Wolcott Forest Stewardship Committee

Notes from general meeting on Thursday, February 12, 2026
6 pm – 8:00 pm

Attending: Cate, Joe C., Dave, Trevor C., Mary Anne, Scott, Trevor(?), Gordon, Jack T., Gabe, Luke H.
Online: Roger, Jeannie
Quorum? yes

Agenda

1. Call to order (6 pm)
2. Organizational actions
    a. Amendments to agenda
    b. Approve minutes from last meeting (1/8/26)
        i. **Moved Dave, 2nd Cate**
        ii. **Approved (Yes, 5; No, 0; Abstain, 0)**
3. Public comment
    a. None
4. Ongoing (6:10 pm)
    a. Trail-building update
    b. Maintenance update
        i. Follow up – Right of way through T. Corp's property [Jack Travelstead]
            - Trevor brought Scott and Mary Anne to share their knowledge of the property's history.
            - Gordon acknowledged the NRLT and TPL have provided detailed information establishing the ROW, but asserted that the committee welcomes new information and hopes to reach a reasonable agreement.
            - Dave and Luke voiced support (7:20)
            - Scott and Mary Anne said that the ROW actually passes on the opposite side of their property, away from

Trevor's. They recounted how they were offered an alternate ROW than the one originally deeded.

- As a result of his research, Luke explained that there were significant gray areas in the establishment of the ROW over Trevor's property.
- Trevor stated that previous attempts by residents to use the ROW were denied.
- When the property was transferred, the ROW was not consistently identified, nor properly established in the record.
- Questions were raised about why the shared history does not seem to align with the research from TPL, related to the property map. Several documents and maps were provided to support their testimony.
- Gordon summarized by suggesting that we'll likely need to negotiate with Howland to secure access to that part of the town forest, since the ROW, as described, runs through his property.
- He explained that the town will consider all of the information regarding legitimacy of the ROW if the town chooses to pursue access. He asserted that the town intends to be good neighbors to everyone whose property adjoins the forest.

c. Forest management update

i. Status update – Conservation district grant [Luke Hardt]

- CWSP
    a. State program with funding available for projects in the Lake Champlain area related to

watershed protection, which includes certain forest management/trail maintenance. This funding is critical to enable work on erosion controls and to reopen proper channels throughout the forest. The town forest was working through this process. However, progress has been stalled due to a personnel change at the agency; our point of contact no longer works there. Luke is working to reconnect with them and advance the project, but there is a hard deadline of March 12 to get the request in.

- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
    a. They have funding allocations available through partner organizations – in this case the Ruffed Grouse Association and the National Turkey Federation – for which we could be eligible.
    b. If awarded, the entire allotment must be spent by the end of September, 2026.
    c. Luke presented a map displaying a comprehensive slate of management actions (see map) that could be executed across the town forest for which this funding could be used.
        i. See map in file
    d. Some of the outlined activities may require official review and/or permitting, that may not be completed in time, he suggested focusing on

repair and planting projects. He explained that larger extraction projects in some areas could be win/win, but there is inadequate infrastructure to execute them.

e. Discussion reasserted that these projects are options, and that we should select the projects that, meet our town priorities, as well as catch the funder's attention, if we choose to pursue this funding.

- **If approved, Luke will continue to pursue CWSP up to the deadline, but is also laying the groundwork to apply for other sources should we not receive that funding.**
- Gordon reminded the group the area across the rail trail, where the erosion issues were identified in the fall, is still the high priority area for trail building due to its proximity to the village center as a point of easy access.
- **Motion (Gordon): The Stewardship Committee requests Luke Hardt to pursue as much of the proposed ecological work as he sees feasible, and to pursue the available funding sources with a primary focus on the areas previously identified as to be developed for recreation (Northern edge of Bourne parcel), and a secondary focus on the river (at area 16 if his map).**
    a. **Second: Roger**

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i. Dave mentioned that Luke should be reimbursed for all of this specialized work. Luke explained that, if approved, his compensation would be line-itemed as part of the project.

b. Approved (Yes, 5; No, 0; Abstain, 0)

d. FY 2026 Budget

i. Follow up – Allowable uses for TPL management grant funds

- See email in file

5. New business (7:30 pm)
    a. Discussion – Potential funder for high-value conservation projects [Luke]
        i. See above
6. Adjourn (8:00 pm)