Fayston Conservation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

5:45 - 7:00 pm

Fayston Municipal Office

1. Meeting called to order at 5:46pm

2. **In attendance:** Brian Litmans, Woody Dugan, Andrea Henderson, Kim Phelan, Amy Dalton

3. **Minutes from June 25, 2025:** Motion made by Andrea. Seconded by Kim. All voted in favor.

4. **FCC Administration:**
   - Ky Koitzsch will be serving as an advisor to CBTF management plan update process
   - Need to begin 2026 budget work. Andrea to provide a draft for review and edits at our August meeting.

5. **Planning Commission LUR update:**
   - The planning commission is updating land use regulations, most importantly trails, trail standards. The old regulations primarily referenced mountain bike trails. Updates to the LUR would apply to trail building more comprehensively through the adoption of VT state guidance and regulations. While there is no enforcement capacity, the use of "shall" in the proposed regs has elicited objections. The FCC submitted a letter in support of the proposed change. LUR updates provide several links with recommendations on a range of trail building activities. The FCC will draft a follow up letter to address public concerns about the changes.

6. **Chase Brook Management Plan Update:**
   - Amy & Brian met with Ky on 7/10 to develop an outline for the **CHASE BROOK TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN**. This plan will complement the Birdseye Forest Management Plan by addressing VLT requirements to update the 2006 management plan goals, objectives and priorities.
   - Amy made a motion via email on 7/10 to bring Ky Koitzsch on board as an advisor to the management plan update process. Pete seconded. All members voted to

support this appointment.
- Pete is aggregating the community survey data to drill down on the goals & priorities for CBTF
- Michael Brown is on stand by while FCC members develop the CBTF Stewardship Management Plan

7. **Project updates:**
    a. **Invasives/Knotweed:**
        - A July 15, 2025 UVM Community News Service story, *To fight knotweed, Mad River Valley towns let goats pig out* has been picked up by several news outlets regarding goat grazing in the MRV.
        - Community work days are proving to be successful with some new folks joining due to increased posts on FPF, the FCC newsletter, and Instagram. The remaining two Fayston Knot Work Parties, scheduled for August 6 and 13 will also be posted on the new app called *BEE*. Overall, outreach has been more effective.
        - Waitsfield Farmers Market tabling planned for July 26, and Aug 9. Conservation seed mix purchased from Kenyon's continues to be sown where knotweed is being managed, and is growing where sown earlier this summer
        - George Schenk will host an annual dinner for UVM interns on July 31 at American Flatbread

    b. **Chase Brook Maintenance:**
        - Knotweed pulled on July 9th during the Fayston Knot Work Party.
        - Central VT Pest Control treated inside and outside of McCullough barn on 7/23 for powder post beetles (2nd treatment). Andrea met with Joe on 7/23 to view powder post beetle activity, which is minimal. Continued treatment twice a year (May and July) is recommended, in lieu of sealing beams or making the barn weather-tight.

    c. **Wildlife Corridors:**
        - No update

    d. **Conservation and Recreation Visioning**:
        - First quarterly meeting was held in mid-July. Discussed CRV road show to SB and others. MRV Planning District pilot study on

economic impacts from outdoor recreation for Town of Waitsfield, MRVPD trail data, MR Path active transportation corridor update, and a campaign for trail etiquette called Attitude of Gratitude

e. **MRV Bear Initiative:**
   - CRV update shared by Laura Arnesen, MRV Rec District at July 22 MRVBI meeting
   - Discussed updates to MRVBI website suggested by Jaclyn Comeau, to include VT F&W and Coverts links.
   - Valley Reporter nonprofit pricing for ads obtained, and approved a ¼ page ad for the fall; Andy Phelan and Janet Bisbee working on ad with MRVBI branding
   - Discussed fall event with VF&W updates, potentially together with Stowe Land Trust in Waterbury
   - Two BearSaver receptacles are being delivered the last week of July to Andy Phelan's home. Bridge Street is the first choice for placement, and potentially Lareau swim hole, WFM, or MRV Rec Hub
   - Tabling scheduled for July 26, Aug 9 at WFM, Sept 13 at Morefest, and more

f. **Boyce Hill**:
   - Committee leadership met to discuss and calendar bog bridge materials and construction,as well as fall volunteer service/stewardship workday. Also to review current conditions and share observations. The committee work day will be on August 23rd for construction and installation of bog bridges and other light work around the pond steps. The community work day will be on September 21st, with a September 22nd rain date.
   - Ben Bridgewater was approached regarding our desire to thank, reward, and/or reimburse him for his services and contribution to the pond stairway project. He intends to submit an invoice indicating a discount he plans to apply as a donation/personal contribution to the project.
   - The cellar hole and the trails near the orchard have been mowed. More work on the orchard trails is needed.
   - The video documenting Boyce Hill's hill farm history was released on YouTube and has had over 1,000 views to date.
   - At a dinner meeting with Sugarbush's John Hammond we learned that their mowing cannot begin before the fall nesting bird season has ended per forest service regulations. This explains why they cannot get to Boyce Hill as early as we'd like.

8. **Other Business:**
    a. Fall guided hikes - Phen Basin, Boyce Hill (librarians leading a hike on Sunday), and Chase Brook Town Forests - TBD
    b. Woody will work on the follow up AVCC grant report for the Boyce Hill documentary.
9. Items for next month's agenda
10. Brian made a motion to adjourn. Woody seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm

Next Meeting: **August 27, 2025 at 5:45pm**