



Randolph Community Forest

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

Date: October 1, 2025

Location: Randolph Town Hall

Members Present: Mark Kelley, Walter Graff, David Willcox, Nate Reid, and Alex Roberts

Guests Present: David DeGruttola from LandVest, Michele Cormier, Jeremiah Hawkins, and Shelli Fortin, Minutes

Mark Kelley called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

David Willcox and Alex Roberts, alternate members, were appointed to sit in for Laura Brockett and Tim Mather.

I. Review September Minutes

On a motion by David Willcox, seconded by Walter Graff, the Commission voted to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2025, meeting as presented.

II. Financial Review

A. Invoices Received

Two invoices were received from Joel White to cut and spray the knotweed, one invoice was for \$810.00 and one for \$748.67, for a total of \$1558.67. An invoice was received from LandVest for \$1,009.90, for their monthly work which included preparation for Forest Day. An invoice was received from Rotten Rock Welding and Fabrication in the amount of \$11,475 for the gates. An invoice was received from White Mountain Lumber for use of the forklift to unload the gates and two pressure treated posts, which were installed on the road to the tower, in the amount of \$337.96. All invoices were approved for payment and signed.

B. Payments Received

No payments were received this month.

C. Financial Review

Mark Kelley advised the balances have not changed much since last month. The income totals about \$118,000 and expenses at about \$67,000. They will have about an additional \$22,000 in expenses before the end of the year.

III. Maple Sugar Lease

Mark Kelley advised that the comments received from the Planning Board have been sent to the attorney to incorporate into the lease, however the amended copy has not been received yet.

IV. RMC MOU

The Planning Board is currently working on the MOU with the RMC.

V. Current Use and Timber Taxes

Mark Kelley advised that the Town is still waiting on the tax rate for this year to figure out the current use taxes owed. David DeGruttola will come up with a number for the timber tax based on the harvest. Both amounts will be approved to pay at the November meeting.

VI. Preliminary Budget Discussion

David DeGruttola reviewed items that they should consider adding to the budget for next year, including the Jimtown Road culverts for erosion control, road repairs for next year's timber harvest, the wildlife opening, easement monitoring and tree farm inspection.

Walter Graff asked about beech leaf disease and David DeGruttola advised that it is not here yet. Mr. DeGruttola noted that beech is the only hard mast tree in the North Country for wildlife. There is a fungicide, Reliant, that can be used to spray the trees, and Mr. DeGruttola advised he will get more information on this. Mr. DeGruttola noted that there is an area off the Pond of Safety Road that could be used as a site to test the use of the fungicide. When asked about species to replace beech, Mr. DeGruttola noted that red oak would be a possibility.

The timber harvest this year is planned just beyond the Little Ledge sale, after they upgrade the road this fall. The harvest will begin after the first of the year and will be done by the end of February or beginning of March. When asked about the Deerfly site, Mr. DeGruttola advised that this area could be harvested again when the conditions are right. There are also some opportunities for a timber sale on Jimtown Road and Bowman Road.

Walter Graff asked about the effect of tariffs on pricing, and Mr. DeGruttola noted that lumber has not been affected yet. However, due to the rising costs of other items, there may not be a demand for lumber as people will not have extra funds for renovations or to build new homes.

VII. Bethel Community Forest Invitation

Mark Kelley advised that they received an invitation from the Northern Forest Center to attend a field trip to the Bethel Community Forest on October 21. Kelley will send the information to those members who did not receive the email.

VIII. Permission to Use ATV on Town Forest

Mark Kelley advised that a request was received from a gentleman requesting to use an ATV on Town Forest land, as he has a moose permit and will need the ATV to get the moose out of the woods. Kelley advised that they have given permission before for requests such as this. Kelley will request that the gentleman let him know if he is successful.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that the moose should not be pulled across the brook.

IX. Permission to Hunt

Mark Kelley advised that a request was received from the Hicks family for written permission to set up a tree stand on Town Forest land in Jefferson, as they have been hunting there for many years. Mr. DeGruttola advised that they should use a strap-on ladder, put their name and contact information on the stand, provide the coordinates for where it is located, and will need to remove it within 30 days of the close of the season.

Mr. DeGruttola advised that a landowner can say no to baiting deer or bear, even though it is legal in NH. Mark Kelley will type up a letter in response to the request, and Mr. DeGruttola advised he has a spreadsheet, with requirements that can be checked off, to enclose for Mr. Hicks to sign.

X. Signs for Parking for the Glades

Jeremiah Hawkins provided the updated drafts for the signs for the parking area. The signs will be 16x24, with one type of sign for the road and another for the kiosk. Four or five signs are planned for the road, and Mark Kelley will contact Eversource for permission to put the signs on the poles. Jeremiah Hawkins will pay for the signs, and then provide the Town with the invoice for reimbursement.

The Commission discussed plowing for the parking area for the winter, and Mark Kelley advised he would contact Bill Arnold to see if he is interested. The Commission also discussed changing the layout of the parking area before next year so that it could be plowed more easily. Michele Cormier noted that the road was adopted by the Town, so this may be the Town's responsibility. One section of the four parking areas in the lot will be designated for resident parking only.

Jeremiah Hawkins asked if an agreement was needed for maintenance of the glades, and David Willcox advised that Mr. Hawkins would need to set up a formal organization to have an MOU with the Forest Commission. Maintenance will be done on an informal basis by volunteers for the time being.

XI. Forester's Report

David DeGruttola advised that he and Elise Lawson met to identify potential locations for a permanent wildlife opening. Some areas are too wet for this, and DeGruttola advised that red spruce and cedar could be planted in these areas. At the end of Deer Fly Road there is a small two-acre site that is dry and could be mowed. There is also a 5-acre site for a remote grassy opening, however they would need to fix the road to access it. This area is by the no-management zone designated in the easement due to elevation.

The clearing of the transects was discussed, and Michele Cormier advised she will discuss with the Selectboard the suggestion of hiring Mr. Campbell as a temporary employee, so that he will be covered by the Town's liability insurance. David DeGruttola will find out what his hourly rate would be.

David Willcox asked if Mr. DeGruttola had spoken to Scott Quinn from the WMNF, and Mr. DeGruttola advised he has called however has not spoken with him yet. He will continue to try to reach him. Although USFS may not have personnel available to help at this time, they could plan for the future.

Walter Graff asked if NH has a Cooperative Research Unit like what Maine has, to compare techniques for harvesting wood. Mr. DeGruttola advised they have the NH Cooperative Extension, who currently do research on a maple tap lease and beech leaf test spots. Mr. DeGruttola advised that they have tried several different techniques in the Town Forest for timber harvests, except the use of a chainsaw and cable skidder.

XII. Other Business

Mark Kelley advised that he has been asked to speak by State Representative Arnold Davis, who is the Chairman of a subcommittee looking at the issue of carbon credits in the Pittsburg area. They are discussing the issue of the loss of revenue from timber taxes. Kelley advised he has been asked to speak since he is a landowner, someone in the timber industry, and a member of the Forest Commission. The Commission briefly discussed the issue, and Mr. DeGruttola advised that the landowner in that area has been making changes to return the timber harvest to what it was.

Michele Cormier asked if the Randolph Ramble asked permission to hold the event this year. Mark Kelley advised that Jeremiah Hawkins did call to ask permission, and since it has been an annual event he did give permission. Kelley noted that they will try to mow before the event.

XIII. Executive Session

There was no executive session needed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm by general consensus.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5 , 2025, at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelli Fortin