

Natural Resources Committee

DRAFT Minutes

Mar 11, 2015

Committee Members:	Diana Carter, Nick Causton, Colin Davis, Peter Grant, Stan Grzyb, David Hamilton, Wendy Sue Harper (Chair), Arabella Holzpfel, David Ludwig, Andrea Ochs, Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, David Raphael, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright
Present:	Nick Causton, Peter Grant, Stan Grzyb, Wendy Sue Harper, Ed Payne, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright
Staff:	Kevin Behm
Guest:	

Wendy Sue opened the meeting at 6:00. The members choose to wait for additional members to approve the minutes.

- Review of the Regionally Significant Resource Map

Wendy Sue asked Kevin to briefly discuss the responses received from the request to the town delegates for suggestions on changes to the Regionally Significant Resources Map. Kevin stated that he had received around 6 responses but only a few actually suggested changes or new information that could be added. A couple of additional towns may still provide comments. The Ferrisburgh Conservation Committee provided the most comprehensive list and Panton, Monkton, Bristol, Starksboro, Shoreham and Goshen also responded to the request.

Ferrisburgh CC asked that riparian buffers on all streams be included on the map rather than the “Major Watershed Streams” that are shown on the map. Since riparian buffers are not clearly defined for all the streams, Kevin provided the NRC with a map depicting ANR’s recent development of ‘stream corridors’ which are primarily defined for flood protection but also provide some habitat protection from limited development. These are defined with a specific set of standards and would serve well as a regional stream buffer map layer. Individual communities could also enhance these corridors with habitat overlays if they have developed a habitat inventory. Identifying the ‘stream corridors’ as a Regionally Significant Resource would also benefit the resilience policies and discussion that will be added to the regional plan prior to the next adoption. The ‘stream corridors’ are fully discussed on <http://floodready.vermont.gov>. Ed noted that these ‘stream corridors’ are primarily in floodplains and wetland areas that are already protected at some level and acknowledging the flood-prone nature of our rivers will serve to limit flood damage in the future. Peter stated that Bristol has dealt with flooding issues in the past. Ed motioned to include the ‘stream corridor’ layer as a Regionally Significant Resource. Peter 2nd and all were in favor.

The next suggestion was to include habitat blocks larger than 250 acres as regional resources. The NRC discussed the suggestion and noted that the Regional Plan already

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includes a map of large forest blocks over 200 acres with policies addressing contiguous forested habitat, however they are not identified as a regionally significant resource. In addition, forested State and Federal land is identified as regionally significant.

Also suggested were including state delineated 'significant natural communities'. 'Rare, Threatened, Endangered and Natural Communities' are identified in the plan as Regionally Significant Resources, but not all the 'significant natural communities' are included. The Regional Plan does identify the clay plain forest natural community and provide policies and a map of their extent. The NRC discussed that since clay plain forests were an important feature and habitat that is expressed well in Addison County's clay soils it should be considered a Regionally Significant Resource. They were also recommended as a regional resource by Pantan.

Wendy Sue mentioned that there are blocks of forest land at higher elevations than clay plain that serve as contiguous habitat throughout the county. In particular she mentioned a conservation easement on Raven Ridge, an area that straddles Monkton, Charlotte and Hinesburg. The group felt that deer wintering areas, which were also suggested by the Ferrisburgh CC, were clearly defined throughout the region and provided significant habitat for animals that have a wide range. Paul said that clay plain forests and deer wintering area serve an important function in addition to being forested blocks. Wendy Sue asked the NRC if there was a motion. Paul moved to include clay plain forests and deer wintering areas as a Regionally Significant Resources. Stan seconded and all were in favor.

Nick mentioned that bear corridors were also suggested as a regional resource. Kevin stated that he does not have any mapped information for bear corridors. He has a denning area map that coincides pretty well with the Green Mountain National Forest. Even though the NRC was aware of bear travel throughout the region, the members felt the corridors weren't clearly defined and the existing and newly recommended areas of regional significance would likely include many of the travel corridors.

There were a couple of other suggestions that the committee will review next time. Wendy Sue asked the members to also review the scenic section in the regional plan for the next meeting.

The Committee adjourned at 7:15.