

Andrews Community Forest Committee Minutes

Special Meeting

June 2 2025 6:00pm to 8:30pm

Attendees: Sonya Mastersen, Wright Preston (co-chair), Ian Stokes (co-chair), Brad Elliott, Sam Pratt, James Cochran, Julian Portilla (phone)

Minutes taker: James Cochran

Time keeper: Wright

Public: Dan Wolfson

Public Comment Period:

- Dan printed and handed out a map of sensitive areas in the forest to help guide discussion about what areas are most sensitive and should be avoided. He has also applied to be on the Andrews community forest committee.

Ecology Section Revision:

Looking at draft management plan 2 dated April 28 (Brad's rewrite)

Ian wonders if demarcation of VAST trail in ecology section should be matched with description in rec section.

Sam wonders if some of the language is "verbose." He feels the language should be concise. Proposes moving first 2 sentences from line 19 to appendix.

Sam wonders if a lot of this ecology section could go to the appendix thus making objectives and actions more prominent.

Brad proposes having an editor determine what goes to the appendix and what stays in the B section of the management plan.

Ian wonders if we should maintain "long" sections to help justify the goals and objectives. Build a case for each objective.

Julian reiterates that we should keep the concept of moving things to the appendix where appropriate. A writer should not be employed until we resolve the core issues.

Ian wonders about the input from the conservation commission, specifically what and when they will be looking to recommend changes and how this will affect timeline for submitting to Selectboard.

Sam is hopeful that the conservation commission feedback is expert in nature and not organizational. No flow edits. Just tweaks to the science etc.

Julian: Wonders if the last map in the ecology section is confusing. Needs some edits to highlight where the parcel boundary actually is.

Ian has additional edits for Brad and will send.

Recreation Section Revision:

Ian wonders if this rec section should be a replacement for the current draft management plan or supplemental?

Ian wonders about the recreation appendix. Should it be retained?

Sam wonders if much of the rec section will refer back to the ecology section

Julian: Rec objectives need to be sorted to be rec section specific. Many of the early objectives listed pertain more to other sections. Also, some of the management guidelines can be moved to objectives.

Julian wonders if including distances should be removed from the overlay management guidelines. Also that actions have some that should be removed. Promote use of the forest by diverse user groups. Talk about what we do want, not what we don't and do so in a positive manner. Julian will submit comments to Sam.

Sonya: wonders about potential hunting setbacks/safety zones near houses, roads etc. Jim feels this should be included in the rec section in a way that relies on state guidance.

Julian: Prohibit may be too strict of a word when talking about buffers etc. There may be scenarios where a trail clipping a buffer is preferable or unavoidable.

Sam The strong language was chosen to make things not seem optional.

Julian: Suggest "avoid, minimize, restrict might be better words with an additional process for how trails come into being.

Brad: Also feels/has felt that there needs to be a process for considering new trails, process for building new trails

Julian: The process for developing a trail could incorporate mileage limits similar to how Caitlin/Daniel approached.

Brad: Cost estimates for trails should be included. Trail proposals could be similar to conservation reserve fund by having a checklist to determine value.

Sam: Trail dev param references the VT town forest guidelines. Maybe

Consensus that a process should be created for trail proposals.

Ian: what sort of change can be made mid-stream on the management plan. Should trails be considered only every management cycle?

Sam: The subcommittee can address comments from other committee members.

Town Plan

Brad: ACF is currently lumped into general Town owned property. Virginia recommended having specific items for ACF.

Voted to include Brad's comments to the town plan. Unanimously approved.

Adjourned to participate in the Selectboard meeting.

Meeting again on June 23rd 6pm