Minutes
Buffalo Mountain Steering Committee
Tuesday, August 22, 2026

Members Present: Brendan Buckley, Eric Remick, Leif Goldberg, James Kelley, Andy Gilbert, Joe Nudell, Margery Prevot, Julie Sullivan, Rachel Kane, Sue Rivard, Paul Cillo, Lucian Avery, Tyler Buswell, Marie LaPré Grabon

Members Not Present: Renaud Demers, Dylan LaFlam

Advisory Members Present: Hannah Redmon, Jack Travelstead

Agenda Item #1: Eric moved to approve the minutes. James seconded the move. All present approved and the motion passed.

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

Item #3: There were no public comments.

Agenda Item #4: Leif lead a public bicycle ride on the mountain. Six people, including Leif, explored Wright Road. Lucian and Joe plan a public walk on October 4, and Julie and Brendan are also planning one for October 10.

Agenda #5: Review of the Management Plan draft to date; it was agreed that the steering committee does not have consensus on a few items….most approve but a few disagree, but the committee could still put forward the document to the Select Board. Tyler asked if the rules re: motorized activities were set in stone…if there was room for connector fields. Hannah replied that motorized vehicles are approved on the mountain working with larger networks and managers.

The Town of Hardwick may allow recreational all-terrain vehicle ("ATV") use and maintenance and repair of an ATV trail across the Protected Property that connects to an existing, legal network of ATV trails, provided that the ATV connecting trail and network have no significant negative impact on the conservation or public recreation values and the Town of Hardwick has received the prior written approval of the Easement Owners for such use.

Paul suggested a review of the names of the forested properties owned by the Town of Hardwick…that is, the name Buffalo Mountain Town Forest, when suggested, was not intentional, and that it could be renamed Buffalo Mountain Community Forest, so as to not confuse with the 70 acre Hardwick Town Forest. Paul would like the name to be intentional. Lucian stated that he thought changing the name now would be confusing and that the lands are manages differently. Lucian asked it there are different definitions for “town” vs “community”. Jack replied that town and community mean the same. The name will remain Buffalo Mountain Town Forest.

Hannah advised that the steering committee respond to more of the history of Buffalo Mtn., and as a group review the goals that are currently in the draft of the

management plan. She stated there are outstanding points and we want to send a basic form to the community.

Hannah proposed The committee begin discussing public input and the steering committee's role in providing information to the Hardwick town residents and landowners. Thoughts on what to be shared with the community…how often we, the steering committee meets, names of the committee members, the committee minutes are public, the committee meetings are advertised and open to the public, the committee has used public input and local resources in creating a management plan, and the committee meets deliberately with diligent and thoughtful process.

Emily S. has almost completed The Forest Management Plan.
Under Geology and Soils the description of soils needs to be completed.

Proposed Action Schedule; the steering committee needs to provide the first steps for the Stewardship Committee…

-Trail work, maintenance of trails,
-Enlist volunteers for maintaining the trails
-To establish a sustainable hiking trail
-To gather more public input
-To gather more information and recommendations from experts
-To create simple signage
-To create a kiosk

Lucian asked if there are flags delineating the property lines. Hannah will check. It was offered that there are but they need to be refreshed.

Under the Management Plan parking needs more conversation, and there is no winter access. It was suggested that there be more than one kiosk. Another suggestion was for signage on Route 15. Public access to maps of the mountain can be viewed on the Hardwick town website.
Access to one of the trails is thru Atkins Field. The committee needs to talk with CAE re: this because we should not just assume access without a conversation, and discuss the possibility of future/additional access. Legal access to the property is currently being worked on by lawyers.

Goals: the committee moved on to review the Goals written into the draft of the BM Management Plan…with the "goal" of making small changes where possible.
The description of revised goals are listed below.

General Purposes:

-To preserve and conserve the 329.5-acre property on Buffalo Mountain so that residents and visitors have access to explore and recreate within a healthy northern New England ecosystem.
-Where possible, to expand public use, educational programming, and enhanced recreational opportunities, while preserving the health and natural diversity of the land.
-To identify and secure funding for active management and maintenance

Wildlife Habitat:

-Maintain and protect the existing biodiversity and ecological integrity.Contribute to environmental resilience, particularly by providing terrain for wildlife mobility.
-Protect and conserve rare species and habitats.
-Maintain healthy surface and groundwater sources and availability.
-Protect forested and non-forested wetlands, vernal pools and other aquatic habitats.
-Maintain and protect the diversity of habitats and the plant and wildlife that flourish therein.
-Prevent, or at best limit, the introduction and spread of invasive species.
-Adhere to current best practice guidelines in our approach to management of the land, the forest and the wildlife

Educational Goals:

-Partner with local educational institutions, conservation organizations, and people of all ages to use the forest as a classroom.
-Install low-impact signage and offer guided programming highlighting natural communities, biodiversity, and good stewardship practices. Educate visitors on -Leave No Trace principles, protect sensitive features, and promote safe co-existence across recreational uses through seasonal hunting notices and trail etiquette.

Trapping: The committee returned to the issue of trapping on Buffalo Mountain. The committee does not have consensus on whether or not to allow trapping on the property. The public survey showed mixed feelings…many participants in the survey did not want trapping on the property. There was discussion of letting the Select Board decide thru a democratic process. This was the final agreement made by the committee re: this issue.

Camping: Again this issue has not been resolved by the committee. The issues resolve around "primitive camping", a permit for a larger group, who manages and enforces rules for camping on the property. Leif read the *VT State Rules and Regulations* re: camping.

Primitive camping is allowed within designated areas BMTF.
Camping must be at least 100 feet from any stream or body of water
Camping must be at least 200 feet from any trail or property line, and 1000 feet from any traveled road.
Camping is allowed up to ? consecutive nights in the same area.
Groups of ? or more individuals must obtain a permit from the Select Boards in order to primitive camp.
We require one responsible adult for every 4 campers under the age of 14.
If you carry it in - carry it out!
Leave your campsite so clean that no one else can find it.
The use of backpacker stoves with self-contained fuel is urged.
No campfires are allowed.

This issue has not been resolved by the committee.

Hannah emphasized that we, the committee, needs an extra meeting in order to present the final Management Plan to the Select Board.

Next Steps…resolve the issue of camping, and more reviews of the Management Plan. We will meet on September 28th, 6 p.m. at the Parker Ladd Room, Jeudevine Library. We will hold a public Community Meeting on September 29 at the Parker Ladd Room. We hope to meet with the Select Board to present the plan on either October 1 or October 15.

The following agenda items # 6 and #7 were not addressed due to time.

Brendan moved to end the meeting and Lucian seconded the move. All agreed and the meeting ended at 8:11 p.m.

The next meeting for the Buffalo Mountain Steering Committee will be on September 28, 2026, 6 p.m., at the Parker Ladd Room, Jeudevine Library.

Respectfully submitted by Marie LaPré Grabon