



Southwest Region Planning Commission

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Natural Resources Advisory Committee

NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 26, 2019

3:30 p.m.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH

AGENDA

Camilla Lockwood, Chair
Temple

Janice Manwaring
Vice-Chair
Keene

Tim Allen
Keene State College

Rick Brackett
Monadnock Conservancy

Alicia Flammia
Walpole

Jane Johnson
Swanzey

Amanda Littleton
*Cheshire County
Conservation District*

John Mann
Alstead

Richard Mellor
Rindge

Steve Roberge
*UNH Cooperative Extension
Service*

Gus Ruth
Winchester

Brett Amy Thelen
*Harris Center for
Conservation Education*

Francie Von Mertens
Peterborough

Ruth Ward
Stoddard

- I. Call to Order and Introductions
- II. Minutes of April 4, 2019
- III. Spofford Lake Water Quality Initiative

- a) Update
- b) Other

IV. Featured Presentation

Water Connections - What Fresh Water Means to Us, What We Mean to Water – author Jim Rousmaniere will join us to discuss his new book.

V. Potential Meeting and Public Forum Topics

- a) Committee Meeting Topics
- b) Potential Regional Educational Forums

VI. Next Meeting - September 25, 2019

VII. Adjourn

Natural Resources Advisory Committee

MINUTES

April 4, 2019

Present: Camilla Lockwood, Chair, *Town of Temple*; Janis Manwaring, Vice-Chair, *City of Keene*; Richard Mellor, *Town of Rindge*; Steve Roberge, *UNH Cooperative Extension*; Gus Ruth, *Town of Winchester*; Brett Amy Thelen, *Harris Center*; Francie Von Mertens, *Town of Peterborough*; Ruth Ward, *Town of Stoddard*.

Staff members present: Lisa Murphy, *Senior Planner*

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Lockwood called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. Minutes June 26, 2018

Motion: To approve the minutes of December 18, 2018.

Motion by Janis Manwaring, seconded by Ruth Ward. Approved by unanimous vote.

III. Spofford Lake Water Quality Initiatives – Update

Lisa Murphy provided an update on the Spofford Lake Water Quality initiative. The request for grant funding to the NH Department of Environmental Services was approved. We are in the process of finalizing the contract that will include the services of a consultant.

IV. Presentation and Discussion: Retaining and Recruiting Volunteers for Natural Resource Maintenance and Protection

Brett Amy Thelen shared her observations about volunteerism and the shift in interest she has seen in recent years. There are some volunteers that have been there for decades giving their time to help in a variety of roles. While they offer great experience and wisdom, many are aging out or simply scaling back on their volunteer positions. She said that it has been a struggle to attract and retain younger volunteers for work at the Harris Center, but it is different with the Citizen Science and Salamander Brigades volunteerism. This is unique, however, and she feels that the difference is because volunteering for these positions is the lowest level of commitment since they are temporary and short-term. At the Harris Center, they have seen a decline in volunteers interested in leading the programs, but not necessarily in positions such as trail work. This too is likely due to the short-term commitment.

She gave a presentation on Salamander Brigades and the value they have as an intergenerational social opportunity. For the Salamander Brigades, volunteers are trained in safety and in the species migration. The work is very important because it reduces the number of road kills associated with the spring migrations of amphibians. In at least one location, it involves a road closure on busy migration nights. The migration of these amphibians is weather dependent because they are very active on cool, wet nights. When the forecast is favorable, an email is sent to volunteers that have signed-up to help.

Brett Amy Thelen said they have trained over 1,200 people for the Salamander Brigades and many of them stay active. There are no other Salamander Brigades organized in the state. Chair Lockwood asked about a train the trainer type of workshop so that more people could conduct these brigades in other parts of the state. Brett Amy Thelen said that she does two or three in the spring, but then the interest seems to shift

and there are no additional salamander brigades in the State. She has also started a volunteering handbook which includes things such as data forms, a PowerPoint, etc. It is much easier to participate in the event than it is to organize and contact volunteers on migration nights. Her goal is to get a brigade started in each region. Francie Von Mertens asked if she had tried reaching out to parents through the schools. Brett Amy Thelen said that some schools have done this, but that it is difficult to do brigades with large groups of children, because the parents need to be equally involved. The best way to reach a larger audience has been through social media such as Facebook. The old fashioned word of mouth is also important.

Chair Lockwood thanked her for the presentation and discussion and moved onto the rest of the agenda. She asked members if they are seeing changes in the protection and maintenance of natural resources within their communities. Ruth Ward said that she has observed more wind mills and solar panels along the ridgelines in New Hampshire, including scenic vistas. Steve Roberge added that the landowners are aging, and more are discussing the protection and conservation of their properties. Francie Von Mertens said unfortunately the younger family members are less likely to continue this after they have received the inheritance and are more likely to sell the property.

Lisa Murphy asked members what some of the potential negative changes are that we could experience in natural resource protection if the current demographic trends continue. Chair Lockwood said that it is difficult to find a balance of conserving land verses allowing additional building to occur. Conservation of land sometimes takes away land that could have been used for workforce housing and these are competing interests. Richard Mellor said that many houses are being built, but retirees from other states are buying them instead of families.

Francie Von Mertens said there are a lot of young people moving into Peterborough, but housing is an issue because the market is limited. Brett Amy Thelen said that the middle age (parents) often don't have very much time to volunteer because they are spread too thin between work and raising families, so we will likely see a reduction in volunteering.

Janis Manwaring said that she has noticed that there are not many volunteers among the 20 to 30 year old age group. Brett Amy Thelen suggested that it could be that they don't feel qualified because they don't have the experience and expertise that some of the older volunteers have.

V. Calendar Year 2019 Discussion

Chair Lockwood asked members if they had any suggestions on meeting topics for this year and for any region-wide events that we should consider hosting. Francie Von Mertens said that we could have a presentation on the burning of fossil fuels including the recent study on wood burning. The topic could be expanded to cover conservation vs. efficiency.

VI. Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for June 26, 2019 at 3:30 p.m.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Murphy
Senior Planner