

**Fayston Conservation Commission**  
**Minutes**  
**November 30, 2022**

**FCC Members Present:** Lisa Koitzsch, Corrie Miller, and Patty Pasley

**Guests:** Amy Dalton, Ashley Madea, Brian Litmans, and Andrea Henderson

1. Patty made a motion to approve the minutes from October 27, 2022. Corrie seconded, no further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.
2. Several Fayston residents attended the meeting after having expressed interest in the Conservation Commission. Introductions and brief discussion.
3. Updates

Phen Basin

Corrie provided a summary of a meeting she and Lisa recently had with Hannah Phillips, Jason Nerenberg, and Becca Washburn from Vermont's Department of Forest Parks & Recreation regarding their working draft of a revision of the state's Natural Areas Policy. In attendance at the meeting were representatives from VLT, Fayston Select Board, and Friends of the Mad River. The Natural Areas Policy governs Phen Basin's Ecological Protection Zone (EPZ) so any revisions to the policy that are adopted are relevant to the future of Phen. This meeting was the most recent conversation with FPR that has evolved due to the Commission's concern that the 2001 Camel's Hump Unit Long Range Management Plan invites the creation of mountain bike trails in Phen Basin's EPZ which, in our interpretation, creates a conflict with the terms of the Conservation Easement. FCC is looking to the revised Natural Areas Policy as a possible resolution of this conflict, though the meeting revealed that this process will be evolving over some time and there is no current plan for public input. The Commission would like to see long-term management considerations and protections among the three documents (easement, management plan, and National Areas policy) that are consistent with each other, and which enforce strong ecological protections for this special area of Fayston.

Conservation and Recreation Visioning (CRV)

Corrie gave an overview of the CRV project. The goal is for conservation and recreation groups to work together to optimize ecological integrity and recreation in the Mad River Valley. The project has secured approximately \$65k (estimated need is \$80K) and a Steering Committee has been formed, which includes all the watershed conservation commissions and trail organizations. Two working groups have been formed: Ecological Integrity and Recreation. Corrie and Akhil represent the FCC on the Ecological Integrity working group. Their work will include topics such as best practices to protect wildlife when considering trails, how to protect soils, what recommendations can be made on connectivity, etc. A project coordinator has been hired to manage this two-year collaborative project.

Boyce Hill

Lisa and Corrie reported that they had been doing their best to advocate for ecological considerations, sound science, and best management practices to be used alongside community input in the developing management plan. The Steering Committee met with the Fayston SB to present their current draft management considerations and receive feedback. This meeting was followed by a field trip to help respond to the SB feedback. The management plan consultant is helping facilitate the SC meetings as she works to develop the draft plan. Her contract will likely be extended a few more months. Patty remarked that the SC presentation to the SB was very balanced

and considered many facets of the community's input. Ashley expressed appreciation for how special and unique Boyce Hill is.

#### Japanese Knotweed

The FCC has received a commitment from the SB for ARPA funds to start a pilot knotweed program to inventory, prioritize, and manage this invasive species in Fayston. Lisa and Patty met with representatives from both the Warren and Waitsfield conservation commissions to discuss their Japanese knotweed management efforts in the Mad River Valley. Fayston recently signed on to a joint proposal with Warren and Waitsfield to engage a graduate student from the UVM Field Naturalist program to inventory invasive species throughout the Valley. Fayston will also collaborate with the two towns next summer to enlist interns for active knotweed management. Patty expressed how critical it is to work with the other towns in a valley-wide initiative. Andrea said she would be very interested in helping with this project.

#### Wildlife Corridors

Patty and Lisa met with Jito Coleman to hear about Warren's efforts to identify and protect wildlife corridors. Fayston is proposing to work with Arrowwood Consulting and the State of Vermont to increase the integrity of data developed in 2007 and focus on protecting the future of existing wildlife corridors. Fayston has more core habitat than the other towns but needs to focus on road and culvert crossings to preserve natural wildlife movement. Fayston has joined Warren and Waitsfield to sponsor a panel discussion in February at the Big Picture to discuss the importance of wildlife corridor protection.

#### McCullough Barn

Patty has been soliciting bids to install a concrete floor in the McCullough Barn to improve this community resource. After attempts to contact five different contractors, she received quotes from two reputable local firms. FCC members chose Kevin Streeter over Kingsbury Construction because of price and previous experience with the property. Lisa will send this recommendation to the Select Board for their approval and then Patty will move forward with scheduling this work for early next summer.

#### ARPA Memo

Lisa and Corrie have drafted a summary of the five projects the FCC received ARPA funds for in April and will send that to the Select Board when they present the commission's 2023 budget.

4. FCC 2023 Budget
  - a. FCC Overhead – Continue annual request of \$1,000.
  - b. Conservation Reserve Fund – Go back to \$5,000 request since Town Forest Reserve Fund request will be less this year. Given the dramatic increase in property sales and building in Fayston, FCC believes strongly that our town should invest in conservation measures.
  - c. Town Forest Reserve Fund – Chase Brook expense will be minimal. Boyce Hill needs to be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting.
  - d. Mad River Valley Bear Initiative – All agreed to add \$500 to FCC overhead request to fund Fayston's contribution to this initiative.
5. Next meeting will be Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:30 PM pending agreement from other FCC members. Meetings will occur regularly on the third Thursday of every month.

