

**BOYCE HILL STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**  
**May 22, 2023**

**Attending via Zoom:** Corrie Miller, Peter Colgan, Woody Dugan, Karrie Thomas, Sally Dwyer, Amy Sheldon, and Liza Walker (Vermont Land Trust)

1. Sally moved to approve the minutes from April 3, 2023. Woody seconded, no further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.
2. There was no public input.
3. Liza Walker led the discussion of the Vermont Land Trust's (VLT) comments on the draft management plan. She noted that Caitlin's and her comments were in part based on their experience with other plans. Much of the discussion centered around riparian and vernal pool buffers. Liza would like to have the management plan be a little more explicit about these buffers and include a description of how vernal pools are identified and classified as well as where and why the buffers were chosen. Corrie suggested the State Wetlands expert (Shannon Morrison) could be engaged to review the Boyce Hill vernal pools and wetlands; Liza suggested this could be a "desk" review rather than a site visit. All agreed that the vernal pool buffer should be at least 50' (except where the road/trail comes close to the pool), and Pete noted the SB had agreed with this designation. Corrie said her recollection of past discussions was that the vernal pool buffers should be 100'. Amy said she could put the buffers to scale on the map although most are well over 50 feet as they are within the more protective management zones. Woody stated that better documentation/description might be helpful within the management plan. Pete also suggested we put description of the management of riparian buffers in the management considerations.

In further discussion on riparian buffers, Liza stated that VLT easements have become "less prescriptive and more goal oriented." This could mean that some cutting/pruning of vegetation in stream riparian buffers would be allowed if the easement goals of ecological protection are prioritized and met (i.e., it would be OK to prune branches or remove a tree if it doesn't affect the water quality, soil integrity, plant and animal habitat, etc.). Fayston zoning regulations would not allow tree cutting within a 50' stream buffer. The width of the stream riparian buffers on the west side perennial stream were confirmed on the walk with the Select Board to be 50' on the west side of the stream and 100' on the east side of the stream. Liza reiterated that more description regarding buffer management would be helpful.

4. Liza suggested that a little more of an introductory description on the spreadsheet re: management categories would be helpful. In the trail description section, Karrie suggested that defining trail standards, processes and site design would be helpful.

There was a short discussion about managing volunteers and prioritizing the list of stewardship projects. Woody will contact Ross Saxton about removing the trees at the toe of the pond dam. There was also a short discussion about which type of machinery was best suited for mowing – flail mower vs. brush hogging – and how to deal with the tripping concerns due to the “punji sticks” in certain mowed areas. Karrie suggested a ‘stay on trails or move at your own risk’ policy.

5. Amy will incorporate VLT’s and Pete’s comments into the plan, and she asked that any other comments be sent to her no later than [Sunday June 4th](#). In reference to buffers, SC will make recs that are consistent with Fayston zoning and the SC vision. Amy will include descriptions regarding how buffers were selected and why. She will add text in the legend re: vernal pool and buffer. Karrie and Corrie suggested that there also needs to be a mention of a trail to be developed in Management Area 7.
6. It was agreed that the proposed management plan be delivered to the Selectman and to have the public presentation made at the Select Board meeting on [Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>](#). Pete will check with Chuck to make sure this timeline works.
7. Pete reviewed Sam Ford’s excellent public presentation and said she is going to provide the SC with an update on the history section of the plan. Sam has offered to do another walk next Spring and possibly a video presentation.
8. Sally will send a summary of the legal opinion she received regarding state regulations on access to private land.
9. The next SC meeting is scheduled for [Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>](#). Topics to be discussed include governance, public forum details, stewardship short term priorities, and neighboring land-owner relations. **The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm.**