

## Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes

Thursday, December 19, 2019 – The INN, Montgomery

**Attendees:** Jacques Couture, Russ Ford, Carol Hickey, John Little, Jim MacCartney, Misty McCartney, Bethany Remmers, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Dan Seeley, Sherry Willey, Ranier Lucas, Lindsey Wight, Meg Rossi, Adele Wolfson, and Vince Hickey

**Meeting called to order** at 6:35. Sherry was our secretary for this meeting. Thank you Sherry!

**Review of the November minutes:** CS motioned; CH seconded; minutes were approved as written.

**Wild and Scenic Film Festival:** Lower attendance at the film festival this year – due to the holiday? Still locals; not getting the resort crowd, so in the future we don't need to feel like we should tie it to busy times at the resort. We could try a different location – EHS in the auditorium? Dairy Center? Newport (City Cinema)? St. Albans? – or a different time of year (outdoor event in warm weather??). It was noted that it's nice to have this in the winter when we don't have a ton of other things going on. We do need to be mindful of not having it encroach on the VNRC film festival – although Lindsey's contact at the national group said that data shows that when there are two festivals in the same region, the second one has higher attendance. We could check with VNRC about February 2021. Lindsey will work on this.

Other thoughts: advertise to college and high school kids (for extra credit?) – partner with schools/teachers. Offer student discount?

**River Community Grants:** Thanks for the feedback on the River Community Grants application; still fairly wordy, but hopefully a bit more clear for applications. Applications are due February 3<sup>rd</sup>; please help spread the word. Town reps, please be sure that your town officials are aware of this funding opportunity. Applications are available on our website: [vtwsr.org/river-community-grants-program](http://vtwsr.org/river-community-grants-program)

Russ presented for the partnership grant “Missisquoi Headwaters Search and Rescue”: The mountains above our rivers are a wonderful asset, and benefit from a great collaboration of many protectors. Our rivers also benefit from the protection provided to the land and from the love that people feel for the land on which they recreate. There is no Search-and-Rescue organization set here, and growing recreation brings growing potential for incidents. Jay Peak Ski Patrol has taken up the mantle of “mutual aid”, and found a need for a portable, lightweight sled for extricating injured people. Through a partnership with the Grateful Shreds backcountry group, JPSP has purchased a backcountry rescue sled that weighs 34 lbs and breaks into 2 pieces for ease of carrying. This sled will be used by JPSP and also made available to other organizations as needed.

**2019 Annual Report/Newsletter:** Coming in January

**Marketing Strategies:** As part of the Mill Brook funding, we received technical assistance. We were paired with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and discussed primarily marketing. Lindsey wants to form a subcommittee to create “brand” guidelines – color and other details that will help us when making products and having consistent advertising. Also: should we change over our website from [vtwsr.org](http://vtwsr.org) to [umatr.org](http://umatr.org)? Still keep [vtwsr.org](http://vtwsr.org) and redirect – also purchase [umatr.net](http://umatr.net), [umatr.com](http://umatr.com), etc. Concern raised that [umatter.org](http://umatter.org) is a suicide prevention site.

Subcommittee for marketing/branding: Cynthia, Carol, Misty

**Other Admin:** The NPS financial folks will need our budgeting DONE by April, so we'll be discussing our next budget earlier than usual – at our February meeting instead of our April one. This makes the February meeting a very big one for finances: we'll make our grant decisions at the meeting, as well as put together a draft budget to be finalized voted on during the March meeting.

February conflicts led to us changing the meeting date from Feb 20 to Feb 13.

**Committee Satisfaction:** Committee filled out satisfaction surveys that Ranier/Lindsey created – Ranier will enter into spreadsheet, so that the answers are anonymous.

**Projects:** Bethany presented on the Combs Road project – an undersized culvert replacement; went from 5' to 14'. VT Fish and Wildlife funds (for fish passage) – the contractor partnered with the town to make this an affordable project. 72 feet long. Held up to the October flooding and the vegetation took. VTFWD was pleased; the design engineer doesn't love the inside – it did have material wash through in the flooding (historic bridge abutments restrict the channel and the heavy rains made it a nozzle; have to get Historic Society involved to remove that...); the way the structure was installed meant it was hard to get material into the base of the structure. Good learning process; some work still to do on replicating the stream bed. BR brought photos that tell the full story.

Land conservation – the property that Anne and Bruce McKay conserved with the Vermont River Conservancy has not been fully transferred to the town yet; Lindsey and Lydia from VRC met with the Village Trustees and this transfer is moving forward. VRC will stay involved to help improve and protect the property. Other VRC-related projects include property near 3-Holes that is rumored to be for sale. Lindsey spoke with VRC about having some dedicated time for them to spend on projects in our region – conversation ongoing. May need to be a significant percentage of time to make it worth them dedicating (or hiring) staff for this purpose.

Mill Brook – final design plans are ready; we'll be pulling the trigger on this as soon as spring allows. Need to clear up permitting needs.

Other – the October flooding took a chunk out of the riverbanks along Loop Rd in Westfield. Always a need for more structures grants/funding. AOP funding can help with legwork – helping towns to prioritize projects. There's always some match required by the town; this is a good pitch for our funding – let's make them aware of it! Mention the Combs Rd project, could bring pictures, but the selectboards don't really need that; they know about the problems.

Another Richford culvert: South Richford Road; the town has a grant, some F&W funds, could use funding from our pot to bring the project to completion? Get the word out!

**2020 Events:** Snowshoes: Feb 8, 9-11am Franklin County; Feb 2, 9-11am Orleans County. Fishing tournament this spring. LNT workshop this spring. Paddle/Pedal June 20<sup>th</sup>. Paddle/Picnic June 6<sup>th</sup> on the Trout. Adult overnight on the river August 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Gathering? Film Fest? Other?

**Upcoming meetings:** January 16 – Orleans County – Lowell?  
\*February 13\* – Franklin County – Richford?  
March 19 – Orleans County – North Troy?

**Wrap up and adjourn:** MMc motioned; DS seconded. All in favor; meeting ended at 8:33.