



BOD and Membership Meeting
November 16, 2021
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Persons in attendance: Lisa LaFont, Jean Audet, Monica Raymond, Robin Severy, Kerrie Garvey, Mikayla Pick, Heidi Krantz and Jeannette Cole.

BOD members absent: Jim Nickerson, Jane LeGard, Robin Simpson, Sue Miller

Service Committee –

- Bike related work – **Kerrie** will continue the work that Robin Simpson started for written document and further educational process. This work is on HOLD until the ERSA grant is finished, because there is not enough time to complete both initiatives. **Monica** will contact Nick (mountain bike contact) regarding bike/horse interactions.
- VT Safe Kids – **Sue Miller** put the requested information together and the organization was very appreciative.
- VHSA Spring Road Safety Campaign – we need a VHC member to interact. A Facebook post requesting help will be completed.
- Farm Bureau – Heidi Spoke at the VT Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on 11.6. Shared information from Impact Study, which was well received. The Farm Bureau is looking forward to more collaboration in 2022.

Promotions Committee –

- Industry Summit – Heidi is leading. Registration for Summit is open. Keynote speaker confirmed. Please promote heavily and plan to attend as this is a signature VHC event.
- Membership Renewals – Robin is leading. No updates currently.
- Jackson Miller - Received proposal from Jackson Miller and submitted grant request for funds to support Impact Study marketing and membership recruitment to private donor through Vermont Community Foundation.

Equine Activity Committee –

- FPR Update –
 - The FPR agreement is complete
 - Phase 1&2 are complete on Willoughby trails
 - Map for these trails in progress
 - Leadership of the FPR Agreement is being handed to Kerrie Garvey from Jim Nickerson.
 - **NEED JIM TO DO THE SUMMARY REPORT AND DO THE TRANSITION WITH KERRIE ASAP.** Jim has asked to turn over responsibilities to Kerrie.
- Silver Lake – Heidi submitted Mountain Dew \$5000 grant application to fund the corrals. We will hear a response by the end of 2021. \$350 has been fund raised to date. Jeannine Welch attended chainsaw training and is now certified.
- ERSA Grant – in process; 11/17 meeting with the sub team.
- Blueberry Management – Project DROPPED – no horses allowed per Jean’s investigation

Administrative Committee –

- Secretary Report – the October minutes were read and approved unanimously. Updates for activities by each of the members on each of their projects has begun effective this meeting. Those updates are included in “Appendix document”.
- Treasurer Report – Total assets of the organization effective October 31, 2021, is \$13,992.76
- Insurance update – Jeannette is leading. Still waiting for underwriters.
- Annual Meeting – Jeannette is leading. January 22, 2022, at 10 am virtual and live (Brown Public Library). Bylaw changes and annual meeting must be warned by Dec 21, 2021. Still do not have a slate of officers finalized. Speaker needs to be “au gratis”.
- American Trails – **Motion: appropriate \$100 payable to American Trails to renew VHC membership in this organization.** Motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Jeannette will renew membership.
- Restructure of the VHC – Meeting with Monica, Heidi, and Kerrie on December 14 at 7 pm to discuss this idea.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm. Next meeting of membership and BOD is December 14, 2021, at 7 pm, via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Jeannette Cole (VHC Secretary/Treasurer) – *appendix document for reference below*

Appendix Document - VHC Update 11.13.2021

Farm Bureau Update:

Heidi Spoke at the VT Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on 11.6. Shared information from Impact Study. Well received. FB looking forward to more collaboration in coming year.

Industry Summit and Round Table:

Registration for Summit is open. Keynote speaker confirmed. Please promote heavily and plan to attend as this is a signature VHC event.

ERSA Grant:

Jim - Richard LaClair has signed off on the construction text including Monica's changes. Have his Insurance Certificate from his insurance company demonstrating adequate coverage.

Lisa - Contacted Cold Hollow & Poulin Grain via email for support letters, hope to have both replies within the week.

The grant is due on Nov. 29. Decisions will be made in early 2022 and will be awarded in late winter, early spring.

Silver Lake:

Heidi submitted Dew Grant application Nov. 1. Jeannine Welch participated in chainsaw training and is now certified.

Marketing Effort:

Received proposal from Jackson Miller and submitted grant request for funds to support Impact Study marketing and membership recruitment to private donor through Vermont Community Foundation.

VOREC – Lisa LaFont:

Lisa attended VOREC Meeting – notes: Morning team, I was only able to attend the VOREC morning session last Friday. I'm not sure what the format is to be but last Friday each steering committee introduced themselves and gave an update. There was to be a time when the public was to have time to ask questions but I'm not sure when that was to be scheduled as the morning session did not support this. The afternoon was to have 'break out' groups, as I was unable to attend the 2nd part it's not clear what this entailed.

I would be willing to attend the next VOREC session if this is found acceptable with VHC. I'm not clear on our role with VOREC as I did sign in with my name and a tag of VHC but assume VHC falls under 'public'. Is there a specific group(s) that VHC interacts with or a specific individual(s) that is our liaison?

From the morning session the following notes were taken:

Acknowledgement was given to Jessica Savage and all the work she did and how losing her has left several big holes within VOREC, ongoing search is still being done to fill in those holes.

Rural economic development through Parks & Rec is a driving force with 2021 seeing the highest Park visitors, majority being since Labor Day. A count of 20,000 was given. 2021 has supported 3 park updates for the communities with projects such as a Splash Pad.

Abby Long & Cindy Locke are both stepping down from the current roles.

While Trail usage & Outdoor gear is growing there is still a work force challenge. There was conversation of looking into college courses for the Biking industry.

An upcoming summit is to be held in Stowe which will give acknowledgement to Patrick Leary and his support to outdoor recreation and conservation.

VOREC received 104 letters of interest, typically only 60 letters are received. Out of the 104 letters 37 projects were invited to submit a full application, 14 of 37 letters were from non-profit organizations. Only those that were of a 'natural outdoor' setting was accepted for a total of \$12.8 million. A list of applications invited is to be posted on the VOREC website.

Conversation was stated concerning the LVRT, Velomont Trail, Cross VT Trail & Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and their importance on connection communities together.

Josh Hanford communication how the Governor has a direct interest in the LVRT and its importance throughout the communities. Josh stated there is \$5M grant money that is to be used to establish walking paths, signs, history components, and repurpose buildings to bring communities together for economic & tourism interest. Typically, \$1M annually is projected.

Unfortunately, I didn't find the opportunity to discuss with Josh Hanford on specific equine parking allowance for LVRT for different sections of the Trail or where parking partners might be found. Currently the only access that I'm aware of is in Danville at Goodfella's and in Cambridge at the canoe launch site. It would be nice to have this type of parking outlined on the website and as a map key icon. Morning team, I was only able to attend the VOREC morning session last Friday. I'm not sure what the format is to be but last Friday each steering committee introduced themselves and gave an update. There was to be a time when the public was to have time to ask questions but I'm not sure when that was to be scheduled as the morning session did not support this. The afternoon was to have 'break out' groups, as I was unable to attend the 2nd part it's not clear what this entailed.

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Updates – Jeannette Cole 11/11/2021:

Groton State Forest/District 4 = Monica, Belynda (Monica's friend who lives near Groton Forest) and Jeannette met with Luke O'Brien on November 10, 2021, to review multi-use trail improvement proposals; review the status and next steps of Devil Hill and Peacham Pond Loop trails; transfer of leadership and point of contact to Monica from Jeannette. It was a good meeting with several action items ensuing:

- ☐ Monica to begin mapping and identifying trails
- ☐ Jeannette to get trail markers (like the ones used in Willoughby) to begin utilization at Groton
- ☐ Jeannette to contact Green Mountain Club about the logistics of organizing a volunteer cadre
- ☐ Luke to summarize the meeting and email to Monica, Belynda and Jeannette

Groton State Forest – New Discovery Corrals = Jeannette, Monica and Belynda assessed the corrals for any needed maintenance. All of them need drainage footing added and some of them need to be leveled up with "wooden feet" reattached. A couple of them have bent pipes from horse damage. Some touch up painting needed. We should put up signage that the corrals are donated and maintained by the Vermont Horse Council with information on how to donate and/or remit if your horse damages the corral. We should also hang liability sign(s). When we were there, the state crew was taking down trees to finish the pull through site. Jeannette will get estimates on footing costs so that BOD can vote on providing funding for upkeep and will coordinate with Luke on volunteer day in spring 2022.

Director and Officer & Liability Insurance = Alliant has asked for additional information as of 11/10/2021; 1. Pdf for ARCH loss run (completed), 2. 2020 and 2021 financials (request with Nancy), 3. Corral construction (completed).

Multi Year Director and Officer Insurance = investigating cost savings opportunities associated with multiple year purchase of insurance. Nothing has been done yet.

Annual Meeting Planning = investigating speaker costs, developing ballot, writing warning letter for posting (must be completed by December 22), drafting agenda for meeting, assuring 2021 minutes are completed and ready for membership approval. Annual Meeting Date has been chosen as January 22, 2021, at 10 am.

Operations Manual Update = I had started updating this manual and will complete this for distribution to BOD/Officers for Annual meeting.

October 19 BOD minutes = still outstanding. Will be completed by November 15, 2021, for distribution to the BOD. Zoom information sent as of 11/11/2021

Chain Saw Training remittance = Check for \$300 was sent to Jeanine Welch on October 25, 2021, per motion of the BOD. Need expense receipts from Jeanine.

Farm Show = Attended 2-hour Farm Show preparation meeting on October 21, 2021, as the Vermont Horse Council representative. The Farm Show will be happening Feb 1-3, 2022. We need to decide if we want to attend. A booth will cost us ~\$400. I would recommend "no" because we do not make enough income to cover the cost. If we want additional publicity, perhaps we could attend some fairs or other horse events for free throughout the year.

Membership = sent two helmet covers and a hat to _____ as requested. A donation of \$25 was received which will offset the cost of ~\$15.00 to ship the items to Oregon.

American Trails renewal = need a decision from the BOD on whether to renew membership to this organization. The cost is \$100. Jean is the VHC representative on the membership.

American Horse Council cross functional group= Meeting scheduled for Nov 15 at 11 am. Will discuss the pending NY slaughter laws. Jeannette will attend and report out. Anyone else interested should let me know so I can share contact information with the organizers.

VHC Transition Thoughts from 2 people

From Monica at the last VHC Board meeting we heard some support for Kerrie's and my proposal to shift the Council's focus to trails, and we also heard from both long-time and new members that there is energy to maintain the mission of being the voice of the equine community and supporting equine businesses. We certainly don't want to quash this, so I'd like to amend the proposal as follows:

- Maintain the existing activities of VHC that there is energy for, and
- Develop a very robust trails committee (perhaps with a name like "VHC Trail Alliance")
 - o This committee would have a strong public presence by having the word "Trail" in its name
 - o It would have a structure that encouraged membership and volunteerism.

Much of this is already going on, but this would formalize it and give it more structure and therefore be easier for people to join and volunteer.

This might look like this:

- Have a Trails Chair or 2 Co-Chairs (e.g., one for northern VT and one for southern VT), who are not necessarily Board members (since Board members are already overstretched), unless they want to be.
- They would oversee regional leads (don't we have one lead for each FPR region?), or if not regional leads, Champions for various areas (for example Laurie/Silver Lake, Jim, and Lisa/Willoughby).
- The Champions would:
 - o Be knowledgeable about their chosen trails, sign and/or map the trails as needed, and perform light maintenance or call in help as needed from FPR or VHC volunteers
 - o Recruit volunteers from among other riders in the area
 - o If they have ideas and energy, initiate projects in their area and carry them out with assistance from VHC, just as we are doing with Silver Lake and Willoughby.
 - o Advocate for trails with town councils, work with mountain bike organizations as needed, all under the umbrella of VHC which would give them more legitimacy
- VHC would provide knowledge and some resources (tools, signage, etc.) and serve as a 501(c)(3) for grant applications, but the local folks would actually do the work and write the grants.
- It would *not* be the Board's task to do the lion's share of the work (as it seems to be now), but the local people who are most passionate about that trail system. Shifting the responsibility more to the users should generate more volunteers with more long-term buy-in. It's like the Fellowship of the Wheel, whose members build trails that they want to mountain bike on.
- Create roles to engage volunteers. Luke O'Brien mentioned that GMC has what they call "Maintainers" who maintain trails.

When I lived in NH, I was a Land Steward for a 1,000-acre parcel owned by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, which meant that I kept an eye on the land and trails and did minor trail maintenance and alerted the Society of any downed trees, rubbish, damaged bridges, etc. I LOVED being a Land Steward, because I felt like it

gave me a special relationship with that property and gave me some “authority” to recruit others to help maintain and map the trails. It was also set up so that I could do as much or as little work as I wanted.

One of the key things would be to advertise not just as the Vermont Horse Council, but as, e.g., the “Vermont Horse Council Trail Alliance” as a sub-group of VHC – while keeping the VHC name for other pursuits such as the industry summit. I don’t know if there would be any legal issues with this, but I think we’d get a lot more people to perk their ears up at a brochure or poster or online posting if the word “Trail” was in the name.

Bottom line, this is not very different from what we are doing now, but a restructuring and partial rebranding to bring in more members, more volunteers, and spread the work out.

From Bev McMullin - What would be your opinion of a change as follows: if the right person came along, would the possibility of co-presidents work? I mean two people with equal responsibility, not as in a Pres. and a VP. It seems to me that dividing the responsibility so that the burden was not so heavy for one person might have some merit. Other organizations to which I have belonged always seem to end up with the same few people shouldering the majority of the work unequally. If two people were equal someone might be willing to step up and do more of the heavy lifting.

As you no doubt remember, VHC lost many good hard-working members when the schism (am I being too strong in calling it by that name?) occurred over the Tunbridge Ride finance issue. The organization took on a different direction after that time, which resulted in improvements in its function and outlook. However, it took quite a while for it to recover membership numbers and that is still an issue today. I am observing that people simply, not only are unwilling to attend meetings, but also shy away from joining organizations. People seem to value their time differently these days.

Well, that is my 2 cents worth, and as we know free advice is worth what you pay for it!!