

Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
BRCF Management Committee Meeting

May 7, 2024

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

New Durham Community Room

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81318527714?pwd=YlIUUL01nTF0rSHQ0NXBXWTcvVnpiUT09>

Meeting ID: 813 1852 7714 Passcode: 050914

- 1) November 2023 minutes (10 min)
 - a) Approve minutes
 - b) Update status/reminder for any actions needed (quick review)
- 2) Updates (10 min)
 - a) MMRG
 - b) Powder Mill Snowmobile Club
- 3) 2024 budget and work plan for 2024 (20 min)
 - a) Presentation of final 2024 budget
 - b) 2024 work plan – project status and expected timing
- 4) All Access Trail update: timing for raising funds and planned work (10 min)
- 5) Planning for 2025 and beyond: forestry and wildlife habitat management (20 min)
- 6) Public Events & Special Use permit form (15 min)
 - a) Summary from Charlie
 - b) Discussion
- 7) Runoff from BRCF during storm events (10 min)
 - a) Discussions with neighbors & Town
 - b) Planned actions
- 8) Community Input and Conservation work in New Durham – Update (5 min)
- 9) Other business? (20 min)
- 10) Next meeting TBD September 2024

BRCF Management Committee Meeting – Draft Minutes

Debbie, Brian, Yohann, Chad
Charlie, Matt, Dennis, Mike, Cathy, Lee, Ethan, Emma, Lorrie & Brad
Via Zoom – Brian, Emma, Chad, Lorrie & Brad

1. **September 2023 minutes** - approved

2. **Updates/status of ongoing activities**

a. Current status of action items from last meeting:

- Birch Hill road work (will wait to hear from Steve Edwards)

Names for new trails:

- “Ruben” Trail” (across from Corridor 22 to MU-5) is for hiking only

- “Lookout Trail” is the broad loop for Corridor 22 in MU-6

- Two parking areas to be constructed near the Cabin (15-20 vehicles); Yohann will prepare a site plan/diagram

- Chad updated on prescribed burn planning process and State of NH POCs;

Yohann and Chad will be in touch with Lindsey Watkins (new County Forester) and William Edwards (who writes fire plans for NRCS)

- Mike will check with Fred Quimby on water resource testing.

- Ethan will continue looking into creating a comprehensive map of public access trails. He mentioned that it is primarily for providing information for Fire Department access. Mike cautioned about displaying private property trails.

- Cathy will be attending the next meeting of the New Durham Historical Committee.

b. Current Activities

a) MMRG

– Lorrie provided a brief update. In particular, the September “Hawk Watch” sponsored by MMRG.

- Yohan mentioned that BRCF will be included in the next edition of the Southern NH AMC Hiking Guide.

- There is a need for better public access to printed and on-line maps for BRCF.

b) Powder Mill Snowmobile Club – Mike mentioned the outhouse by Cabin has been completed. All trails are in good shape for the winter. Straw worked quite well (much better than hay!).

3. **Presentation of approach to receive community input for conservation work in New Durham** (30 min)

- Brian gave a PP Presentation about gaining public input on conservation lands in the MM Lake watershed/regional area. (see slides #2-#5 in PP Presentation)

- involves determining what are community priorities related to land conservation and stewardship

- foresee a public forum and/or topical webinars

- this would also inform/promote the Mt. Jesse acquisition

- He also explained how Mt. Bet and Collins Family Forest will be jointly managed. Also, how the future Mt. Jesse acquisition will become part of expanded BRCF.

- The Community Forest grant for Mt. Jesse requires community input for management planning. In this way the broader aspects of community forest planning can be combined.
- Cathy pointed out that “signs along Rt. 11” has been the best way to inform about this type of process.

4. **Cabin** and Special Events (see packet from September 20, 2023, meeting for materials

- There was discussion of special events utilizing the Cabin. This included a brief review of the *Special Use Permit* (SUP) form.
- Cathy mentioned that the Town of New Durham already has a “Special Events” permit for Town organizations.
- Input on appropriate events and uses of the Cabin will be solicited during the winter.
- Mike also mentioned that PMSC has a multi-year special arrangement on use of the Cabin and trails.

5. **2024 Budget and Work plan**

- a) Presentation of final draft budget has been submitted (see PP slide #12)
 - Debbie provided a brief update on property access and infrastructure (see PP slide #7)
 - Yohann gave an update on recreational and public uses, including access locations
 - Will be a *BRCF Trail Guide*. In process of updating. Target date for completion is next spring.
- b) 2024 work plan - specifics

6) **Other business?** (20 min)

- Yohan mentioned that BRCF trails will be included in the next edition of the AMC Trail Guide.
- Debbie mentioned that Dr. Heide Asbjornsen (UNH Forestry Profession) is interested in possibly conducting some research projects at BRCF.
- Education and Outreach (see PP)

7) Next meeting TBD spring 2024

Birch Ridge Community Forest 2024 Budget

| Activity/Code | Expense | Comments | Source of Funding | | | Notes |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| | | | SELT | NRCS-EQIP | Other Grants / Funds | |
| 5210 · Printing & copying | \$450 | 3 new kiosk maps | \$450 | | | |
| 8600 · Property Taxes | \$2,300 | based on assumed cost of \$2,200 in 2023 with increase | \$2,300 | | | |
| 5255 · Small Equipment and Furniture | \$500 | Electrical supplies for generator | \$500 | | | |
| 5532 · Mowing & Brush Hogging | \$450 | 1.5 hrs/month May-Oct around cabin = 9 hrs @ \$50/hr | \$450 | | | |
| | \$1,000 | trails \$50 per/hour for 20 hours | \$1,000 | | | |
| | \$200 | large landing by cabin if doing while mowing trail 1 hours | \$200 | | | |
| | \$350 | mow cabin 7 hours both side of stone wall \$350; | \$350 | | | |
| 5533 · Snowplowing | \$0 | assume 5 storms @ \$75 each for Merrymeeting Road parking lot | | | | Volunteered time est. \$350 |
| 5537 – Signs | (\$300) | Sponsorship of bench through PMSC | (\$300) | | | () Not in final approved budget |
| 5538 – Road Maintenance | \$3,000 | Maintenance of Birch Hill Road | \$3,000 | | | |
| 5540 - Field Supplies and Tools | \$500 | Adding tools to those stored in New Durham | \$500 | | | |
| 9418 - Graphic Designer | \$300 | Cathy - map design | \$300 | | | |
| 9419 – Other Professional Consultant | \$1,200 | Burn plan | \$350 | \$950 | | Likely |
| 9612 · Timber Stand Improvement | \$19,280 | NRCS contract item 11a | | \$19,280 | | |
| 9618 · Early Succession Habitat | \$56,969 (\$28,242) | NRCS contract item 8a | | \$56,969 (\$24,242) | (\$4,000) | () Modified based on decrease in acres treated & increased cost of work/acre |
| 9658 · Property and Kiosk Signage | \$664 | Panels for Brienne Rd. kiosk | \$664 | | | |
| 9659-Other Land Management Services | \$3,333 | Possible costs for UNH research site preparation | | | \$3,333 | |
| 9660 – Lumber & Hardware | \$2,500 | Materials to build tool shed | \$2,500 | | | |
| 9662 · Gravel, Rock and Other Material | \$750 | Gravel by cabin | \$750 | | | |
| | \$600 | Concrete to fix gate | \$600 | | | |
| Total expenses | \$98,146 (\$69,719) | | \$13,564 (\$13,864) | \$81,249 (\$48,522) | \$3,333 (\$7,333) | () modified from approved budget |
| | | | | | | |

* Note: Budget expenses do not include staff time

Birch Ridge Community Forest Work Plan 2024

Below is the work plan for 2024 at the Birch Ridge Community Forest. The work plan is driven by the Goals, Objectives & Strategies outlined in the 2023 update to the BRCF Management Plan.

General

Place boundary signs along boundary where they are still needed

- In 2024, this will be focused along the boundaries shared by lots along South Shore Road, and along the southern boundaries of MU-5 and MU-6

SELT staff conducts required annual monitoring visit as required of all fee-owned land

- Likely conducted in late summer or early fall (coinciding with above-mentioned boundary work)

MMRG conducts required annual conservation easement monitoring visit

Property Access and Infrastructure

Identify additional public access to the BRCF – Objective IV

Apply for grant to begin construction of the All Access Trail (Strategy 1)

Evaluate the cabin and need for other public amenities – Objective V

Determine appropriate public and management uses for the cabin that are consistent with community needs, SELT's programmatic needs, SELT policies and funding sources (Strategy 1)

Assess the current condition of the cabin to support desired uses (Strategy 2)

Recreation and Public Uses

Determine locations and use of additional trails – Objective II

Apply for grant to begin construction of the All Access Trail (Strategy 1)

Maintain cooperative working relationship with Powder Mill Snowmobile club – Objective IV

Assess post-winter trail conditions with club and identify annual work (Strategy 1)

- Mike, Yohann, and Chad have inspected Corridor 22 and proposed/planned

improvements in several areas. Some will require coordination with NRCS. Nothing overly severe but some washouts and rutting did occur.

Evaluate status of temporary trails and determine necessary adjustments (Strategy 2)

Review agreement with Club governing use and responsibilities (Strategy 3)

Provide information to the public on recreation at the BRCF – Objective V

Update trail maps to reflect current trails (Strategy 1)

Finalize installation of trail junction signs (Strategy 1)

Enhance trail blazes along public recreational trails (Strategy 1)

Create formal trail guide for paper and mobile use (Strategy 1)

Update kiosk panels and other relevant information in kiosks (Strategy 2)

New trails approved by the BRCF Management Committee – Objective VII

Develop a new hike/bike trail across MU-5, per trail inventory and assessment study (Strategy 5)

Comply with the easement terms pertaining to improvements – Objective VIII

Provide MMRG with updated trail maps, including designated snowmobile trails (Strategy 2)

Education and Outreach

Education and Outreach by core partners – Objective I

4-6 programs annually conducted by SELT and MMRG (Strategy 1)

- SELT interested in leading a follow-up tour at BRCF this summer to show and educate people on the work done in the current EQIP contract, specifically ESH work, road improvements, FSI. Jon and Charlie to co-lead with Chad?

Formalize Outreach working group to:

- Assemble list of potential partnering organizations (Strategy 1)
- Determine efficient and cost-effective approaches to engaging partners (Strategy 2)

Contact potential partners and stakeholders – Objective II

Determine ways the BRCF can be used by research institutes as a living laboratory (Strategy 3)

- SELT to receive more definitive information this year regarding UNH forest farming work

Establish a mechanism to inform the stakeholders on BRCF activities and status – Objective III

Develop maps and information to post on SELT web page (Strategy 1)

Establish links to partner/stakeholder web pages (Strategy 2)

- SELT to begin more frequent, informative communications regarding planned, current, and upcoming work on all New Durham properties. To be implemented beginning this spring or summer

Determine policies and procedures for group activities – Objective IV

Review policies and procedures that apply to other SELT properties (Strategy 1)

Management Committee recommends a course of action to SELT (Strategy 2)

Scenic Views

Identify locations to establish and maintain scenic views along trails – Objective II

Maintain/create scenic views in conjunction with forestry and wildlife habitat work (Strategy 2)

- Routine late-season mowing to maintain views, along with exploring prescribed burning below Birch Ridge/Hill
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Forest Management

Restore the former blueberry field area – Objective III

Begin to develop a prescribed burning plan (Strategy 3)

- Coordinating site visit with burn boss, aiming for spring 2025 burn pending assessment. Will be using NWCG / NHPFC staffing standards, can explore having NDFD assist as needed. May need more continuous fuel loading before burn would be successful.

Investigate the process to conduct prescribed burning (Strategy 4)

- Significant pre-emptive education and outreach will also be conducted as a component of the burn

Manage and monitor condition of log landings – Objective VI

Mow landings periodically to maintain herbaceous conditions (Strategy 2)

Wildlife Habitat

Maintain old-field habitat down-slope from the cabin = Objective I

Mow to keep open after September to protect ground nesting birds

Restore the former blueberry field area – Objective II

Begin to develop a prescribed burning plan (Strategy 3)

Investigate the process to conduct prescribed burning (Strategy 4)

Manage and monitor condition of log landings – Objective III

Mow landings periodically to maintain herbaceous conditions (Strategy 2)

Determine wildlife management recommendations for MUs – Objective IV

Incorporate wildlife management recommendations to be performed with forest silvicultural work (Strategy 2)

- Final round (in current EQIP contract) of ESH and FSI work being conducted now (spring 2024 – see maps in meeting presentation). Original ESH acreage reduced by roughly 25 acres due to inoperability across much of planned work area. NHFG Small Grants program funding approved to supplement EQIP cost-share for this work. FSI presently underway.

Water Quality

Assess water quality and habitat conditions of perennial streams – Objective II

Support the existing water quality monitoring occurring on the BRCF (Strategy 1 & 2)

Identify stream crossings and culvert locations requiring repair or improvement – Objective III

Assess existing infrastructure such as culverts and water bars (Strategy

1) Maintain infrastructure such as swales and ditches (Strategy 2)

- Identified areas that need maintenance (ditches, surfacing), a culvert that needs replacement (culvert available from work in 2023) and additional improvements that would be beneficial in 2024. Mike/PMSC to incorporate costs into RTP grant – June/July.

Climate Change Mitigation

Seek opportunities to achieve connectivity to other conserved forest lands within the region to facilitate plant and animal dispersal and movement – Objective I