

**BOYCE HILL STEERING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 15, 2022**

Present via Zoom: Pete Colgan, Woody Dugan, Sally Dwyer, Chuck Martel, Corrie Miller and Karrie Thomas.

Guest Speaker: Ross Saxton, Mad River Path

1. February 1 Minutes: Woody moved to approve minutes; Chuck seconded. The minutes were approved with no changes.
2. No public input.
3. Town Meeting Presentation: Corrie and Pete will give an update on the Steering Committee's progress in completing a management plan, the public events that have been given to inform the public about Boyce Hill, and an explanation of the Fayston Conservation Commission's proposed budget, most of which will be for Boyce Hill, at the Town Meeting Presentation on February 22nd at 6:00 PM.
4. Management Plan:
 - a. Pond: Pete Cogan asked Ross Saxton to speak about what pond possibilities the Steering Committee should consider in managing it. Ross responded that the pond currently has a small, but active population of small mouth bass (probably introduced by a prior owner) that appear to have successfully removed native inhabitants of the pond (e.g., frogs, minnows, amphibians, etc.). The pond is likely not suitable for any of the larger fish – small mouth bass ("smallies"), brook and rainbow trout – on a long-term basis unless they were restocked each year. If the committee would like to restore the pond to its natural state, consider hosting a fishing derby to remove the "smallies" and trout, perhaps hosted by the VT Fish & Game "Let's Go Fishing" program, the Silver Trout store in Waitsfield, and/or Mad Dog Trout Unlimited. Ross expressed interest in helping arrange such a derby.

Ross also spoke briefly about the desirability of having vegetation around the perimeter of the pond in order to cool the water and encourage the return amphibians, etc. He also encouraged planting wild flowers on the outside of the pond dam in order to support pollinators in places where deeper rooted plants are not recommended in order to maintain dam integrity.
 - b. Equestrian Update: Sally reported that there have been few responses to the emails she's sent out to the local equestrian community and those that have responded displayed misunderstandings about prior equestrian use of the parcel and abutting properties. Chuck would like to convene an in-person meeting of the local equestrian community, perhaps with outside expertise included, in order to see what solutions might be obtained to the concerns raised in the survey and in the Steering Committee.

It may be that the management plan will continue to exclude horseback riding until such time as these concerns can be addressed. It is anticipated that the lack of parking will limit the number of riders to those who live nearby, perhaps no more than 15 riders.

- c. Hunting: Woody reported that he is still waiting to get a response from the Back Country Hunters & Anglers organization. The Steering Committee agreed that it would be appropriate for Woody to include the VLT easement and a description of the property when he emails the organization a second time in the hopes of eliciting a response.

 - d. Name of Property: There was a consensus among most attending that the name for the property should be the simple two word "Boyce Hill" although there were several suggestions for an additional word or two – Common, Reserve, or even Conservation Area. Several thought it would be appropriate to have a name that acknowledges the indigenous peoples' use of the land and/or incorporated a descriptor of the property rather than the name of a settler family. It was agreed that no formal decision will be made on changing the name of the property until a future date.
5. New Business: Pete raised the possibility of using some of the ARPA funds that Fayston will be receiving to hire a professional to write the management plan. Chuck reported that this is an allowable use of these funds and that the Selectmen would support it. The proposed Town budget includes \$15,000 for the Conservation Commission, most of which would be designated for Boyce Hill. Pete and Corrie will go through our list of organizations and individual consultants to see who should be approached about helping us produce a final management plan. The estimate cost of hiring this out is ~\$10,000.