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# Fayston Conservation Commission Meeting

Tuesday, 10/6/20, 6:00 pm

## Attendees:

Lisa Koitzsch, Ned Kelley, Geri Procaccini, Gene Fialkoff, Akhil Kaplan

## Agenda

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Akhil approved the minutes from the September 1, 2020 meeting; Ned seconded, all approved.
2. **Public Comment** - 5 minutes - there were no public comments.
3. **Community Composting** – Update and next steps.

Geri gave a report about the Community Compost project she has been organizing. Due to the problems associated with the proposed site of the compost facility (Lareau Farm) in the Mad River floodplain, the compost working group made the decision to postpone the project, pending locating another site and manager. George Schenk, owner of Lareau Farm, had been willing to manage the project on his land. FCC members agreed that it may be a more productive course of action to hold workshops to include possible hands-on instruction at Lareau Farm instead. Geri will look into the cost of having a pick-up service of food scraps in Fayston, possibly to include the three Valley towns.

4. **Randell Road Beavers:** Ned and Judi last week removed a temporary beaver barrier they had installed in front of a culvert on Randell Road. FCC, the Fayston Select Board, and the Fayston Road Crew worked with Tyler Brown of the Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to install a new "Beaver Baffle" in the same location. Judi sat in at the meeting for a few minutes to give a beaver update: willow branches had been pushed into the barrier and she noticed two tracks, but the water level had receded about a foot. When Lisa checked out the area, she noticed that the water was shin deep. Lisa asked that everyone try to monitor the area for beaver activity when passing through and remove any attempts the beavers make to build a dam in front of the newly installed 'baffle'.
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5. **Forests, Wildlife, & Communities:** Lisa reported on the Tri-Town CC meeting held on Sept 29, 2020. The meeting was organized by Phil Huffman (Waitsfield Conservation Commission Chair), Corrie Miller (FCC Co-Chair) and Jito Coleman (Warren Conservation Commission Chair) to review data from studies conducted by Arrowwood Environmental and the Forest, Wildlife & Communities Project in 2007-2008. Jens Hilke - Conservation Planner with Vermont Fish and Wildlife, Jamey Fidel - General Counsel at Vermont Natural Resources Council, and Corrie Miller- Executive Director of Friends of the Mad River, gave presentations about natural and water resources, wildlife habitat and the effect of development. Lisa would like to conduct a wildlife corridor project in Fayston similar to Warren's. Lisa also asked the group if it would be possible to conduct a study on the impact of trail building and trail use on wildlife habitat and intact/core forest.

## 6. Fayston Town Forests

### A. Boyce Hill

i. **Steering Committee Update:** The Steering Committee has had two meetings and Lisa will send copies of the BHSC minutes to all FCC members. Meetings are scheduled twice a month. The Vermont Land Trust is acting in an advisory position.

#### ii. Natural Resources Info

1. **NRI Update:** Grace Glynn, Vermont Master Naturalist with Dubois & King will submit a draft Natural Resources Inventory/Ecological Assessment report soon;

2. **Invasive Species Report:** The Vermont Land Trust will be submitting a report from data they gathered on the property this July;

3. **Vermont Audubon Report:** Audubon Vermont has submitted a draft report and Corrie and Lisa are reviewing.

#### iii. Management in 2020

1. **Pond Embankment:** Lisa said the pond was assessed by a dam specialist who recommended removing some growth that could cause instability of the bank; a work party will be organized to fulfill that task.

2. **Mowing:** has been requested by the Select Board and will likely be done in some areas that may be deemed unrecoverable by next year. The steering committee is working on the best type of equipment to use to minimize environmental impact.

3. **Other issues:** Monitoring of campfires: Ned and Judy will deconstruct the fire ring at the top of the hill next to the Adirondack chairs. The fire ring at the pond will be left for the time being. Campfire and fishing regulations will be revisited in the Spring.

## B. Chase Brook

i. **Fred Gilbert Dog Loop trail signs:** FCC members agreed to name the new trail '**The Fred Gilbert Dog Loop**' and to discourage but not prohibit bike usage. Ned mentioned that Joan Gilbert was very happy that Fred will be honored in this way. Ned will make 3 signs for the trail this winter and he suggested they be installed on metal posts. Lisa said we will have a trail-christening ceremony in the spring, at which time we will install the signs. Akhil will map the new trail.

7. **Trail proposal in Phen Basin:** Akhil said there is a proposed Mad River Riders mountain bike trail that will connect Hemlock Hill with the Chain Gang trail through Phen Basin. FCC members expressed concern about negative impacts on core wildlife habitat and the fragmentation of intact forest. Akhil contacted Vermont Forest, Parks & Recreation (FPR) with FCC's concerns and Jason Nerenberg, Stewardship Forester, FPR, responded in an email letter that explained the process for approving this potential trail. Once the overall management plan for the Camel's Hump State Forest has been approved, FPR will begin consideration of the Riders' trail plan. All commented on the need to keep large intact areas of wildlife habitat, such as Phen Basin, protected. Ned said dogs can also be a hazard to habitat when left unleashed.

8. **Fayston Town Plan:** Select Board/Planning Commission/DRB/FCC Joint Meeting is proposed for late October, exact date TBA. Jared Cadwell, SB Chair, would like to designate specific assignments and projects to each commission: Select Board, Planning Commission, DRB and FCC. Lisa requested that all FCC members review the new Fayston Town Plan, approved in late September by the SB, for any sections mentioning the FCC.

9. **Reschedule November Meeting:** Due to the Election on November 3, 2020 the FCC has to reschedule its November meeting. Lisa will send out a notice to see what dates might work for everyone.