

BOYCE HILL STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes

April 6th, 2022

1. Corrie moved to approve the minutes from March 15, 2022. Pete seconded, no further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.
2. Management Plan Consultant RFP – Update
The RFP for the Boyce Hill Management Plan was sent out on March 28th and the deadline for response is May 1, 2022.
3. Cultural Project Grant – Update
Funding for the small grant initiated by Brad Long from the Mad River Valley Rural Recreation Committee was approved through the Mad River Valley Planning District. A contractor will be hired for the project and will focus on research into the land use history of Boyce Hill and the creation of wording for future signage.
4. Next meeting date: **Thursday April 21 at 6:30 pm.** Woody, Lisa and Karrie will invite representatives from the Mad River Valley Backcountry Coalition, Mad River Path, and Mad River Riders to the meeting. Each group will have 20 minutes to present any ideas or input they have on the management of Boyce Hill.
5. Boyce Field Report:
Woody reported the Wood frogs are emerging, the willows are budding, and the ice has melted from the pond (Corrie suggested an ice-out competition). He counted 32 fish, a combination of blue gills and smallmouth bass, and noticed some amphibian activity in the pond. The yellow drain protector has disappeared, and we may have to purchase a new one. He saw fresh bear tracks at the top of the property, noted that seed heads from the phragmites plants near the pond have been manually removed to prevent spreading, and he has moved the large tractor tire out of the pond inlet. Corrie suggested removing the Snowplow Turnaround sign for the summer. All agreed.
6. Mapping
Caitlin Cusack and Liza Walker helped the SC begin working through the initial phase of mapping management considerations and provided GIS mapping ‘on the fly’. Corrie stated the goal for the evening was to put together what we have learned about the property so far with our knowledge of geographic data. Begin thinking of the parcel as a spatial entity. Discuss some of the management strategies we might use and how to use them spatially to set in place some of the values we want to see in the management plan. First focus, ecological values. Liza agreed we could begin with basics of the VLT easement and what we know we need to protect.
 - Vernal pools: The vernal pools on Boyce Hill do not meet the standards for statewide significance and protection, and therefore are not protected by the VLT easement. However, there are state requirements under the wetland rules for vernal pool protection, generally a 50’ vegetated buffer, that would come into play with Boyce Hill’s small vernal pools. This buffer is critical as a life zone for amphibians and is important for keeping shade on the pool to reduce

evaporation. Caitlin suggested we follow up with a state wetlands biologist.

Note: We should add Woody's vernal pool and the pool located along the path to the pond to our list of vernal pools. Also, check the 'pits' along the east side of the property.

Woody pointed out that cutting trees along the pond embankment could potentially affect the vernal pool in the forested area below the pond.

All agreed that starting with a 100-foot protection zone around each pool would be a good starting point and we can adapt with a smaller/larger zone if they intersect with important infrastructure, like the road or pond embankment, or other critical needs as we go through the management process.

Caitlin will map a series of zones around each water feature so that we can see what the various buffers will look like.

- Streams: VLT easement requires a 50-foot vegetated buffer along any stream that is defined as such by the state. All the streams on Boyce qualify except for perhaps the artificial channel. There was discussion on whether this channel should be considered a stream as it functions as one now, or whether it should be returned to its original state and the water allowed to disperse naturally. The latter may not be possible given the culverts that were installed under the 'road' above the channel. The channel could serve as a wildlife corridor if protected with a vegetated buffer. All decided to revisit this issue.
Chuck noted that the 50-foot buffer along streams also complies with Fayston's Land Use Regulations.
- Wetland/emergent marshes/seepage forests: Class 2 wetlands (usually at least one acre in size) are protected by the state and require a 50-foot vegetated buffer. SC should consult with State Wetlands Biologist re: protection of Boyce Hill's water features. In addition, Grace Glynn, in the Natural Resources Inventory, recommended buffers and other management considerations for these features.
All agreed that protecting and buffering the area around the source of Marie's spring was critical.
- Corrie suggested that all the water and wetland features on Boyce Hill have a designated buffer that is decided as one layer of strategy in the management plan. Then, any management activities or lack of activities within those buffers could be as consistent as possible for management ease.
- Brief discussion on how much information to include on a map at the entrance of the property.
- Brief discussion on how to incorporate the viewshed analysis.
- The rest of the meeting was spent reviewing the GIS map created by Liza and Caitlin showing the buffered water features and looking at a LIDAR view of the property.