

MINUTES
Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
Education, Outreach & Research Committee Meeting – January 24, 2022

In attendance: Beth Girshman, Conway (Chair); Kate Lindroos Conlin, MFA; Robert O'Connor, EOEEA; Keith Nislow, USFS; Joe Nowak, Adams; Hannah Poplawski, Rowe; Whit Sanford, GSFABA; Henry Art, Williamstown; Lisa Hayden, NEFF, Administrative Agent; Sophie Argetsinger, NEFF, Assistant; Brian Rhodes, iBerkshires; Glen Ayers.

1. **Call to Order** at 5:02pm by B. Girshman.

2. **Approval of Minutes from Education, Outreach, and Research Committee meeting on 9/20/21.** K. Conlin motioned to approve the minutes and J. Nowak seconded. All approved.

3. **Oaks Webinar (12/11/21) debriefing.** B. Girshman said that the webinar went well overall and noted that webinars are a good way to reach more people and bring positive publicity to the Partnership. 82 people registered for the Oaks Webinar. A question was raised about whether there might be a way to incorporate more input from the public during or after future webinars. One suggestion was to send a short post-attendee survey to participants. K. Nislow offered to share an example from the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center. It was suggested that professional credits should continue to be offered for webinars in the future.

4. **Establishing regular EOR meeting times.** Mondays, 5-6:30, every two months was suggested as a regular meeting time. It was noted that smaller groups could also meet more frequently to work on specific projects.

5. **Partnership brochure and discussion of MTWP name change possibility.** H. Williams emailed a draft framework for the brochure to the EOR Committee, following draft text from W. Sandford. There was a discussion of what to call the region in the brochure, which led to a more general discussion of the Partnership name. It was noted that 'Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership' is a somewhat problematic name because the Partnership does not have any tribal associations. Additionally, another group has also used the name for a competing website and for a Facebook page.

Some suggestions for alternative names for the region were: Greater Berkshires, Northwest Hills, Northern Hills, and Northern Berkshires and Hilltowns, or Northern Berkshires and Foothills. B. Girshman said considering a name change could be a public engagement opportunity, for example if a contest were held. W. Sanford suggested that the Partnership needs to think larger than the towns and to market the region as a whole for economic development, recreation and tourism, and there are two audiences: visitors and the people who live here.

It was agreed that the name 'Woodlands Partnership' might be a good alternative name to use for the Partnership. For possible future use, K. Conlin created a Woodlands Partnership Facebook page and S. Argetsinger purchased the domain woodlandspartnership.org through namecheap.com.

6. The Committee discussed **community engagement in the update of the Partnership Plan**, including both municipalities and individuals. Two regional meetings, in person or by Zoom, could be held, as well as town-by-town meetings across the region, including focus on the towns that have not yet joined. There was less interest in a survey or formal questionnaire to gather feedback. The more than \$1 million

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state grants to towns and regional projects should be highlighted and B. O'Connor noted that the Board itself, or a Committee could apply for an EOEEA regional grant, which does not require match.

7. **Education event ideas.** Suggestions included: a talk from Ethan Tapper (Vermont forester practicing “radical forestry” focused on sustainability and equity); a talk from Bill Keeton (Professor of Forest Ecology and Forestry at the University of Vermont); a talk from David Sibley (author and illustrator of the Sibley Guides and Conway resident); a talk or woods walk focused on indigenous peoples’ knowledge of forest management in the region; a woods walks focused on sustainable forestry with a forester, ecologist, and someone from the U.S. Forest Service. The Committee liked the idea of a Speakers Bureau. Fall would be good timing for a next event to allow progress on the Plan revision. The MTWP may need to purchase a webinar level of Zoom account if regular public webinars are planned, as there are features to support large groups and automatic RSVPs. Kate and Beth agreed to support with press releases and continue thinking about a list of budget items.

8. **Public comment.** None was made.

9. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.