



VERMONT URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

VT Urban & Community Forestry Program
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Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Council Meeting

December 11, 2019

Essex Junction, VT

MINUTES

Attending: Richard Amore, Jane Brown, Cecilia Danks, Mike Fallis, Steve Handfield, Emilie Inoue, Bill Jewell, Juhey Kim (ACCD intern), Ali Kosiba (FEMC guest), Gwen Kozlowski, Jenny Lauer, Melissa Levy, Bob McCullough, Tess McGann (UVM guest), Nick Meyer, Ginger Nickerson, Sara Packer, Tim Parsons, David Raphael, Elise Schadler, Jared Ulmer, Bonnie Waninger

Welcome and Council Business

Richard Amore welcomed the Council members and introductions were made.

- **Review/Approve Minutes:** The minutes from the September 11, 2019 council meeting in Montpelier were reviewed and approved (Steve Handfield moved, Bill Jewell seconded; David Raphael abstained, all others voted to approve).
- **Proposed Bylaw Change:** Current Bylaws say the minutes will be distributed via email within two weeks. The proposal is to change it to one month. Approved.
- **Council Calendar and Sign-ups:** Elise reviewed the coming attractions that require volunteers:
 - Grant Proposal Review
 - Tree Steward Awards Review
 - Tree Steward Awards Emcee
 - Arbor Day Conference Room Facilitator
 - September Council Meeting Host
 - Legislative Letter Committee
 - Arbor Day Conference: with Elise on maternity leave for next year's event, extra help will be needed!

Program Conversation

- **Written Program Report Highlights:**
 - Arbor Day: mark your calendars for Thursday, April 30, 2020.
 - First Detectors: Advanced First Detector trainings were held in November to train volunteers on how to conduct initial EAB site visits, with a goal of screening suspect trees to ease the burden on limited state staff. 17 individuals were trained and will volunteer to confirm ash identification and take a series of quality photographs to submit to the online VTinvasives 'Report It' system, allowing staff to determine whether a comprehensive site visit is necessary.

- Tree Warden Summit: A Tree Warden Summit was held in October. This half-day event drew 38 participants. Gwen Kozlowski is working on updating the tree warden manual; it should be ready in 2020.
- Big Trees: The Big Tree database is being revitalized with the help of ANR IT. The hope is to get County Foresters involved in the future.
- Backyard Woods: 48 families participated this fall.
- 2020 UCF Grants: \$70,000 total--\$25,000 for Canopy grants and three \$15,000 grants for EAB management.
- **Tree Warden Statutes**
 - The 2020 legislative session will be the third try at tightening up the Vermont tree warden statutes. The original statutes date from 1904, with the last revision done in 1969.
 - The goal is to modernize the statutes and enhance the role of Tree Wardens. One change would require towns to report the name and contact information for their tree warden. Another change would be the addition of a definition section; too many undefined broad terms are currently in use.
- **Focus Share: Rural Resilient Right-of-Ways**

Elise Schadler shared a PowerPoint presentation on Joanne Garton's work on the Resilient Right-of-Ways Project.

 - Funded by a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant in 2015
 - \$245,000 in funding
 - Goal: to develop a collaborative and integrated approach to advance green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) in roadside environments, targeted at communities in the Lake Champlain basin that have the greatest need to manage stormwater runoff from developed urban centers and rural back roads.
 - Partners: Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Transportation, Agency of Commerce & Community Development, UVM Extension, and 20 municipalities
 - Project will end on May 31, 2020

Climate Change & Urban Forestry Conversation: Tessa McGann (UVM Grad Student)

Tessa's research focuses on how urban and rural foresters across the Northeast might be altering their management strategies in response to current and predicted environmental changes. Tessa led a discussion on how urban and community forestry has changed in the past decade, what's on the minds of community forestry organizations in Vermont, and if they have insights to community forestry practices across the Northeast and how they might vary.

*(*Note that Jenny Lauer, the meeting's secretary, left during this session to pick up lunch for the Council, so no detailed notes were taken).*

Revisiting Council Priority Areas (2016-2019), continued from September

Cecilia reviewed the Council's September meeting conversation and discussed a proposal for moving forward. Because the current 5-year action plan is concluded, a new 5-year plan will be needed by Dec. 2020. **The Council will provide input, with staff guidance, to integrate future Council priority areas into planning process for the program's activities.** Elise reported that the UCF program staff have already

discussed the next plan and begun brainstorming. The council should look at spending time in June or Sept. to discuss this prior to the big all-day Dec 2020 meeting.

Breakout Discussions

- **Topic 1: Community Map on the VT UCF Website: Who's the audience and what's the goal?**
The community map feature on the UCF website is underutilized. UCF does not have staff capacity to keep it updated as it was originally intended. Who's the audience and what's the goal?
Discussion Highlights and Ideas:
 - Council members like the look of the map feature.
 - Could it change to something that wouldn't require so much staff time?
 - Highlight Caring for Canopy grants on this map with some text written by the towns in their final grant reports.
 - Eliminate items already on the ANR Atlas.
 - Delete events—too time consuming to continually update.
 - The problem is the format, not the info.
 - Question: could the info be presented in other places on the website?
 - Do away with most of the map and the info.
 - Consider whether students at St. Michael's College or Champlain College could work on the website.

- **Topic 2: Strategic Partnerships and Sponsorships: gleaning ideas for 2020 and beyond!**
UCF needs to have approximately \$40,000 in match every year for UVM Extension. With tightening requirements on in-kind match (volunteer time) coming soon, UCF staff are brainstorming ways to increase other revenue sources. The discussion focused on fundraising and sponsorships. Highlights:
 - Fundraising is about relationships: people give money to those they have relationships with.
 - Partners: could UCF partner with non-profits like the Nature Conservancy?
 - 5-Year Plan: the next five-year plan should consider potential sponsors. Companies that might have potential: garden centers, nature centers, outdoor places.
 - Arbor Day Fundraising/Sponsorships:
 - Solicit for sponsors for Arbor Day. Could include sponsors for lunch, keynote speaker, awards, and the full day. A variety of benefits should be developed and offered.
 - Arbor Day programming: offer a professional track to draw in more people. Identify who you want to invite, call them, follow up with a mailing. Identify professional industries that have potential.
 - Check National Arbor Day sponsors and look for local equivalents.
 - Consider changes to Arbor Day (date and location) to offer more space and increase attendance, making the day more profitable. This might open the door to larger sponsors as well.
 - ***Richard Amore offered to meet with other council members to brainstorm fundraising.***

FEMC Tools and Research Update

Ali Kosiba from FEMC (Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative) presented an update on the organization's activities and discussed three current ongoing research projects:

- **Economic Cost of Urban Pests and Forest Regeneration Concerns**
 - Target audience: regional planning commissions and towns, to plan what to do with public trees. Many cities and towns have tree inventories, but they are not centrally located and not accessible by everyone (Vermont's are more accessible than many other states).
 - Pests: FEMC has chosen eight pests to focus on--Asian long horned beetle, spotted lanternfly, EAB, oak wilt, beech leaf disease, brown tail moth, gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid.
 - Regeneration: another focus is regeneration, and potential future variations with climate change.
- **Vermont Forest Indicators Dashboard**

The Vermont Forest Indicators Dashboard is a data-driven, ecological monitoring tool that quantifies the condition of Vermont's forested ecosystems in simple terms that offers a more holistic view of the structure, function, and services the forests provide. Current conditions and long-term trends can be compared to threshold or baseline values to help inform management and decision making. The dashboard currently summarizes information about 34 different long-term datasets, from timber production to crown condition to regeneration trends to forest bird diversity.

Each indicator is given:

 - an annual score
 - a comparison to long-term trends
 - a chart with trend line
 - a contributing weight towards the overall score of the category
- **Monitoring Forest Fragmentation in Vermont**

The Northeast Fragmentation Information Network (FragNet) is a clearinghouse containing a wealth of various resources about forest fragmentation - the breaking up of continuous forest cover. These resources have been collected from throughout the northeastern US to make it easier for policy makers, planners, advocates and researchers to access information on forest fragmentation. Using FragNet, you can explore resources such as journal articles, technical reports, brochures and legislation.

The purpose of these tools is to be useful to people. FEMC wants input on what would be helpful. The data needs to be used!

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: March 11, 2020

