

TOWN OF ELMORE, VT

Monthly Select Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes – prepared by G. Schwartz
Status: Approved

Meeting Date: November 10, 2021

Start Time: 6:00 pm **Adjourn:** 9:00 pm

Meeting Attendees: See Attendance Sheet.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

The minutes of the **October 13, 2021** Select Board Meetings were approved

1. SPECIAL TOPICS:

- a. **REVIEW:** Vermont River Conservancy (VRC). Update on “Canyon Lot” parcel. Request for Town of Elmore letter of support. Steve Libby, Exec Director, VT River Conservancy

Notes: The Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) has a contract to purchase a 14.1 acre parcel of forestland located on the east side of the East Elmore Road, approximately .5 miles from the Elmore/Wolcott town line. The Elmore Branch of the Lamoille River flows through this parcel and has created a spectacular riverscape of steep bedrock chasms and cascades. Due to these geologic features, the parcel is known as the “Canyon Lot” (see attached photo).

VRC’s strategy, if they can successfully acquire this property, they will develop a Management Plan for public access and conservation of the old growth forestland setting. VRC would be very open to input in the development of the Management Plan from the Town of Elmore, neighboring property neighbors, and other interested parties. VRC pays property taxes on lands it owns.

VRC is applying to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) for a grant to facilitate the acquisition of the Canyon Lot. Steve Libby, Exec Director, VT River Conservancy asked for a support letter from the Town of Elmore, since the success of this grant application will be significantly enhanced if the Town of Elmore is willing show support for the project. The Select Board voted and unanously approved a support Letter for this project. C. DeVore to send the letter to Steve Libby.

- b. **REVIEW:** Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve, Bob Linck, Conservation Director (15 min overview)

Notes: Bob Linck Conservation Director of the Northeast Wilderness Trust presented the proposed Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve. They are requesting \$1M from VHCB, having already raised (to date) \$4M in private foundation grants and individual contributions.

Working with the Meyer family and E.B. Hyde Company, the Northeast Wilderness Trust recently signed a contract to purchase 5,459 acres from E.B. Hyde, including about 2100 acres in Elmore. The proposed closing date is December 15, 2021. They understand that this will be a significant event for our community, and in the coming months will provide additional information about their organization, explain the conservation project, answer questions, and seek input from the Select Board and Elmore’s residents.

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It is their intention to establish a wilderness preserve that will allow public access – for such activities as hiking, cross country/backcountry skiing, hunting of abundant prey species (deer, grouse, rabbits, turkey, waterfowl), and continued use of snowmobiles on the VAST trail. Otherwise, the property will remain forever wild, with no future timber or firewood harvesting (with the exception of a 30+ acre pine plantation) or salvage logging. The primary goals will be the protection of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, development of “old forest” conditions that maximize carbon storage and improve resilience to climate change. Currently the State of Vermont has 3% old growth forest. The goal of the Northeast Wilderness Trust is to increase that to 9%

The tax implications for Elmore were discussed and there will be none. The current property owner, E.B. Hyde Company is enrolled in Current Use, and they are qualified to (and will) enroll it as well, as a nonprofit conservation organization.

Bob Linck Conservation Director of the Northeast Wilderness Trust asked for a support letter from the Town of Elmore, since the success of this grant application will be significantly enhanced if the Town of Elmore is willing show support for the project. The Select Board voted and unamously approved a support Letter for this project. C. DeVore to send the letter to Bob Linck.

A summary of the project is attached.

c. REVIEW: Elmore Community Trust; Historic District. Matt Shoe, Preservation Trust of VT.

Notes: Matt Shoe from the Preservation Trust of VT presented information regarding the establishment of an Elmore Historical District that would be on the national register. This is in addition to the Village Center designation that was previously approved. If approved this would enable the Elmore Community Trust to apply for a \$100,000.00 federal grant for the restoration of the Elmore Store. Part of the application process would require photographs of the existing buildings within the proposed area (see attached) and to obtain any historical data. The buildings must be at least 50 years old. Matt asked the Select Board to notify property owners that properties within the proposed zone will be evaluated by the Preservation Trust. C. Devore to notify property owners.

2. ACTIVE ITEMS:

- a. DISCUSSION:** Elmore highway maintenance facility; temp bldg.; engineering eval status; project review; update land swap withdrawal / Burley; need for one-page overview to ANR; update USDA grant update
USDA loan apps due mid-December; funding available April/May 2022 (Note: A \$1,000,000.00 loan would be about \$2,900.00/month or \$34,800.00/year; 2.125%/30 yr)

Notes: G. Schwartz attended the USDA Community Facilities Zoom Meeting on 10/25/21. The following are some of the highlights of that meeting

- USDA offers both grants and loans for rural development
- Elmore is not eligible for grants due to the income of the Town
- Low interest rates 2.125% for 30 years are available for the maintenance facility and land
- The loan would be contingent upon the Town holding a bond vote at Town Meeting
- There would be no penalty for early repayment of the loan

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- Applications for the loan would be due mid-December with funding available in the April May timeframe
- Seth would be available to assist in the preparation of the application
- The USDA administrator's name is Misty Sinsigalli
- An engineer's estimate of construction cost would be required for the loan application
- A \$1,000,000.00 loan would be about \$2,900.00/month or \$34,800.00/year

Test pits were performed at the Keith Properties by the Town and Cross Consulting Engineers. Pits were not performed at the State Park location due to lack of permission.

Caroline DeVore to talk to LCPC to assist with the one page project description to be given to our State Representatives to assist with the State property.

- b. UPDATE:** School union petitions to withdraw and ballots; 12/7/21 vote; Information mtg Tuesday, November 30th, 6:00pm Elmore Town Hall

Notes: The following items were discussed and will be addressed in the meeting warning

- Will the meeting be in person or via zoom? The meeting will be available both in person and via zoom.
- Who will facilitate the meeting? John Gailmor will be asked as long as he does not have any conflicts
- What role if any does the Select Board have in this meeting? The Select Board has no role at all other than warning the meeting. In addition, at least one member of the Select Board is to be present at the in person meeting.
- Will masks be required at the in person meeting? Yes
- Due to limited internet access at the Town hall where should the meeting take place? The suggestion was made to use the church for the meeting. R. Wills to check if that would be acceptable to the church. Backup would be to hold the meeting at the firehouse.

C. DeVore has been coordinating with the Town's attorney and Seth Jensen

- c. UPDATE:** Applications for Road Crew town employee

Notes: To date there has been no response to the ads that have been in the newspaper and Front Porch Forum. S. Draper to continue running the ad. M. Lacasse to continue to ask around to see if anyone is interested. Frequency of the advertisement will be increased and a signing bonus will be offered. The possibility of outsourcing was discussed.

- d. UPDATE:** Town Zoning Admin/Hyde Park; replacement ZA plan

Notes: No Update. The Select Board decided that no new permits would be issued until a replacement is found. Kristen to continue with permits that have been issued.

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- e. **UPDATE:** Regional Law Enforcement Sustainability Forum

Notes: C. DeVore and R. Wills attended the forum via zoom. The Sheriff's Department is looking into a regional police force to address coverage and employment issues.

3. **CONTINUING ACTIVE ITEMS:** (Update status by principle owner):

- a. **UPDATE:** Road Commissioner's Report

Notes: See attached report

- b. **AWARENESS:** Alison Link, Community Outreach Coordinator, Healthy Lamoille Valley, will update SB on Retail Cannabis in Lamoille county; 12/8/21 meeting.

- c. **AWARENESS:** Brian Evans Mongeon, will update SB on joining the Lamoille Fibernet CUD; 11/23/21 meeting.

- d. **UPDATE:** American Rescue Plan Act

Notes: G. Schwartz to research possible purchase of AV equipment for zoom meetings as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. Contact to be made with LCPC.

4. **COMPLETED/INACTIVE ITEMS:** (Update status by principle owner)

- a. Review Action Item List

Notes: The action list was not reviewed at this meeting

5. **NON AGENDA/OTHER ITEMS:** (Time Available)

- a. **DISCUSSION:** Check Warrant Report

Notes: The Check Warrant Reports were reviewed at this meeting.

6. **EXECUTIVE OR DELIBERATIVE SESSION AS NEEDED**

Town of Elmore
Meeting Attendance Record

ENTER MEETING DATE	11/10/21
ENTER MEETING NAME	Select Board Meeting

Check all that apply
Reason for Attending

	Reason for Attendance				
YOUR NAME (printed)	Observer	Interested Party	Principal Party	Expert or Consultant	WHY ARE YOU ATTENDING?
Glenn Schwartz			✓		SB Mentel
Don Valentine		✓			Planning Board
BURLEY				x	
Robb Wills			✓		SB Member
Carolyn Dore			✓		SB Member
STATE LIBBY		✓			CANYON LOT
Michel LACASSE			✓		Road Commissioner
Mark Isselhardt					ECT
Matt Shoen					Elmore Community Trust
Kate Sprague					EPC
Bob Linck					NEWT
Warren West					Citizen
Lisa Ryan Presser					Preservatia Trust of UT
Jul Lindenmeyer					DRB.



Road Commissioner Report

November 10, 2021

1. Mountain road route 2 has been graded twice in the last 30 days. Route 1 has been graded once, plans are to grade again next week.
2. Dug test pits at Keith site.
3. Truck #3 back in service. Out since August 26.
4. Road signs taken. new one's ordered. Chances are we'll not see them until spring, long delays.
5. A lot of time spent on King road class 4 issue.
6. Started preparing trucks for winter.
7. Patrick on call while I was away.
8. Dana is on for weekends.

Michel Lacasse
Road Commissioner

Vermont River Conservancy (VRC)

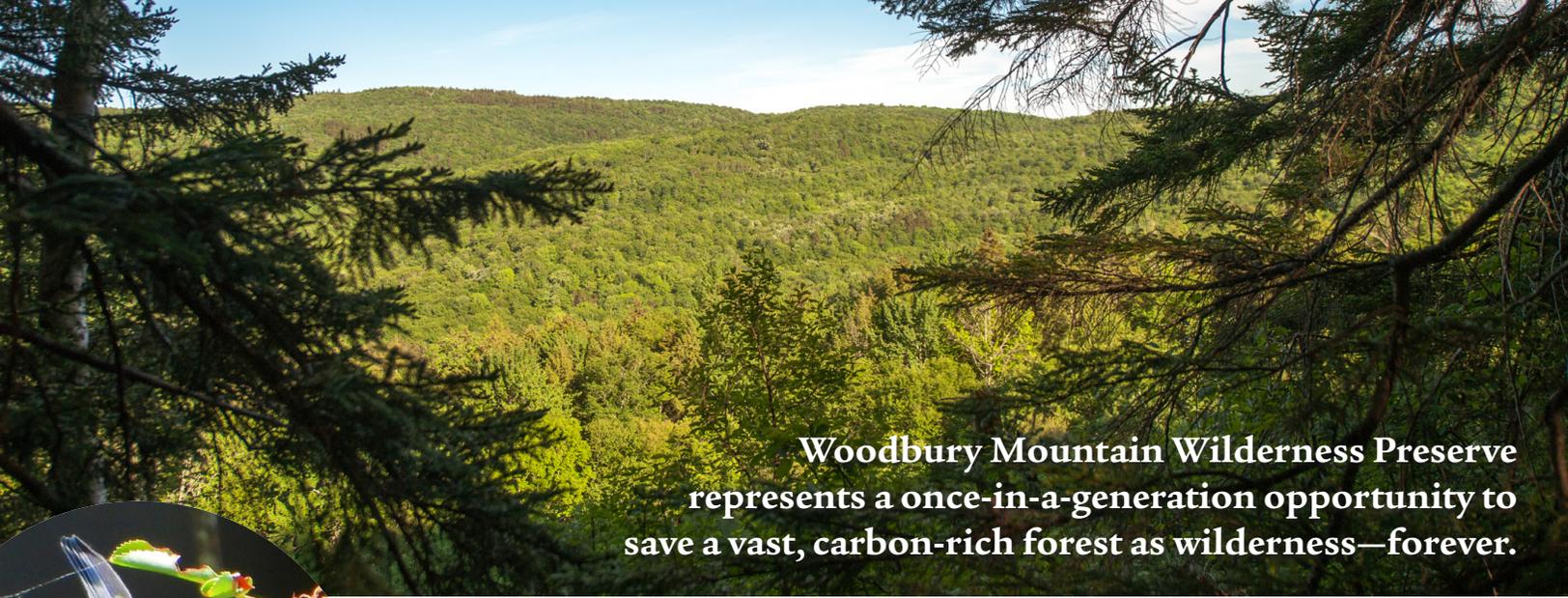


NORTHEAST
WILDERNESS
TRUST

**WOODBURY MOUNTAIN
WILDERNESS PRESERVE**

Vermont's next wild landscape for nature and people





Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to save a vast, carbon-rich forest as wilderness—forever.



Opportunities to protect thousands of acres as forever-wild are rare in Vermont.

Rarer still is the chance to preserve such a landscape that also captures the headwaters of two major rivers, is integral to regional wildlife connections, and carries on the legacy of multiple generations of exemplary land stewardship.

The proposed Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve presents just such an opportunity—and to make this a haven for wild nature, Northeast Wilderness Trust needs to raise \$6.5 million by February 2022.

A connected forest of local, regional, and global significance

The 5,459 acres that comprise the proposed Preserve include a mature northern hardwood forest and a diversity of wetlands and streams.

The land sits directly at a crossroads for far-

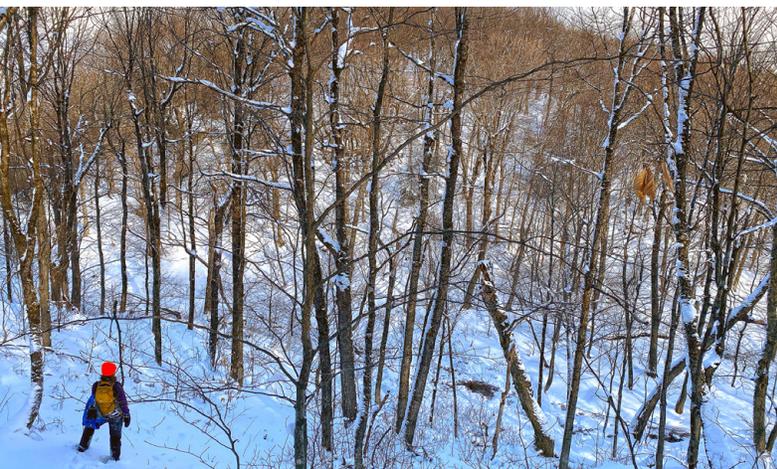
ranging wildlife. To the west are the Worcester Mountains—Vermont’s last undeveloped mountain range—and to the north is the Northeast Kingdom. The area between is the ‘Worcester to Kingdom’ linkage. The Preserve lies at the heart of this linkage, sandwiched between three large forest blocks totaling 85,000 acres just north of Montpelier.

Audubon has mapped this as Vermont’s only ‘Important Bird Area’ of global significance. Preserving unmanaged forest within this largely-managed landscape will ensure birds like Winter Wrens, Northern Goshawks, Blackburnian and Black-throated Blue Warblers, who all thrive in large blocks of old forest, continue to find good homes in the Green Mountain State.

Diverse, healthy, under-represented habitat

The proposed Preserve also stands out for its diversity of natural communities.

This land is critical habitat for fauna from wide-ranging predators like bear, fisher, and bobcats down to tiny salamanders and fingernail clams. There are abundant American beech and black





cherry trees; critical sources of food for wildlife preparing for winter. There are 12 Red Spruce-Cinnamon Fern Swamps, which are preferred breeding grounds for saw-whet owls and yellow-bellied flycatchers. These are just a few of several uncommon and vulnerable natural communities on the proposed Preserve.

Four vernal pools of statewide significance and eight streams of highest conservation priority are on the Preserve, providing homes to rare, threatened, and endangered species. The proposed Preserve falls at the watershed divide between the Lamoille and Winooski Rivers, both of which drain into Lake Champlain. Maintaining old forest cover at the Lake's headwaters is an effective, cost-efficient means of protecting the lake's health.

Most protected wilderness in the Northeast is at higher elevations. Yet low-elevation habitats host greater biodiversity and are key corridors for wildlife moving and adapting to climate change. The proposed Preserve's average elevation is just 1550'—meaning it will become Vermont's largest privately protected, low-elevation wilderness preserve.

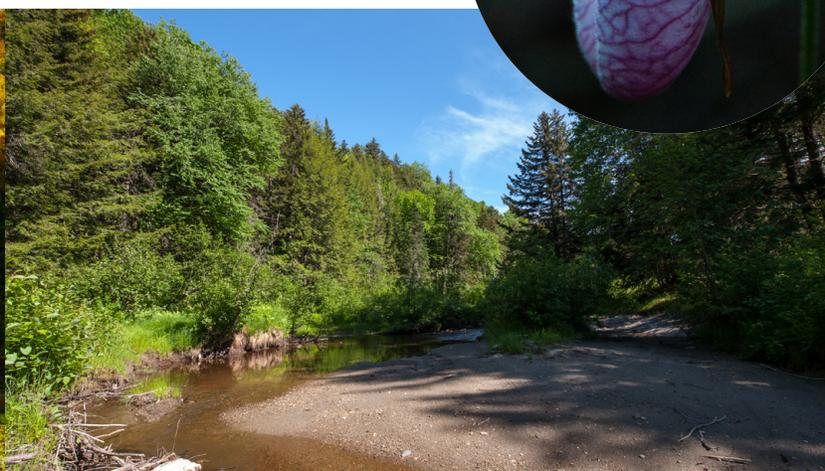
Vermont Conservation Design in action

Vermont Conservation Design is a plan to secure and sustain Vermont's natural areas and wildlife. One goal of the plan is for old forest to comprise at least 9% of Vermont's forested landscape. Today, only about 3% of Vermont is legally protected in a way that will ensure those forests reach maturity and stay that way. Permanent conservation of large landscapes like Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve is essential to meeting this important goal. Through a partnership with Vermont River Conservancy, which would hold the forever-wild easement, we will ensure this land is part of a future with more old-growth forests.

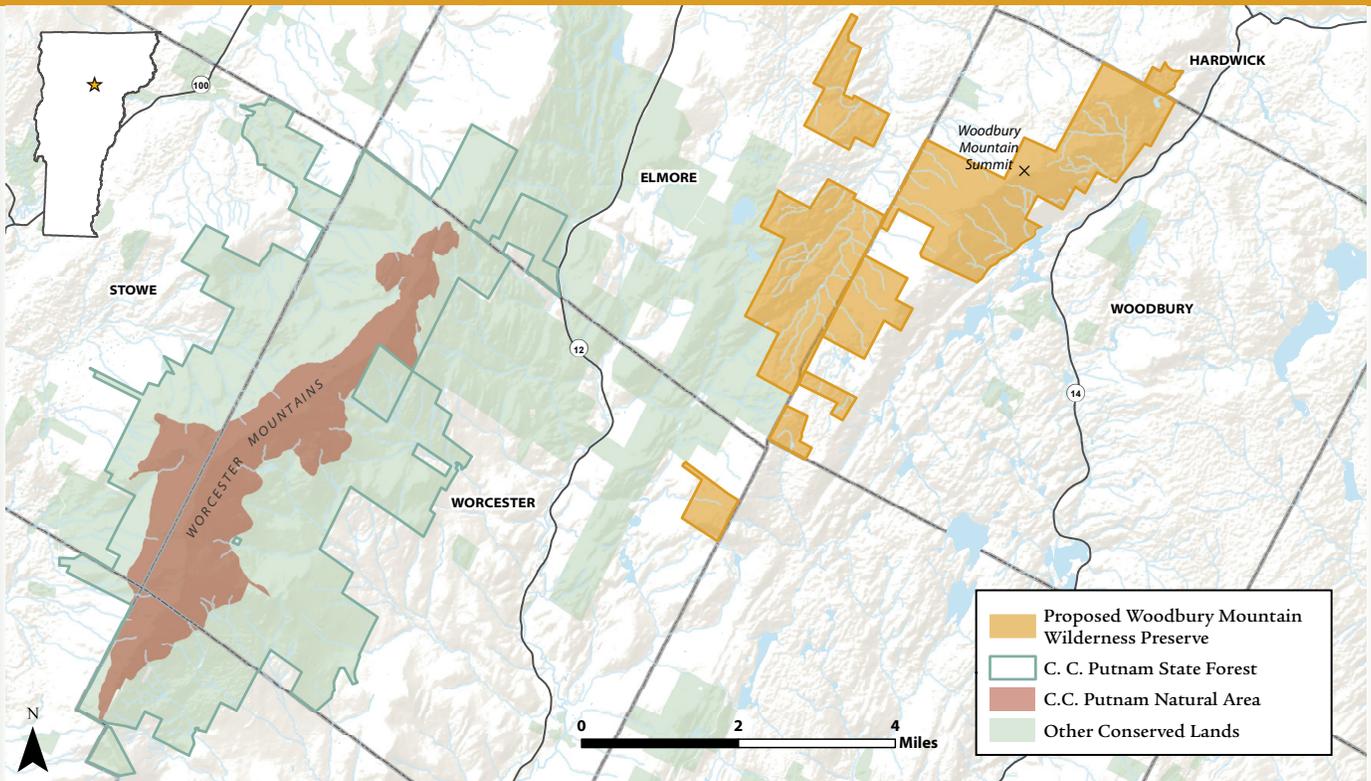
Front cover: Woodbury beaver pond in autumn *Zack Porter*
Beaver *Paul Willis*

Interior: Woodbury wetlands in autumn *Zack Porter*
Immature Chestnut-sided warbler *Paul Willis*
Winter hiker at Woodbury Mountain *Jon Leibowitz*
Woodbury forest in summer and pink lady slipper *Natalia Boltukhova*

Back cover: Moose *Larry Master*



WOODBURY MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS PRESERVE



A natural climate solution

Old forests not only store immense amounts of carbon, they also remove considerably more carbon from the atmosphere than young forests making them a critical natural climate solution. This land currently stores at least 546,000 metric tonnes of carbon, and has the capacity to sequester an additional 1,155+ metric tonnes annually. If protected as forever-wild, its stored carbon will never be lost to resource extraction.

Passing on a legacy of love for wildlands and woodlands

The forest is in excellent condition thanks to the thoughtful management of the Meyer family, who run the E.B. Hyde timber company. Over the course of multiple generations, the family has maintained a light-touch approach that left some areas undisturbed and much of the forest in a mature state. Through their ethic of sustainable forestry has come an appreciation for wildness.

Thanks to the Meyers' legacy, future generations of Vermonters will be able to experience what an old-growth forest looks, feels, and sounds like. The proposed Preserve will be open for on-foot exploration including hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, and hunting.

You can save this land!

For more information on how you can help Woodbury become Vermont's newest forever-wild preserve, please contact Cathleen Maine, Development Director, at 802.224.1000 ext. 105 or cathleen@newildernesstrust.org.

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled, chlorine-free paper.
Learn more about our Green Guarantee at newildernesstrust.org/green



“THE LANDS AROUND WOODBURY MOUNTAIN have always been more than management and forestry, important as those aspects are to us; they represent a place of vastness, isolation with special features. We have always kept these lands open to the public for exploration and discovery. We believe strongly that walking and connecting in these woodlands is important. Creating a Preserve with Northeast Wilderness Trust means this land will stay forested and protected for generations to come.”
—E.B. Hyde Company