

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership - Executive Committee Agenda
August 24, 2021 – 1:00 PM

MTWP Executive Committee: Hank Art (chair), Bob O'Connor, Whit Sanford, Joe Nowak.

MTWP Staff Support: Mark Buccowich (US Forest Service Liaison), Lisa Hayden (NEFF).

Guests: Glen Ayers

Call to Order – 1:03 pm

1. Approve Minutes of July 20, 2021, Ex. Committee

B. O'Connor move and J. Nowak seconded a motion to accept the July 20, 2021, Minutes. Three Executive Committee Members approved the motion with one abstention.

2. Review & finalize agenda for Sept. 14 MTWP grants forum/webinar and for press release

L. Hayden reported that each grantee will have 10 or 15 minutes to present their projects. Lisa will publicize the event with Whit and Hank following up with area news media to make sure the forum is promoted widely.

B. O'Connor will send Whit a summary of the grants that have been awarded over the past year so she can complete the draft of the MTWP Brochure and Lisa can put the information on the website.

3. Update on Hank's recent meeting with representative of Stockbridge-Munsee Community of Mohicans

H. Art reported on his meeting with Bonney Hartley of Stockbridge-Munsee Community of Mohicans. She thinks the group will want to partner with the MTWP on programming, but the organization is limited in its stewardship capacity.

B. Hartley noted Community of Mohicans group would have an interest in oak management. Hank will continue to work on this project. It was suggested that it would be good to develop a list of people who should be invited to attend MTWP meetings, including potential partners.

W. Sanford noted there is a population of Native Americans in Franklin County – Mohawk, Mohican, and Abenaki tribes – that are very active. She offered to see if there is a comparable organization in Franklin County to the Wisconsin Stockbridge-Munsee Community of Mohicans.

It was suggested the different Native Americans groups might want to meet with the Board about sustainable forestry and broaden the scope of their discussion and involvement with the Partnership, including input on the Plan update. Whit will send the names of Franklin County contacts to Hank, and there might be opportunity to write a grant to support a Wisconsin/MA project.

4. Oak resiliency events Nov/Dec – potential need for separate MTWP Plan update listening sessions and scheduling

L. Hayden reported that she is working with the Education, Outreach and Research Committee on the Oak Resiliency Event. They are still working on nailing down the venues, dates etc.

5. Williams College student project for Forest Center needs assessment - outreach to local colleges

H. Art is heading up a student project for assessing the needs of the Forest Center. The students could develop a conceptual plan for the Center – where it would be located, outline its programs and exhibits, and how it might be affiliated with the demonstration forest, educational programming of the Partnership, how it might promote tourism in the region, and could be the site for offices, or resources for local landowners and businesses. Whit will be Hank's counterpart in helping the students with this project. There will be field trips, September 14th and 16th 1:20 to 2:15 at Whitcomb Summit, to launch the study to students who may be on the project team.

H. Art also reported that he reached out to a contact at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams to discuss a possible student project next summer focused on an inventory of waste wood for the region, for which there is interest. There was discussion about extending involvement with MTWP projects to Greenfield

Community College and Berkshire Community College, as well. Committee members promised to share contacts at those institutions.

6. Update on pending state/federal grant applications for MTWP

There was an update on \$60,000 for riparian restoration in local watersheds for which USFS forms are being completed by NEFF, and the Conway School is interested in having a graduate student team conduct an analysis to identify potential MTWP restoration sites, as part of the project. Another \$60,000 state grant would match this project and include climate resilience planning for town forests. B. O'Connor noted that the state is also prioritizing tree-planting sites this fiscal year, so there may opportunity to provide more trees for projects in the region. W. Sanford also noted that Eversource and Great River Hydro award sizable grants that could be pursued.

7. Meetings with local lawmakers – timing of invitations to future committee meetings - Outreach to other groups – MTWP identity

H. Art and L. Hayden are working on having our next Executive Committee or Board Meeting with the region's State Legislators. The purpose of the meeting would be to update them on the Partnership, to discuss the need for updating PILOT payments to the towns, the impacts of state-owned land in the towns of Franklin and Berkshire Counties, and whether the enabling legislation should have line item for MTWP. Legislators would include Senators Hinds and Comerford; Representatives would include Blais, Barrett, Mark and possibly others.

8. Woodland co-op/collaborative concept – upcoming Standing Committee agendas

Jay Healy of Charlemont and a Board Member of the MTWP is scheduled to give a presentation later today on the Woodland Cooperative he helped establish many years back in Western Massachusetts to the Natural Resource-based Economic Development Standing Committee. The Executive Committee thinks the cooperative is a great concept to explore. However, it cautioned that the Partnership should get up and running first before it takes on this type of programming, or relevant Committees could explore this possibility for MTWP and if warranted, recommend the program to the Board.

H. Art also reported that Ed Munch has stepped up to Chair the Municipal Financial Sustainability Standing Committee, which is trying to schedule its first meeting to discuss a recent state auditor's report on the Payment in Lieu of Taxes formula.

9. Board insurance quotes update

L. Hayden reported she is working on getting the quotes.

10. Schedule next Executive Committee meeting

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 23 and Wednesday, October 13 from 2:00-3:00 PM.

11. Other Items not anticipated within 48 hours of agenda posting

The Executive Committee discussed how it could move forward on drafting a new plan for the Partnership based on the 2015 Plan. W. Sanford offered to begin the process by working with the Standing Committee Chairs. She has drafted the first chapter of what she thinks should be a strategic plan, since the Committees haven't fully developed their missions, goals, or priority projects. The Committee authorized Whit and Lisa to draft the plan by sharing Chapters with the Chairs and Executive Committee, which will critique and suggest edits to the material they produce.

12. Public comment

Glen Ayers spoke, quoting the IPCC report that climate change is a code red for humanity, and asked that the Climate Crisis be addressed in the Partnership's updated plan. He noted the Partnership should read the recent IPCC report and other climate change plans, as the Partnership rewrites its plan, and shared an opinion that there is not much worth salvaging in the old plan. He asked that the plan be redirected, excluding biomass, to focus on global warming. He stated that shifting focus to a Carbon Reserve plan, including "wild carbon," could attract a "waterfall" of funding in the new Mohawk Trail Plan.

13. Adjournment

W. Sanford moved, B. O'Connor seconded the motion, and all agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 2:27 PM.