

## MINUTES

### Education, Outreach, and Research Committee

Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts – December 12, 2022

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Kate Conlin (MFA, Chair); Hannah Poplawski (Rowe, Notetaker); Joseph Nowak (Adams)

**Staff/Board Present:** Board Chair Hank Art (Williamstown); Lisa Hayden (NEFF); Sophie Argetsinger (NEFF); Marybeth Chichester (WP Board, Franklin Regional Council of Governments)

**Public Attendance:** Whit Sanford (Shelburne); Andrew Randazzo (Forest Ecologist, Mass Audubon); Dana Williams (Williamstown Rural Lands)

- 1. Call to Order** at 5:01 by Kate Conlin.
- 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 17, 2022:** K. Conlin motioned to approve the minutes and J. Nowak seconded. Unanimously approved.
- 3. Public Comment:** M. Chichester and D. Williams introduced themselves to the committee. M. Chichester is the new representative from Franklin Regional Council of Governments on the Woodlands Partnership Board and is sitting in on upcoming committee meetings to find one that is a good fit for her.

D. Williams, a citizen of Rowe, is the new Program Coordinator at Williamstown Rural Lands and is interested in getting involved with the Partnership and partnering on future events. Williamstown Rural Lands will have an upcoming talk series “Know Your Land” that the EOR committee could help with. She is also interested in bringing citizen science projects to the community.
- 4. Update from Andrew Randazzo on the Rowe MVP Grant and Virtual Forest Center:**

A. Randazzo of Mass Audubon gave a quick overview on the Forest Climate Resilience Program and MVP Grant, with goals to support applied research and engage municipal leaders. The MVP grant includes creation of a Virtual Forest Center web resource, featuring local case studies, and funding for demonstration sites in towns implementing climate-smart forest management. The EOR Committee is invited and encouraged to participate in an upcoming focus group regarding the Virtual Forest Center. A. Randazzo asked the EOR committee for suggestions as to who to include in the VFC stakeholder focus group and Kate, Hannah and Amy Shapiro were among the suggestions. K. Conlin suggested reaching out to conservation commissions within the Partnership region and involving foresters or someone who works/owns a mill. She suggested Jay Healy with a plug for the Hall Tavern Farm Woodcraft Collaborative. A. Randazzo has considered reaching out to conservation commissions. L. Hayden pointed out that we want engagement from both municipalities and community members for a successful project. M. Chichester suggested sending a notice to stakeholders who have land under Chapter 61.

A. Randazzo also asked we consider resources the VFC should focus on. K. Conlin suggested demystifying what forest management is and what it can look like, an honest account of local resources and their uses, addressing equity issues and defining in clear, concise ways why forestry is important. H. Art suggested incorporating aspects from the Ten-Year Partnership Plan which, although not finalized yet, is now featured on the WP website. A. Randazzo encouraged the group to consider what the best points would be from the Ten-Year plan. The MVP grant includes 4 focus group meetings over 2 years and will also include woods walks and cultural programs. Stakeholder meetings will be during the evenings, weekends, and by zoom/hybrid so more people can participate.

- 5. Wood Residue Panel Update – featuring Ben Kargère, Jay Healy, Sean Mahoney, and a forester (TBD):** K. Conlin provided an update on the planned panel discussion. S. Mahoney can participate and suggested taking the discussion a step further to include how forests/woodlands can address the 2030 climate goals – since he has experience with these goals, he offered to speak about this specifically. L. Hayden and H. Art agreed that for this panel discussion we should keep the focus on wood residues, but it would be great to have Sean back for a separate webinar to discuss this. L. Hayden suggested February 1st or 2nd at 12PM. This was followed by a quick discussion on the title of the event, after brainstorming and suggestions from W. Sanford, K. Conlin, H. Art, and L. Hayden, the group decided on “Waste or Resource?: A Panel Discussion about Wood Residue.” Confirmed presenters are Ben Kargère and Sean Mahoney. K. Conlin will reach out to Emily Boss (MA Woodlands Institute) and Jay Healy (Hall Tavern Farm) to see about their availability.
- 6. Updates on planned webinar with Alexandra Kosiba, forest ecologist, Vermont:** H. Poplawski has been drafting a flyer for the upcoming webinar with A. Kosiba on January 25, 2023, 12PM. K. Conlin has a new picture to use and will forward to H. Poplawski. K. Conlin voiced her concern about the Zoom account registration and the increased work for L. Hayden and S. Argetsinger to manually add all the participants. L. Hayden suggested that NEFF has a Zoom account the Partnership can use which features easy registration. As long as L. Hayden reserves the days for the webinars ahead of time, it should not be a problem to use the NEFF account. In the flyers and press release we should make the registration available on the website (link to home page) which will help increase traffic to the website.

K. Conlin led the group in a discussion about the best times for webinars. Having it in the middle of the day can limit the amount of people who are able to attend, however, for these types of webinars it is common participants work for the state, land/conservation organizations, or universities where it is not an issue to join for a midday webinar. For future events, we should keep in mind whether evenings or weekends are better for more participants. A. Randazzo suggested that we could also promote the webinar recordings so the public can view the event afterwards if they are unable to join.
- 7. New Partnership Logo, Website, and Social Media Ideas:** S. Argetsinger shared the Woodlands Partnership logo ideas and a few comments from the Executive Committee prior to the meeting.

K. Conlin and H. Poplawski like idea #9 with the black trees and Partnership name. W. Sanford liked the ideas that include the road/river with mountains in the background because they do not just focus on the forest aspect of the Partnership. W. Sanford also liked the idea with the pinecone, #15. L. Hayden also likes the road/river idea because it includes the origins of the Partnership and W. Sanford suggested we use the square or rectangle one, not the triangle as that is similar to Mass Audubon. K. Conlin suggested the EOR committee pick our top two or three ideas and then present those to the Board to pick from. After some discussion the group decided on #15, with the pinecone, and #7, rectangle with the road/river and the Partnership name to the right. M. Chichester suggested that for #7 the yellow color of the field is adjusted because it looks too much like the sun. She also suggested including the website URL but S. Argetsinger argued logos do not usually include a URL so it should be left out. S. Argetsinger will adjust the yellow color of the field for the final draft. During the next Board meeting in January everyone can vote on which of the two ideas they like best.

L. Hayden, S. Argetsinger, H. Art and K. Conlin interviewed Cider House Media to potentially hire as web designers for the new website. L. Hayden suggested the agency and working group will have to drive the process to help with what context and elements we want to include. L. Hayden believes Cider House is the best candidate at this point and would feel comfortable moving forward with them. H. Art asked if we should vote on using Cider House now and K. Conlin and L. Hayden agreed. H. Poplawski and J. Nowak agreed to offer the web design contract to Cider House.

L. Hayden asked if we should hire a part-time person to post on social media or if someone from this committee would like to post. There should probably be a bigger discussion, perhaps with K. Conlin, H. Art, S. Argetsinger, and anyone else who would like to join, on the logistics of posting and making sure the information we provide is accurate and appropriate. K. Conlin posts occasionally on our Facebook page but just for upcoming events. Regarding the new Partnership name, K. Conlin is unable to change the current Facebook Page name so we would have to create a new Facebook account. D. Williams recently watched webinars that focused on how nonprofits can use social media platforms to share information and offered to share some ideas and answer questions we may have.

**8. Building the Forest Center Partner Agencies List:** Several months ago, H. Poplawski started the partner agency list and shared it with the EOR committee. K. Conlin asked what we should do with it now – perhaps when the working group for the website is created they can brainstorm how it can be utilized. W. Sanford wanted to clarify that a partnership list and a network list are a little different in that with a network you can choose who to use or go to for collaboration. K. Conlin also suggested we send this list to the VFC stakeholder group because some agencies could overlap. H. Art suggested the new website links to all board member associations (Towns, Trusts, Organizations, etc).

**9. Any item(s) not anticipated within 48 hours:** none

**10. Adjournment:** K. Conlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and J. Nowak seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.