

BOYCE HILL STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES - Draft

March 15, 2022

Present via Zoom: Lisa Koitzsch, Pete Colgan, Corrie Miller, Woody Dugan, Sally Dwyer, and Karrie Thomas

1. Guest: Clark Amadon, MadDog Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Following discussions with Ross Saxton at the last meeting, the SC invited Clark Amadon to discuss the pond and provide information on potential management activities.

Several items to note from talking with Clark:

- To promote biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem, the invasive small-mouth bass currently living in the pond should be removed. They are a non-native species, they are very aggressive, and their presence often means the demise of many native species of fish, reptiles, and amphibians.
- The presence of small-mouth bass in the Mad River Watershed is not a good thing and could have disastrous effects if the fish is allowed to infiltrate the main stem of the Mad River.
- It is important to remove ALL the fish, not just some of them. Also important to educate the public about NOT putting fish back into the pond.
- Discussion re: TU sponsored community event to fish them out vs. individual fisherman removing them vs. using Rotenone (an effective piscicide). Important to have education woven into any event so that the public can be kept informed.
- Brook trout would not necessarily survive in the pond as it is not deep enough (14' at its deepest) and there is not enough stratification to provide cold water areas for them to find a refuge. Trout introduced by the state are sterile.
- An annual community event, especially a kid's fishing tournament, could be a possibility. This would entail temporarily stocking the pond. An event like this might attract 20-30 people.
- Clark and Corrie will reach out to the State Regional Fisheries Biologist for some direction on how to effectively remove the bass, whether the pond could support a trout population, and what options would be available for increasing biodiversity in the pond.
- Increasing woody debris in a pond can provide shelter, food for macroinvertebrates, etc. This small pond is quite a sterile environment with very few amphibians and insects.
- If the SC decides to hold an event, it may need a permit from the State.
- Woody stressed the importance of educating the public and framing the removal of the bass as a better ecological situation for the pond.
- Pete expressed that he is not in favor of stocking the pond with fish, nor is he in favor of a yearly fishing event. Several SC members agreed.
- Corrie stated that this may be the wrong pond to focus efforts on managing for ecological values. If we keep the pond open for fishing and swimming, it may be

futile to try restoring natural habitats as we will not be able to attain a prime/pristine ecological state.

- Karrie noted that fishing and swimming are not necessarily compatible and that enforcement will be an issue.
 - Before taking any management actions this summer, SC will check-in with the Select Board. Also send out email to BH mailing list.
2. Parking: There was a short discussion on the need to really focus on parking issues soon as this will dictate any choices SC makes about public events, management work, etc. as we move forward. Will parking be limited? More signage? Will there be exceptions (like a Fayston Community Picnic!)?
3. Sally moved to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2022, meeting. Woody seconded, no further discussion, all in favor, motion was passed.
4. Management Plan Consultant RFP - Review and next steps
The SC conducted a step-by-step review of the RFP document while Pete coordinated the changes and comments on his screen. Some items to note:
- SC will provide consultant with the Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit template.
 - Facilitation meetings between the Consultant and the SC should last approximately two hours. There will be no fewer than 5 of these meetings. Very important for SC to focus their efforts in these meetings as the success of this process will depend on our focused and collective decision-making.
 - Lisa will review Fayston's Purchasing Policy to see if it applies to this RFP.
 - Providing a budget limitation in the RFP will give applicants a good sense of the project's scope. Our expectation is that the plan could be completed for \$10,000 - \$15,000, but we will consider all reasonable bids.
 - Need to articulate how much of the project has already been done.
 - We may be able to use ARPA funds – do we need to adjust the RFP for this?
 - We welcome suggestions for organization and process from Consultant's expertise.
 - Discussion on whether the consultant will present to SB and public or not.
 - Timeline for completion of project – December 2022.
5. Management Plan – Next steps and new items to tackle
- Initial mapping meeting – All agreed to hold this meeting on either April 6th or April 19th. April 5th, the SC regularly scheduled meeting time, does not work for the mapping meeting as the town meeting room will not be available. Lisa will email Caitlin and Liza to check on their availability and get back to everyone.
 - MRVBC/Mad River Path/Mad River Riders – SC discussed inviting members of these three recreation groups to one of our next two meetings to hear any thoughts they have regarding their use of Boyce Hill. Karrie added that it would be important to let them know about some of the issues we are dealing with

related to their activities and how those activities might interact with others. Sally reminded the SC that we need to consider if we are looking at Boyce Hill as an island, or as an interconnected property. Abutting landowner considerations are important.

- Karrie will reach out to Mad River Riders. Woody will contact Steve Sharpe. Lisa will contact Ross Saxton. Each group will have an agenda time slot for approximately 20 - 30 minutes. We will stress that we want to listen to them, that we want to hear their ideas, concerns, or needs, and that we are not making any decisions at this point. Woody suggested we bring up any concerns during the meeting with each group. These groups will be contacted as soon as we schedule the mapping meeting.

6. Next meeting date: To Be Decided – Will be either April 5th or 6th.