# Regular Meeting of the Hogback Management Plan Update Committee 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 24, 2023 Town Office, Marlboro, Vermont and via Zoom

#### Minutes

#### Attendees:

- HMPUC Members
  - o In person: Diana Todd (chair), Mike Purcell
  - o via Zoom: Eric Slayton, Pieter Van Loon, Amanda Whiting
- Guests (all via Zoom)
  - Jennifer Garrett, Vermont Land Trust
  - o Bob Anderson, Nancy Anderson, Lou Tognan

### Call to order: 7:05 pm

- 1. Welcome and introductions
  - a. Why are we updating the Management Plan (MP)?
    - i. The existing MP was drafted circa 2010 when the conservation area (CA) was first created, and has been only lightly modified since then. In 2018-2019, a Biodiversity Inventory was conducted which gives much more information than was previously available about whether certain parts of the CA deserve special treatment. New uses have arisen since the original plan was drafted, such as ebikes and drones, and gaps in the existing plan, such as having no mention of invasive species, have been noted.
  - b. review roles of groups that will be involved in the project
    - i. The HMPUC committee will create a draft.
    - ii. The Hogback Preservation Committee (HPC), parent body of HMPUC, will be responsible for moving the draft through final review, revision, approval and adoption. HMPUC will report their progress to HPC at regular HPC meetings.
    - iii. HMPUC will inform the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association (HMCA), a non-governmental volunteer organization, about progress on the draft at regular HMCA meetings.
    - iv. The Selectboard will approve and adopt the plan on behalf of the town.
    - v. The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), co-holders of the conservation easement on the property, will review and approve the plan. See more detail in item 2 below.
- 2. Overview of the update process
  - a. Guest presenter, Jennifer Garrett of Vermont Land Trust (VLT)
    - i. Requirements in the Conservation Easement
      - 1. A management plan (MP) is required by the conservation easement (CE).
        - a. See section I.B. of the CE for a list of minimum requirements
        - b. Beyond that, there is no mandated format or content requirements, but the MP has to be consistent with the CE
        - c. The MP must be developed with opportunity for public input. Input can be either in the early phase of collecting

- ideas or in a later phase when there is a draft to share, or both.
- d. The MP must be updated from time to time, but on no set schedule.
- 2. The MP needs to be approved by VLT.
  - a. VLT is available throughout the update process as a resource or if questions arise.
  - VLT review is required after the MP is finalized, but an earlier review is also requested, once an early draft is available.
  - c. VLT will coordinate review by VHCB.
- Once the MP is approved, no further VLT approval is needed for projects in the MP, with possible exceptions for projects that are not fully outlined in the MP.
- 4. The ultimate goal is for the MP to serve the town's needs.
- 5. No detailed stand-by-stand forest management plan is necessary until a timber harvest is planned, but a general approach to forest management should be included in the MP.
- ii. Guidance available VLT has created many resources to help towns (and others) develop MPs, including templates, lists, recommended processes, and case studies. VLT has also identified MP's created and adopted by other towns that can be mined for ideas.
- b. Major steps the committee agreed to the following general process:
  - i. Collect ideas and information HMPUC will:
    - 1. review the existing MP, the CE, and the Biodiversity Inventory
    - 2. review MPs and case studies from other towns
    - 3. seek public input, from both Marlboro residents and other users of the CA, via a survey available both online and on paper
    - 4. seek input from HPC and HMCA via reports to them at their regular meetings
    - 5. contact the County Forester to see what support he can give us
  - ii. Formulate an early draft and seek comments
    - from the public at an open meeting or forum (not a regular HMPUC meeting, but a meeting specifically for presenting the draft and seeking responses)
    - from potentially affected groups that use the CA, such as VAST, VMBA, SoVtAudubon, BEEC, Marlboro Elementary School, the Green River Watershed Alliance, etc. The Marlboro Conservation Commission, the Marlboro Planning Commission, and the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum (SVNHM) have already been alerted that the project is getting underway.
    - 3. from VLT
  - iii. Consider ideas collected during review and develop a refined draft
  - iv. Submit draft to HPC
- 3. How we will operate
  - a. adhere to Open Meeting protocols

- i. We need a quorum in order to hold a meeting. If not enough members show up for any given meeting, we will get on the phone and try to track people down until we have a quorum. If members are consistently unable to attend, they may be asked to leave the committee.
- ii. If an item is not on the agenda, it will not be discussed. We can collect new ideas for topics, but they will only be discussed in detail at a future meeting, after they have been included in a warned agenda.
- b. committee members will do specific tasks between meetings (research, writing) and report back at the next meeting
- c. hold meetings to share progress
  - i. TIME CHANGE To enable more full participation by several members, the meeting time is henceforth shifted to 7:30-9:00 pm.
  - ii. We will endeavor to reach consensus on all topics via discussion, but if a decision by vote is needed to keep the work moving forward, a simple majority of those members present will carry the motion.
- d. If someone not currently on the HMPUC asks to join the committee, then-current members who are present at the meeting when the application is discussed will vote whether or not to accept the offer, considering the particular skills and knowledge the person could bring to the project.
- 4. Assignments for next meeting
  - a. everyone review existing Management Plan and conservation easement
  - b. each member to review management plan from one other town
  - c. each member to review a Case Study from another town
  - d. start thinking about the pubic survey
    - i. what apps are available for online surveys?
    - ii. what guestions should be asked?
  - e. See "assignments" handout for details of who will review what.
- 5. Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

### **HMPUC**

## 2023\_05\_24 meeting handout

Assignments for the next meeting – June 14, 2023

Documents listed below can be found in the shared Google Drive "HMPUC file cabinet"

- 1. Review Key Three docs
  - a. existing Management Plan
  - b. Conservation Easement
  - c. Biodiversity Inventory
- 2. Review a Management Plan from another town
  - a. The big picture are there any interesting concepts we could consider for Hogback? Example: zones.
  - b. What level of detail is in the plan?
  - c. Did they do a survey? What questions did they ask?
  - d. Are there topics they cover that we don't mention?
  - e. How do they address enforcement of their rules?
  - f. Do they use multi-purpose trails or single-use trails?
- 3. Review a Case Study from VLT materials
- 4. Start thinking about the public survey
  - a. software to use
  - b. how to distribute and collect paper versions
  - c. outreach to use
  - d. questions to ask

Town/ Forest Name	who will review it	
Bolton/ Preston Pond	Sarah	
Barre	Diana	
Richmond/ Andrews Forest	Amanda	
Stowe/ Sterling Forest	Mike	
Waitsfield/ Scrag Forest	Christine	
West Windsor/ Ascutney	Pieter	
Williston/ Mud Pond	Eric	

Town Case Study	who will review it
Barre	Eric
Bennington	Christine
Canaan	Amanda
Middlesex	Mike
Mills Riverside	Diana
Waitsfield	Sarah