

Craftsbury Municipal Forest Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2022, 6:30 pm, Town Hall

Members in attendance: Barbara Alexander, Ann Ingerson, Rob Libby, Robert Linck, Stuart LaPoint, Jim Moffatt, Jane Solomon

Members not attending: Ben Alexander, Logan Jones, Chris Sanville

Officer Election

All current officers were re-elected: Jim Moffatt Chair, Rob Libby Vice-Chair, Ann Ingerson Secretary

Thanks

The Committee thanks Barbara Alexander for her many many years service as Secretary.

The Committee will send a sympathy card to Irene Strong, appreciating Burt Strong for his long-term service on this Committee.

Common Trees

Stuart Lapoint did the lower-limb trimming that we discussed at our last meeting.

Ash Borer Update

Rob Libby reported that he and Brian Machesney (on behalf of the Conservation Commission) met with the town road crew, who felt that a complete ash inventory was not needed. They did agree that identifying locations with concentrations of ash would be helpful. If we do decide to document individual trees, Brian can translate photos to map data that can be displayed on the state Biofinder website. We need to research how wood can be used when ash trees die and/or are cut. We'll pick up this topic again in 2023.

Acorns

The committee supports Logan Jones' idea of scattering acorns on town forest land, to speed up adaptation to changing climate conditions. Oaks seem to grow well where they are establishing naturally.

Large trees

We'll re-invigorate our previous effort to identify large trees of various species. Photos taken to-date are posted on the town website at [Historic Trees In Craftsbury — Town of Craftsbury](#). Jim also has copies, copies are stored at the town hall, and Stuart has a display that was made for a previous town meeting. We'll spread the word via Front Porch forum for people to submit candidate trees. After a few months or when we have enough candidates, a subgroup will visit and measure the trees, using the Vermont Department of Forests and Parks measurements (Circumference (inches) + Height (feet) + 1/4 of the Crown spread (feet) = Total Points) – see [Vermont Big Trees | Vermont Urban and Community Forestry \(vtcommunityforestry.org\)](#). We'll start with measuring white pines and see where it goes from there.

Tree Planting – Black River

Stuart contacted a nursery about recommended species for planting along riverbanks - box elder maple, black willow, and silver maple are good candidates. Rob and Stuart will check on sources of funding and

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contact other groups doing this kind of work. The Orleans Natural Resources Conservation District sells trees and sponsors tree-planting projects. Memphremagog Watershed Association has done plantings lower in the watershed and may be interested in our area. The Orriane Society ([Wood Turtle - The Orriane Society](#)) has done plantings in Craftsbury.

Public Uses and Trails

Public uses are compatible with the mission of our town forests. Other important functions include wildlife habitat connectivity. See the Forest Management Plans posted on the town website - [Mun Forest Comm — Town of Craftsbury](#) - for details. For now, we'd like to stick with informal and dispersed use of the Hatch Brook town forest, rather than establish formal trails. We'll explore possibilities for installing signs at the boundaries along roads so that town residents are aware of where their land is located. Our next meeting will be at the Coburn Hill forest so we can assess the status of the kiosk, picnic tables and trail there.

Education

Jared Nunnery has worked with the schools to encourage use of the town forests as educational resources. Barbara is interested in educating the public about how forests can help address climate change, including the importance of old forests for carbon storage. Jane mentioned the recent expansion of the Current Use property tax program to allow designation as old forests with no requirement for timber harvest. The Committee might help spread the word about this option.

Blueberry Lot Balsam Fir

Jim reminded us that we approved harvesting of mature balsam fir on the Blueberry lot (furthest west portion of Hatch Brook forest). Jared Nunnery affirmed that this is compatible with the forest management plan. A neighbor expressed interest in doing the cutting, but Jim has not heard from him recently.

Next Meeting

The Committee will hold an on-site meeting on **August 4 at 6:30 pm at the Coburn Hill Forest**. Meet at the storage sheds at the corner of Wild Branch and Collinsville Roads to carpool. Suggested agenda items include:

- Check on sign, tables, etc. at the Coburn Hill lot.
- Update on tree planting possibilities.
- Update on big tree candidates.
- Update on signage options.

Meeting was adjourned at about 8:00 pm.