

MINUTES
Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts*
Education, Outreach, and Research Committee Meeting – October 17, 2022

Committee Members in Attendance: Kate Lindroos Conlin, Massachusetts Forest Alliance (chair); Hannah Poplawki, Rowe, (notetaker); Joseph Nowak, Adams.

Staff/Board Members in Attendance: Hank Art, Williamstown (Board chair); Greg Cox, Hawley; Jay Healy, Charlemont; Lisa Hayden, NEFF, Admin. Agent; Sophie Argetsinger, NEFF, Assistant.

1. **Call to Order** at 5:03pm by K. Conlin.

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from Education, Outreach and Research Committee Meeting on July 20, 2022.**

J. Nowak motioned to approve the minutes with an amendment that a stipend for presenters could be increased to more than \$200 in the future. H. Poplawski seconded. Approved by roll call vote.

3. **Public Comment.**

G. Cox from the Massachusetts Forest Alliance spoke to the Committee regarding a series of programs that will be held between now and June 30th, 2023. The programs will occur in three parts, with about 12 programs in total in Franklin and Berkshire Counties. In the spring, there will be two 2-day chainsaw trainings for landowners and another two for firefighters. The remaining programs will be a series of woods tours featuring different types of forest management, and forestry education programs with topics such as current use programs, forest carbon storage, and forest health. These topics will be led by DCR and other land management organizations. G. Cox wants the EOR Committee's input on what types of programs we would like to see and if there is a way to collaborate, especially to avoid competing events. The Woodlands Partnership could potentially help publicize in newspapers, on Facebook, and on the Partnership website. K. Conlin requested programs that focus on local forest management that are geared toward the public. L. Hayden will keep eyes and ears open for upcoming events or potential opportunities for collaboration.

J. Healy shared that he has 3 or 4 areas of patch clear cuts on his land of different ages (20, 5 and 2 years ago) that could be used for a woods tour program. He also wanted to share that he has been speaking with a local Charlemont church about setting up a wood bank in the area to distribute firewood to low-income homeowners in the community and people in need of energy assistance. He has wood that he is willing to donate, and has all the splitting/processing equipment and a forklift to load the wood into trucks (his employees would be the only ones to run this equipment and they have a dry kiln). He would need help for a couple Saturdays in the fall to get the wood into piles and distribute to those in need. If there is anyone who would be willing to help and can bring their truck for the day to deliver wood that would be very helpful, or just volunteer their time to help load the wood into the trucks. Jay did approach the Charlemont Selectboard to assist with this idea and although they thought it was great, they are just too busy now to help with it.

G. Cox suggested that any wood the highway department clears from the road could be donated to the wood bank. Jay wants to be careful about where the wood comes from and mentioned firewood should be dried for at least 60 days before it is used. J. Nowak commented that the wood should be locally sourced to prevent spread of invasive species (insects or disease). K. Conlin said she would like to have J. Healy come to another EOR meeting, potentially with Sean Mahoney (DCR) to discuss a wood bank

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further. H. Art said that Ben Kargere's wood residue project found that a wood bank would be a viable option for making use of wood residue in the region.

4. Public Webinar or Panel with Ben Kargere.

The Committee should decide on a couple possible dates for Ben to present his research on wood residue to the public. Since his topic covers a broad subject, we could make it a panel and involve other speakers like Sean Mahoney (Director of Wood Utilization for DCR) and Jay Healy. K. Conlin believes Jay's experience is very valuable and he would have great input on the topic. J. Healy agreed to be part of the panel. K. Conlin also suggested a forester (maybe Alison Wright or Mary Wigmore) to speak on low grade wood. February would be a good time to have this event. K. Conlin will reach out to potential speakers after this meeting and S. Argetsinger will help determine a date to move this along.

5. Advertising and Support Strategies for Upcoming Webinars.

K. Conlin is working on the budget and will send it to the rest of the members to add to. So far she has ~\$1,000 for the Zoom account and ~\$1,000 for speakers (5 webinars/presentations at \$200 each). The question came up whether the work for S. Argetsinger and L. Hayden should be included in the budget, but it seems that their work is covered under the NEFF Agent budget. It would be helpful to have a Speakers bureau list for planning events seasonally and we could possibly hire someone part time to assist with webinars/presentations, to be discussed more later if we feel like we need it. K. Conlin and H. Poplawski will work on advertising for the events/presentations. Press releases and posting the flyers on Facebook are free and it is always a good idea to send them to Town officials to post on Town websites or in local offices.

K. Conlin has not heard back from Bill Keeton and he could be busy with teaching right now. For now, instead of reaching out to him again, K. Conlin will reach out to Alexandra Kosiba, a forest ecophysiologicalist and Assistant Professor of Forestry at UVM, to see if she would be willing to give a presentation in January or February for the Woodlands Partnership.

J. Nowak suggested that when we have presentations, they should be followed by in-the-field experience. He also suggested we have presentations with a focus on Indigenous practices and with the native groups in our region, and that we should prioritize sharing their knowledge.

6. Forest Center Partner Agencies List.

H. Poplawski started a draft for the partner agencies list. K. Conlin will share that with the rest of the group and once we are done with the list, we can bring it to the full Board to see if they have additional agencies to add. S. Argetsinger suggested we also include organizations from NY, VT, and CT whose interests and range may overlap with us. J. Nowak has a list of private landowners, nonprofits, and protected areas with notes on how much land each group owns. When the list is done send it to L. Hayden and S. Argetsinger to keep on file.

7. Partnership Website and Virtual Forest Center.

To revamp the website, we need to hire someone to design the base website and the Virtual Forest Center (VFC). Related to FRCOG contracting for the Rowe MVP grant that will fund the VFC, the grant partners are inviting web designers to submit proposals. The EOR committee was invited to suggest local web designers to give to L. Hayden to reach out for quotes. During this discussion H. Art emailed three

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local web designers and others offered suggestions. We should organize a working group to review web site redesign planning with an invitation to anyone on the Board who is interested in helping.

The Rowe MVP Grant contracts are coming together with FRCOG's help. There is a subcontract in this grant for the Ohketeau Cultural Center to identify historical and cultural experts to present to the public. Rhonda Anderson is the founder and co-director of the Ohketeau Cultural Center. K. Conlin suggested we invite her to one of the EOR meetings or the Executive Board meetings to introduce ourselves and explain how we can support the public presentations with press releases and advertising. K. Conlin also suggested the Ohketeau Center could have a seat on the Partnership Board.

Adjournment: J. Nowak motioned to adjourn the meeting and K. Conlin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:32pm.

***On Oct. 11, 2022, the Board of the public body created in 2018 voted unanimously to change its name from the "Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership" in its bylaws to Doing Business As the "Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts" and requested the state legislature and USDA Forest Service to officially establish and recognize the new name.**