

Minutes
Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee
March 20, 2025

In attendance: Chris Russo-Fraysier, Jim Deshler, Mark Martin, Emily Hoffman, Janette Shaffer, and Greg Rouleau (5:40-6:55PM)

Guests: Amanda Gustin, Jim Willard, Steph Olsen and Tim Hammond

1. **Call to Order:** 5:30 pm.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** Motion-Chris. Presentation and Request from the Central Vermont Career Center Exploratory Technology Instructors. Second Jim. All in favor.
3. **Agenda Items:**

Communication Agreement & Mission: Reading

Guest Introduction: Jim Willard, Steph Olson, and Tim Hammond

Central Vermont Career Center Exploratory Technology: Steph Olsen and Tim Hammond provided an overview of their curriculum that includes a study of the Cow Pasture Management Plan, Invasive plant identification and proper techniques for removal. The two-week unit (April 7-18th) will include a hike on the Cow Pasture property (April 11th ~ 9:15-11:45) to learn plant Identification, followed by two days of hands-on invasive plant removal (April 17-18th ~ 8:30 – 12:30). Susan McDowell will co-ordinate with Steph and Tim. The Committee is greatly appreciative of the impact this class has had on the removal of invasive plants and will acknowledge the event through media outlets. This will be the classes 4th year on the property.

Approval of Minutes- January 16, 2025. Motion- Mark: Approve Minutes, Seconded - Emily. All in favor, motion passes.

New Member Introduction: Emily Hoffman brings marketing and social media skill sets to the Committee. Emily provided the Committee with a list of initiatives she is willing to assist with and will formalize and present her ideas at the May Meeting. Janette will provide Emily with Admin privileges to the Committees Gmail account.

Alternative Meeting Locations: Alumni Hall is no longer an option. There are no other City meeting spaces available at the time we meet. The Committee is planning on meeting on-site in May and whenever the weather permits. The Committee is required to record the Meeting.

City Of Barre, Vermont Rules of Procedure for Public Bodies: The Committee will elect a Chair, Co-Chair and Treasurer at the May Meeting.

ERSA Update:

ERSA Correspondence: The Sub-Committee is assisting Janet Shatney with a project status report for the State. Janet will be requesting reimbursement for completed project and submitting the Committees amendment request to delay 3 trail projects (M2-1, M3 and S-2) previously discussed.

Trail Assessment: Zac Freeman will be focusing on finalizing the draft Trail Agreement in the upcoming weeks. The final draft will be shared with the full Committee for input and approval.

Trail Work: The Committee will be completing trail work on the S3 (Ridgeline), S8 (Cow Pasture Loop), M1-2 (Wolf Tree) trails and will be closing the S2 trail. Jim and Mark will be planning Trail Day activities and provide a date and plan at our May 15th meeting.

Advisory Group Updates:

Invasive Plant Control: None

Conservation & Access: The City Attorney has drafted an easement agreement and the landowner whose property the S3 trail crosses has approved the language. Mark is working with the City Manager to finalize the agreement. The Advisory Group will be Meeting next week to discuss paper street access to the trail network.

National Trails Days: There are conflicts with the June 7th date. Mark and Jim will identify a date and present a plan to complete the ERSA trail projects at the May 15th Meeting.

Member Recruitment and Expectations (Revision 2): The Committee reviewed a draft update of the document. The document is located on the Barre City Cow Pasture City Web page and shared with individuals interested in becoming a member. Minor revisions were incorporated. Motion to Approve the Revision (Mark). All in Favor. Motion passes (See attachment),

Vermont Town Forest Census Project: An email from Matthew Fischetti (Rubenstein School of Natural Resources) requesting participation in the Census was sent to the Chair of the Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee via the Committees gmail account February 28, 2025. The census is a collaboration of UVM and the VT Dept of Forest Parks and Recreation. Jim and Chris will complete the survey and obtain Committee opinions once completed and prior to submittal.

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn Jim @ 6:55. Seconded Mark. All in favor. Motion passes.

Attachment:

Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee Member Recruitment and Expectations
Revision 2: March 20, 2025

The Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee was formed in the Fall of 2013. The desire is to have 7 active members. The Committee currently meets on the third Thursday of every other month from 5:30-7:00. The City requires that all Committees have a designated Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. There's a Management Plan for the Barre City Cow Pasture (Brodsky 2017) that provides property management guidance, goals and defines the Committee's Mission and Vision.

Mission: To connect people to the place in ways that allows recreation, exploration, collaboration, and stewardship of our Cow Pasture.

Vision: The Barre City Cow Pasture is an undeveloped natural area with ecological importance, historical significance, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Individuals interested in becoming a Committee Member:

- Must attend at least one Committee Meeting to introduce themselves and describe why they are interested in becoming a member,
- Be familiar with the Management Plan for The Barre City Cow Pasture (Brodsky (2017), and the Barre City Cow Pasture Inventory, Assessment and Recommendations (Sharpless 2013).
- Complete a Barre City Application,
- Provide the Committee and the City Council with a letter describing your interest and the skill set(s) that you would bring to the Committee, and
- Attend a Council Meeting for appointment consideration.

Committee Member Expectations:

- Attend all meetings (exceptions will be made for a valid reason),
- Abide by State Open Meeting Law Rules,
- Willingness to share in the responsibilities associated with the required positions: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, or in another capacity as described in the Management Plan for the Barre City Cow Pasture and this document,
- Attend meetings prepared to participate,
- Participate in Committee activities, and
- Share the Management Plan for the City Cow Pasture's mission and vision.

Preferred Committee Member criteria and skill set(s):

- City resident,
- Natural Resource, Outdoor Recreation, Land Conservation or Forestry background,
- Willingness to serve on Sub-Committees or Advisory Groups
- Trail maintenance and mapping skills,
- Communication, public outreach experience,
- Interest in organizing educational events,
- Interest in Invasive species control,
- Experience in Policy and Grant writing, and
- Experience from another Committee with a similar Mission /Vision.

Committee “Friends”:

An alternative to becoming a Committee Member is to become a “Friend” of the Committee. “Friends” are individuals that have a focused interest in the property and will be the Committees contact /resource person. “Friends” are not required to attend Meetings unrelated to their focused interest or participate in Committee activities but are welcome.

Examples of Past and Current Committee Action:

- Annual Reports submitted to the City and Council presentations,
- Letter to Council supporting the preservation of ‘paper streets’,
- Contracted with a consulting ecologist to develop the Management Plan for the Barre City Cow Pasture (2017). The Plan utilized the Barre City Cow Pasture Inventory, Assessment and Recommendations Report created in 2013 prior to the Committee inception.
- Trail Maintenance: Removal of downed limbs and brush, water-bar and other trail maintenance.
- Green-Up Day Activities: Removal of stream bed materials (pallets and a water tank), trash (tires, old encampments), trail maintenance activities and invasive plant removal.
- Co-ordinated with City staff to: remove old guardrail at the property entrance and install large stones, remove old fencing on the property, brush-hog the meadow, and provide in-kind work for Grants.
- Invasive plant removal and educational outreach.
- Applied for and received a State of Vermont Building and General Services Grant to install the kiosk and trail map.
- Created a dog etiquette policy,
- Regulatory signage (No motorized vehicles, dumping of yard waste, hunting, dog etiquette etc.).
- Educational outreach: in-person Naturalist walks, virtual walks.
- Applied for five and received the following four Grants to enhance the property: State of Vermont ANR Clean and Clear Grant (prior to Committee inception 2011), Vermont FPR Recreation and Trails Grant (prior to Committee inception 2013), State of Vermont Building Communities Grant (2014) and the ERSA Trail Grant (2022).
- Logo contest.
- Social Media outreach.
- Land conservation, property boundary and public access investigations and actions. Advocated for additional property acreage which led to an increase from ~70 to ~82 acres, an approximate 17% increase in property size. Created a “Ford Property’ Information sheet with property attributes and threats if developed that ultimately led to the City acquisition of the approximate 10-acre parcel.

Purchased, with ERSA Grant funds, three lots along a popular trail protecting property trail access. Advocated for the inclusion of undeveloped city property to be included in the Cow Pasture Boundary.

- Trail and Property Map Development and sign installations.
- Entrance improvements: Installation of Kiosk, signage and maps, removal of guardrail and installation of stones.
- Organize the periodic brush hogging of the meadow as recommended in the Management Plan.

Community Collaboration and activities include:

- Collaborate with “friends” that have a focused interest in the Pasture property and assist with specific tasks (i.e mowing) or are Committee resources (i.e. Naturalist).
- Winter-Fest: Collaborate with local businesses to introduce and highlight outdoor winter activities.
- Vermont Youth Conservation Corp (VYCC): Property and trail enhancement, maintenance, and invasive species control.
- State of VT Dept. of Forests Parks and Recreation: Invasive species and land management.
- Central Vermont Community Land Trust (CVCLT) Neighborhood Works Green Certification- Kiosk installation.
- Barre Tech Center: Trail Improvements, bluebird boxes.
- Career Center: Collaborated with the Exploratory Science instructors since 2022. The Cow Pasture property has been used as an outdoor classroom and students have worked to remove numerous Invasive plants.
- Created Dog Policy and K9 Code of Conduct information sheet.
- University of Vermont Landscape Design Class: property entrance design and trail considerations.
- Boy Scout Troop 714: Wetland trail restoration.
- Collaborated with the Barre City Police Dept. (camping, fires, hunting, dog issues).
- State Wetland Specialist: Guidance for wetland trail restoration.
- Administration and Planning activities: Creation of a Management Plan for the property and obtained City Council approval of the Plan.
- Rezoning and Conservation: Advocated for the rezoning of the Cow Pasture from multi-use to conservation. Co-ordinated with the City Manager’s Office, Planning and Zoning, Public Works, and Public Safety Departments to assist with the Management of the property.
- SnoBees: Established a memorandum of understanding for trail grooming, maintenance and property use.

Future Activities include:

- Assisting the City in meeting the objectives outlined in the Management Plan.
- Update the Management Plan (2027).
- Apply for additional Grants to improve the property and the trail system.