

Meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission
5 p.m. Monday, May 9, 2016
Marlboro, Vermont Town Office
Minutes

Call to Order – 5:00pm

Attendees: Mike Purcell, Chair, Lauren MacArthur, Ed Metcalfe, Christine Collela, Phil Howe, Hal Himmelstein, David Elliott, Bob Anderson, Nancy Anderson, Diana Todd, Amanda Whiting, Staley McDermot, Patti Smith

Minutes: March meeting minutes approved. January meeting minutes still have not been approved. Lauren will find the corrected version and send it out for approval at next meeting.

Reports

Chair's Report

Mike, Diana, and Amanda went to the Arbor Day Workshop in Montpelier, attending a workshop on managing recreation on public land. (Diana's notes on the workshop: - ("Key theme - focus on managing people's expectations for town forests, rather than the trees, and things will always go more smoothly.

- You'll never have all the information you want to make a decision. At some point you just have to make a judgement call, decide, and move forward.

- There will always be conflicting goals. Come up with compromise/resolution by focusing on the What, Where, and When of the conflicting uses.

- "Recreation is Connection" - getting people out into the woods will build love for the place.

- How much use is too much use? The more people that use a place, the more services you need to provide.

- The fastest growing types of outdoor recreation in Vermont are fat biking (biking in snow), drone flying, backcountry skiing, trail running and extreme events (large off-road races with obstacle courses).

- You can't write a management plan that anticipates all potential future uses of the land. Instead you should have a clear process for making decisions on new uses as they arise."- D.Todd)

MES Day is coming up!

HMCA Report

A summary of what HMCA has been doing in the interval since the last HPC meeting in early March.

1. MES Day (Marlboro Elementary School day of fun & learning on the mountain) has been scheduled for May 24 with a rain date of June 1. HMCA Director Carol Berner, with input from the HMCA Education Committee, is the primary organizer of the event on the HMCA side.
2. The Trail Committee met and planned spring work days to clean up and improve the existing trails. Bob Anderson has purchased the tools approved in this year's budget (McCleod rake, Fiskars loppers, and Pullerbear for pulling small stumps). They are stored in the Anderson garage along with the HMCA brush cutter. Trail days are

- scheduled for May 11 and 14, 2016. The birch tree in the cellar hole needs to be removed in the late summer/fall.
3. Marlboro teacher Tim Hayes asked for permission for his students to use saplings that had been cut on Great White Way as part of the ESH (Early Successional Habitat) project for the school's annual woodworking/bench building project. Tim & Diana Todd scouted the slope and verified that the material was suitable for use. Tim will use the harvesting trip as a chance to educate the students about 1) always getting permission to harvest/use resources on public land, and 2) the goals of the ESH project.
 4. The ESH committee led a tour of the Practice Slope, which will be Phase 3 of the project (2017-2018). Diana Todd, Amanda Whiting, Mike Purcell, Bob Anderson, and Nancy Anderson participated. Ed Metcalf joined the group for the first part of the tour and discussion, reviewing the location of the boundary between the two properties and his plans for the lower part of the slope, which he owns. Ed plans to maintain the flatter part of the ski slope, nearest the parking area, in a meadow-like condition, mowed once or twice a year. Where the slope steepens, he will let the young trees continue to grow. The group agreed that this band of young trees will provide a helpful visual screen between the parking lot and the planned ESH cut further up the slope. The group concluded that the ESH cut should be uphill of the Tower Trail, extending to the blackberry patch at the top of the former ski slope.
 5. Two grant requests for funding the ESH project's use of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps are still pending. Unfortunately, the HMCA was just informed that the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps is committed elsewhere this summer so we'd have to hire private workers to help out with the ESH project. Diana is contacting the potential grant-givers to see if they are still eligible for funds and if they'd be able to hire other workers.
 6. The funding organizations (New England Grassroots Environmental Fund and the Windham Foundation) have not yet made decisions.
 7. Tom Groves, a Marlboro resident, contacted HMCA via the link on the web site, to indicate that his firm, Long View Forest, is interested in learning more about the Biodiversity Inventory. Tom is a botanist with Long View and has experience performing conservation surveys. He learned of the Biodiversity Inventory plans from the HPC minutes on the town web site. Diana forwarded a copy of his email to the HPC and the HMCA Board.
 8. Several HMCA Directors had concerns about the HPC vote to have the Castle stabilized. After an email discussion among the HMCA Directors, the subject was raised with Mike Purcell, HPC Chairman, at the Trail Committee meeting. It was agreed that comments from the HMCA would be shared at the next HPC meeting. See three attachments, appended below. The main points raised were:
 - a. Lack of an overall plan that considers all the buildings.
 - b. Potential for vandalism.
 - c. Need for ongoing maintenance.
 - d. Lack of a clear use for the structure.

The HPC had questions about the bird and tick studies. Are they ongoing? How much longer will the bird-monitoring structure be there?

SVNHM Report – Visitorship is up 60% over last year. Social media seems to be giving the museum a big boost!

Old Business

- **Stabilization of the “Castle” building** – Concerns were raised by the HMCA about whether this building would be an attractive nuisance, but it was decided

that the decision of the HPC stands to stabilize the building with the rationale that a cared-for building is less-likely to be vandalized and that it would be a nice amenity to recreation on the mountain.

New Business

-Buildings on Hogback:

- **Benedict Cottage:** Does the Benedict Cottage have value? Ed went there with Jennider Garnett, VLT Regional Stewardship Manager. She felt the building needed to have a long-term, regular use that meets the goals of the conservation easement. (Nancy Anderson has a key and hopefully the Selectboard does too) We need to patch the roof, at least. Ed has offered to fix the roof.
- **Historical Artifacts** such as the t-bars need to be moved to a safe location. Christine suggests auctioning off t-bars that have been turned into art pieces by local artists as a fundraiser. An inventory of items that we have would be helpful!
- **Quonset Hut** We will revisit this next time to decide what should be done. HPC and HMCA members encouraged to visit the building to check on its condition
- **Asbestos Assessment in the First Aid Building.** Lauren moved to spend the \$500 for the asbestos assessment (Phase 1 of the consultation for possible demolition).

Motion seconded and passed.

Christine will call Catamount and ECF. Mike will request funds from the Selectboard.

The building is unsafe, a liability, and close to the road!

-Snowmobile Sign Relocation? Mike will ask if the sign itself could be removed for the summer (but posts could remain).

-Biodiversity Study- Diana, Amanda, Patti, Mike, David, and Christine will make up a working group to interview contractors, contact UVM's field naturalists program, and discuss next steps for the study.

Lauren will be stepping down from the HPC, but helping to find a new recruit!

Next Meeting – Monday, July 11, 5pm

Adjournment – 6:40pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren MacArthur

5/11/16