

## Andrews Community Forest Committee Minutes

### Regular Meeting

May 18 2025 6:00pm to 8:30pm

Attendees: Julian Portilla, Ian Stokes, Brad Elliott(co-chair), Sam Pratt (Co Chair), James Cochran, Julian Portilla, Dan Woolfson (online), Sonya Masterson

Minutes taker: James Cochran

Time keeper: Ian

Public: Trevor Brooks

- **Minutes approved from 4/27 (Wright moved Brad seconded), All in favor except Julian abstained**

Julian brings up North/South no bikes/dogs email. Sam thinks we should incorporate this issue into upcoming conversations with RCC, RTC, Selectboard and public. Sam- Any feedback could and should be incorporated into post management plan review when the committee is compiling input from RCC, RTC and public..

Ian-Conversation about town forest page versus committee page on the town website. Current page has draft management plan

Julian, with additional protections in place (for animals) allows for a revisiting of the north south rule and maybe we should spend time talking about it. Sam proposes that we get through the current agenda and then talk about this at the end. Sam agrees that the buffers etc has changed the math somewhat to this conversation. Julian feels that the prohibition on bikes in the northern zone should be modified now to avoid future headache. Sam- Lets discuss at the end of the meeting if time allows.

Tonight's selectboard meeting is about scheduling.

Jim- will go to RTC meeting to discuss meadow meander relocation and management plan

Julian: Did FAQ doc go to selectboard? Julian feels this doc will potentially create a firestorm for recreation vs conservation is somewhat one-sided. Sam- I don't know what to say... the committee worked on the FAQ document in a meeting, it was posted. Ultimately selectboard will have final say.

Julian- want's to get his opinion on record that he thinks the committee will get a lot of pushback and end up back in a log jam because of the northern zone bike/dog ban and the management plan is robust enough in terms of protections for wildlife to not need that piece.

Sam- reiterates that selectboard will have final say and it's possible that they may require that the dog/bike thing be removed.

Designating editors- Sonya is going to edit the management plan for "polish". Nothing will be approved until the committee sees it. The committee will have the opportunity to add table of contents, page numbers etc. Ian would like to help with this.

Sam and Brad will reach out to Sonya to facilitate polish followed by Ian to undertake formatting. This will happen after feedback from town.

Followup from onsite visit on Friday, May 15th. Jim, Wright and Sam met onsite to discuss meadow meander traffic coming down into Sonya's yard. Sam- we moved a cattle gate to block traffic from continuing into her yard. Sam- we also looked at the end of the utility road where it could be continued to the former vast trail. Wright- maybe meadow meander could be co-located with a right of way for cattle to avoid Sonya's property. Sam- Sonya has not asked us to address this, this is the committee's wish independent of Sonya's wishes.

Moving Picnic tables from log landing. They don't seem to be used in their current location. Bring them to the parking area? Wright - one is appropriate for parking area. Sam- maybe move second one to a visible place in the log landing. Wright volunteers to move picnic tables.

Visitor materials updates. Visitor rules are ready to be put up. Dogs are a potential issue that may need to be monitored. Trevor Brooks - They could register in some way so you know who they are if there is a problem. They're probably supposed to carry insurance. would generally not go down a trail with a pack of unleashed dogs. Sam- perhaps better to have the rule and know that folks may bend it.

E-bikes- Sam- we're being overly cautious on moratorium on bikes and dogs in northern zone, perhaps we should be more lenient on e-bikes and see if it becomes a problem.

Tree stands are allowed in accordance with Vermont state law. Folks can reach out to the email on the rules doc.

The rules doc will be modified for use in the short term (this summer) by changing the dogs section to reflect the current leash rules and also remove "e-bikes" from Hours and allowed uses

Sam motions Wright seconds. All in favor.

Former VAST trail along wetlands. Potential to move the trail uphill. Ian, a reroute is possible but 3 bridges would need to be built across streams. Sam- How would this reroute need to follow the new process? Tina said that we should reach out to wetlands to do a site visit before proceeding. A botanist should be included in walking the route. A botanist from the state may be a cheaper option versus hiring arrowwood etc. Jim will reach out to Tina to see if there is a state of VT botanist that could walk the route. Sam- lets move forward by asking around without committing to hiring anyone.

Invasive species. Sam- there is an abundance of multi floral rose, and many other invasive species. How do we tackle this? Sam- this feels like maybe herbicide is appropriate. A volunteer workday may be a good way to foster good will and connection to the town forest.

Dan- Grace Glynn is the state botanist.

Invasives next steps: June 13th leaves time to plan a successful event. Sam will coordinate. June 13th at 9am is set.

Next meeting is June 22nd and is the first meeting of the new year. New chair should be discussed.

Dan motion to adjourn, seconded by sam. All in favor.