

Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership Meeting
Wednesday, November 18, 2020; 1:30 PM
Remote GotoMeeting

Attendees: Ashley Parker, SB Project Manager; Holly Rees, Director of Recreation & Parks, South Burlington; Melinda Scott, Williston Conservation Planner; Alex Weinhagen, Hinesburg Director of Planning & Zoning; Dean Pierce, Shelburne Director of Planning & Zoning ; Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Gail Albert, Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Abel Russ, St. George Development Review Board; Jens Hilke, Conservation Planning Biologist, VT Fish & Wildlife Department; Sarah Dopp, President South Burlington Land Trust (Phone)

Absent: Sarah Gentry Tischler, St. George Selectboard; Larry Lewack, Charlotte Town Planner; Don Rendall, Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Bob Hyams, Hinesburg Conservation Commission; Lisa Kingsbury, UVM Planning Services; Kevin Dorn, City Manager, City of South Burlington; Kate Kelly, Hinesburg Conservation Commission

Meeting began at approximately 1:35 PM.

Welcome and Round of introductions.

Changes or additions to Agenda –

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Consideration of Minutes from Previous Meeting –

The minutes from the September 23, 2020, meeting were reviewed. A few minor edits were proposed and accepted. Those changes were made and the minutes were accepted as amended.

Partner News and/or Updates –

Ashley relayed that the South Burlington City Hall had closed to the public again due to the spike in COVID cases, and many staff were now working remotely. She asked what other municipalities had decided to do. Dean indicated that Shelburne was clamping down on who could come to the office starting Monday. Melinda relayed that Williston had asked folks to work from home again, for at least two weeks. Alex in Hinesburg was working in the office due to staffing shortages. Melanie stated that the CCRPC staff were mostly remote and would likely be remote for the foreseeable future.

Ashley reminded folks that the RCP Network Gathering is tomorrow. She sent around an email that shared how individuals could register for this free event. The gathering is all virtual.

Sarah shared that South Burlington's Interim Zoning has been extended further than November. The Land Trust is looking at sewer ordinances as a planning tool to put development in areas of town that make sense. Dean indicated that he could connect with Sarah offline and share some resources. She has looked at Williston and Shelburne's ordinances already.

Mapping Project –

Ashley relayed that she needed to continue working on revising/updating South Burlington data based on the results of the mapping Melanie shared. There were parcels missing from the map that should have been included.

Melanie began reviewing the story map she created based on the data the municipalities provided. She created the story map to remind everyone where we are with mapping in the different municipalities. The goal is to tell the story of conserved lands in the region. After initiating this project, we quickly discovered that each municipality had a different way of talking about protected lands. The partnership then embarked on a standardization process that utilized the state protected lands standards. There is still some work to do with the mapping. We essentially want to make the data we develop through this project the authoritative data on protected lands in at least the region. Melanie noticed some inconsistent data entries. We are still looking for completeness in data entry.

The first map in the story map looks at public access to see what that characteristic looks like across the region. The second map combines both access and protection. The third map looks at protection level and the type of protection. They clearly show that each municipality is in a different stage of the inventory process.

The story map exercise was just to show an example of how to use the story map to tell the story of the partnership's mapping project. Melanie did realize that there is more work to do with p-types and p-agencies.

The question the partnership needs to consider now is what the "finish line" for the data is. There may need to be more attributions that need to be filled out, and Melanie indicated that she will take a look. In the editor now, there is data missing in the drop-down listing, but you can use the code that each attribute is given in the state's protected land standards guidebook. Melanie also said that she could do a quality check.

Melinda noted that it appears that some Williston data might be missing. Ashley also asked if Melanie had received the Audubon GIS layer, and she indicated that she had. She will look to see how best to incorporate that information to the partnership mapping project. Jens wanted additional information on how Audubon put together their layer, so Ashley indicated that she would share Audubon's email with him so that he can look into this.

The partnership also started discussing what land protection patterns to consider next and how to do it the best. The hatching shown on the maps is a bit confusing, but the bold outline is clear. The group discovered that it could be possible that there are two different layers stacked on top of each other, which would happen due to the amount of data we are pulling together. Melanie suggested we wait to see where we're at when we have a completed data set.

A parcel's "gap status" may not clearly show what type of protection level a parcel actually has (how much protection there actually is).

There is a new data set provided by the state. It was downloaded in October. At that time an update happened and now there is missing data. It may be related to the state pulling some of its data which may be affecting the partnership's data. Ashley noted that Red Rocks was one parcel that was obviously missing from South Burlington's data. And when someone checked the state mapping, they noted it wasn't listed there either.

Ashley asked if the state had also issued a new guidebook as part of the data revamp, and Melanie said she would look into it.

The group decided to table the mapping discussion until we can figure out what's going on with the state data. Melanie will check to see where we're at. This also includes a hold on any data edits made by municipalities. It was suggested that partners review the existing data to see if there is anything notable missing.

Overview of Audubon Charlotte Event at Nordic Farms –

Ashley briefly noted that she and Dean attended the Audubon event at Nordic Farms in Charlotte. Audubon was discussing invasive plant management work they were conducting on the property, utilizing grant funding similar to the grant funding recently received. It was an example of the kind of project the partnership could consider implementing when taking advantage of the recent NFWF funds. Ashley stated that if anyone had additional questions or wanted more information about the event and the work that Audubon is doing in Charlotte, to please connect with her or Dean.

Jens also brought up the work of a new group called the Lower Winooski Partnership that is doing similar work in the Intervale. Ashley relayed that she had been contacted by Duncan Murdoch about a meeting in the fall, but was not able to attend. She asked Jens to keep her in the loop regarding future meetings of that partnership.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for: December 16th at 1:30 PM. It will be remote and Ashley will send along those details as it gets closer.

The meeting was adjourned.