included the possible posting of signs alerting both hunters/trappers and hikers to be aware and careful. Hannah will do additional research for the committee about what sort of regulation of hunting and trapping is allowed under VHCB's policy.

5. Management plan sections overview

Hannah reviewed the elements of the management plan section by section referring to the plan outline projected on the screen for everyone to view.

Danny asked to see the draft of the Conservation Easement. Hannah appreciated the reminder and agreed to put it on the committee's website.

Sue asked whether we need to hire a geologist to complete the geological section of the plan. Jack Travelstead said we don't need to hire a geologist, just use existing information in the town plan and other available documents.

Sue asked whether we need all the background information about the property that is included in the plan outline to make a recommendation for uses to the Selectboard. Jack explained that this background information provides a baseline not only for this discussion of allowed uses but future discussions as well. Hannah encouraged committee members to review the Wolcott Community Forest management plan to get a feel for the type of information and the level of detail included in these plans.

Hannah went through the sections of the plan and assigned committee members who volunteered to draft each of the sections. Drafts sections are due by August 22. Names of the individuals who agreed to work on drafting the sections are listed in the Management Plan Drafting Process document in the Management Plan folder on the committee's website.

6. Timeline review

Hannah reviewed the following project timeline with the committee:

July:

- Implementation/Infrastructure fundraising begins
- Community Survey

August:

- Public community meetings
- Conversations with experts
 - Hardwick Rescue–Lucian
 - DFW–Hannah
 - Emily Sayers–Hannah
 - Trail builder person from survey Jon Salewicz–Leif
 - Dylan and Andy both present on trails maintenance costs
 - Ken Davis
- August 22nd due date: Management Plan draft subcommittee sections

September:

- Management plan draft to Selectboard and NRLT. Goal date submitted by September 10th.

October:

- Baseline Documentation Report (NRLT) in early October

November:

- Management plan to VHCB one month before closing

December:

- Projected closing

7&8. Public community meetings

Hannah discussed additional public meetings for community input. Agreed to check into the idea of have a public meeting at Atkins Field in coordination with Kristin Leahy/CAE Monday events. Aug 10 is the preferred.

Sue and Rachel agreed to work with Hannah as a subcommittee to develop a meeting plan for additional public meetings.

9. Other

Sue asked about insurance implications of town ownership of the town forest. Paul mentioned that he has been in touch with Linda Martin, Wolcott Selectboard chair, about insurance costs for their 750-acre town forest with multi-use trails. Linda reported there has been no increase in insurance premiums. Opie will check w/VLCT, which provides the town's insurance.

In response to a question, Hannah said that the recommendations to the Select Board will be in the Recreation and Education section of the Management Plan. The committee's recommendations will be discussed during the next two committee meetings. Committee members were asked to read the Recreation and Education section of the Wolcott Community Forest Management Plan before the August 11 meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Paul A. Cillo (in secretary's absence)