



Randolph Community Forest

Sustainable forestry & traditional uses on 10,000 acres in Randolph, NH

- Date:** January 3, 2024
- Location:** Randolph Town Hall
- Members Present:** Mark Kelley, Laura Brockett, Tim Mather, Nate Reid, Walter Graff (via Zoom) and David Willcox (via Zoom at 6:41 pm)
- Guests Present:** Michelle Cormier, David DeGruttola from LandVest, and Shelli Fortin, Minutes

Mark Kelley called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

- I. Review Minutes of December Meeting
On a motion by Tim Mather, seconded by Laura Brockett, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December, 2023 meeting.
- II. Financial Review
 - A. Invoices Received
Mark Kelley advised that they received two invoices, one for \$5.73 for the Town of Gorham, and one for \$253.10 from LandVest.
 - B. Payments Received
There were no payments received.
 - C. Financial Report
Mark Kelley advised the financial statement shows a total of just under \$400,000 at the end of the calendar year for both accounts.
Michelle Cormier advised that there has been a change in mileage reimbursement and Mark Kelley will forward the reimbursement form to members.
- III. Forester's Report

Mr. DeGruttola noted that John Scarinza used to handle locking the gate after hunting season. The gate will be open during the timber harvest. A member asked if the gate should be open during snowmobile season, and was advised that snowmobiles turn left by the gray camp, so it does not need to be. The only time it stays locked is during mud season. Mark Kelley will check with the snowmobile club to see if they plow the parking lot.

Mark Kelley advised that he spoke with Dave Fuller about the use of the garage on the Farrar Farm. Mr. Fuller advised that the offer was made to use the garage without a rental charge, if he maintained it and paid the electricity. Mr. Fuller will be installing a new entry door. Mr. Kelley advised that they would continue to honor that agreement, as they are getting the benefit of the taps in the expanded area. Any further expansion would require another amendment to the agreement. It was noted that the lines that were run are well above the hiking trail.

David DeGruttola noted that he had staff check the Pond of Safety Road, which held up well during the rainstorm. Mark Kelley advised that he did take pictures of some damage. The Forest Service may be able to assist with repairs, and in the long-term they may want to consider ledge pack for the hill. Walter Graff asked if any culverts were identified during the storm that may need work in the future, and Mr. DeGruttola stated there are a couple of smaller ones that could be upsized, along with a couple that should be bridges. Mr. DeGruttola also stated that he would like to look at the culverts on Jimtown Road.

A. Third Stewardship Plan - Update

David DeGruttola advised that they can submit the plan in January. Mark Kelley noted that the Forest Commission and the Planning Board will need to approve it, and a public hearing will need to be held. It was suggested that the hearing be held at the same time as the discussion about the management of the glade skiing. Mr. DeGruttola will send the plan to the Commission this month, so that it can be reviewed and approved at the February meeting. Mr. DeGruttola noted that they were still collecting data and discussed the stands of trees and areas for regeneration.

Mr. DeGruttola advised they are still waiting on the weather to start this year's timber harvest. Once the Town signs the contract, he will file the Intent to Cut. Mr. DeGruttola advised that prices have started to come back up and should be good through June. They will be using the same logger, the Halls out of Errol.

On a motion by Laura Brocket, seconded by Tim Mather, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the contract for the timber harvest as presented and to authorize Mark Kelley to sign on their behalf.

Mr. DeGruttola noted that he has restarted the dialogue with NH Fish and Game concerning the permanent wildlife opening on the Potter piece. He is not sure where it will be yet. They may need to contract with someone with a chipper, to make it easier to create the field. Laura Brockett asked how many acres it would be, and Mr. DeGruttola advised that there is no limit. It was noted that areas such as the pipeline do not count for wildlife openings, as they do not function the same way.

IV. Annual Report

Mark Kelley passed out draft copies of the Forest Commission Annual Report. Mr. Kelley requested that members read it over and contact him with any feedback. There is still some information that he will need to fill in, that he will get from Mr. DeGruttola. When the report is complete, Mr. Kelley will get it to Linda Dupont.

V. 2024 Budget Update

Mark Kelley reminded members that the Planning Board would be holding a public hearing on the proposed budget at their meeting on January 4, 2024.

VI. Other Business

A. Pond of Safety Road Rain Damage

It was suggested that a sign be placed on the gate when it is closed stating why, as people would accept it better with an explanation. It was also suggested that the road be cleared before locking the gate, so that nobody gets locked in.

B. EMS Communication Tower

Mark Kelley advised that they will be meeting tomorrow at 11:00 am for this project. Mr. Kelley advised he will be suggesting some alternate locations, as all land in the Town Forest should be treated as if was part of the Federal Legacy Conservation Easement. This project would also conflict with the proposed wildlife crossing. Section 7.04, Regulation of Telecommunication Facilities, in the Land Use Ordinance states that towers would not be allowed if co-location is possible. There is a tower available behind the Water Wheel Restaurant, however the group has stated they do not have funds available for monthly rental fees.

It was stated at the meeting concerning the wildlife crossing, that 1300 feet of fencing would need to be installed, including a gate at the Farrar Farm. The need for the crossing was questioned, and it was stated that the last study on moose collisions was done about 20 years ago. The moose population has also decreased due to ticks.

C. Signs for POS Parking and Trailhead Parking

Mark Kelley advised that he sent a note to David Doyle, but has not heard back from him yet. Bill put up the ski signs today. The Commission will come up with a list of signs for George Brown. Several signs were suggested, including one for Deerfly Road, and Randolph Community Forest signs for the Farrar Farm and road to the Pond of Safety. It was noted that the Interpretive Trail signs need work, and that this trail could be a project for next summer. A kiosk for the Gorham entrance was suggested. Mr. Kelley advised that David Doyle should have enough material for three signs, and it was suggested that maps be added to the back of these signs. A parking area on Jimtown Road was discussed, and David Degruttola will take a look at it. Michelle Cormier suggested that an inventory be taken of all the signs, and a rotation be set up for replacement.

D. Workbook of Randolph Forest Procedures

Mark Kelley advised that he would like to set up a workbook for the Forest procedures, including mowing, gates, locations of signs, and other items. It was suggested that there be a place on the website to store information for the members, or to use google docs to share information.

Mark Kelley noted that he received the keys to the Farrar Farm garage and took pictures of the contents. There is what may be a litter inside, and Tim Mather will take a look at it tomorrow. Arrangements will be made with Jennifer Barton-Scaranza to move some of the items that were stored inside.

David Willcox advised that he spoke with the Forest Service about the contract and that there are no substantial changes. It will take about a month for the Forest Service approvals, and then will be brought to the Commission. The contract will be good for five years. This contract will also have to go to the Planning Board, and could be added to the hearing already scheduled in April.

VII. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Town Hall.