

Natural Resources Committee

DRAFT Minutes

Apr 10, 2019

Committee Members: Barrie Bailey, Peter Grant, Stan Grzyb, Wendy Sue Harper (Chair), Arabella Holzpfel, Ashley Laux, Ed Payne, Ron Payne, Jim Pulver, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

Present: Barrie Bailey, Stan Grzyb, Wendy Sue Harper (Chair), Ron Payne, Jim Pulver, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

Staff: Kevin Behm, Allie Dinwiddie

Guests:

Wendy Sue opened the meeting at 6:05. The Nov 14th minutes were moved for approval. (Stan motion, Paul 2nd). Minutes accepted.

VT Fish & Wildlife book *Mapping Vermont's Natural Heritage*

VT F & W recently published the book as '*A Mapping and Conservation Guide for Municipal and Regional Planners in Vermont*'. Kevin had invited Monica Przyperhart, Fish and Wildlife Specialist, one of the co-authors of the book to the meeting but she was unavailable this evening, but would attend the next meeting. Kevin offered to walk the Committee thru the book to provide a brief overview. The book is set-up as a workbook to use with BioFinder, the State's online habitat and conservation mapping site. Wendy Sue noted that she had viewed a webinar on using the State's BioFinder tool to view important habitat areas last year. Kevin noted that there is a link to the webinar on the ACRPC website here - <http://acrpc.org/forest-resource-planning/> Barrie stated that she tried to use BioFinder, but found it difficult to navigate. Perhaps next meeting, Monica can help describe its use. The chapters are designed to each focus on one community map and review the habitat data presented. The maps walk thru a series of topics starting with an overview and focusing on more detail as you work thru the maps. Following the mapping section, the book moves on to a discussion of prioritization focusing on the community's values.

Wendy Sue said that a detailed local inventory is really needed to focus on each community, many of the data layers were developed at the state or regional scale. Kevin noted that an earlier analysis of forest blocks tended to score clayplain forest patches low primarily because of their small size. This has been addressed with a 'uniqueness' evaluation. Jim said that he has noticed some omissions in the state mapping data. Stan said that Cornwall had received a grant to undertake a detailed natural resource inventory and it took perseverance for the town to get the data uploaded into the state mapping layers. Barrie agreed, saying that an eagle nesting site was not reflected in the habitat data. Of course, the site shouldn't be directly identified, but surrounding area should be flagged as highly significant. This correction occurred fairly quickly so it could be included as a constraint for renewable energy siting.

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Kevin demonstrated a brief website with local zoning data that could be setup for any town that is interested. Many towns have an issue with identifying district boundaries on the ground that are not based on clear boundaries. A web-based depiction can be used on a 'smart' phone or tablet if internet is available to show where a user is standing in relation to the district boundary in question.

The Committee adjourned at 7:00