

MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP  
Executive Committee Meeting  
October 21, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.

Committee members present: Chair Henry Art, Joe Nowak, Robert O'Connor, Whit Sanford, Mark Buccowich

Guests: Williams College student team members Abby Methany and Sabine Bismeur; Larry Parnass - Berkshire Eagle; Steve Dravis – iBerkshires; Susan Cox, Conservation Education Coordinator – USFS Region 9; Lisa Hayden - Admin. Agent; Board members: Beth Girshman; Keith Ross; Kate Lindroos Conlin; Andrew Kawczak; Ed Munch

### **1. Overview of student project scope and stakeholder survey**

Hank introduced the Williams College students, Abby Methany and Sabine Bismeur, who will be conducting a study of needs and functions for the MTWP Forest Center. They Abby are tasked with developing a comprehensive vision for the Center – space, uses, location, and possible programmatic elements. Next week, they will be driving around the MTWP region to consider various potential sites.

### **2. Discussion and feedback on survey, process and potential Forest Center needs/uses**

They will be sending a survey to stakeholders while they are developing an initial concept for the Center. It will include ten questions.

Possible defined uses could include:

- ⬆ Information and Booking Center with lists of places to eat and stay.
- ⬆ A stop for public transport.
- ⬆ Demonstration and Woodworking Center (Hall Tavern).
- ⬆ Public Education Center for field trips, summer camp destination.
- ⬆ Forestry Research Center.

Exhibits and activities at the Center might included:

- ⬆ Innovative forest management techniques.
- ⬆ Environmental and scenic values to the economy, rural quality, and public health.
- ⬆ Botanical tours.
- ⬆ Year-round shop and monthly marketplace.
- ⬆ Meeting space, partnership home and offices for partners.

Kate suggested the Center showcase goods, both local wood crafts and larger products like furniture.

Mark suggested that the students survey other visitor centers – e.g., Catskill Center, National Park Service, Acadia Visitor Center with Friends of Acadia, Town of Adams Rail Trail Visitor Center, DCR and Greylock Glen. We should ask how other centers are

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funded. There was discussion of other potential contacts who could share helpful information.

Also, exhibits could include topics like in NYS the Working Landscape of Catskills, best management practices models, and cultural piece like the Blue Mountain Museum in the Adirondacks.

- 3. Schedule next meeting** - MTWP Board Meeting November 9; Meeting with Sen. Comerford tentatively set for Dec. 14.