

Royalton Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2018

Members present:

Brad Salzmann, Joshua (Bushrod) Powers, Mike Bald, Ian MacKenzie, Tico Wolff

Guest present: Emily Miller (Bethel CC)

Members absent: Hoyt Bingham, David Barker

Welcome / Introductions 6:30 pm

We met at the Sarnoff Parcel parking area with the intent to explore and evaluate the lower portion of the parcel for the potential of developing Recreation and Nature trails for public use and education. The logging access to the power line and beyond to the old railroad bed is steep and rutted but there is the potential for an angled or switchback trail through the woods. The old railroad bed would make an excellent trail without much work or resources. There are two short footbridges across small ravines which appear to be in good condition.

We discussed the possibility of extending the trail westward past the Sarnoff property line to connect to an established trail in Bethel near Christian Hill Road. That would likely mean getting private landowner permission and potentially using a power line in Bethel. This will require some research and legwork, both in Bethel and Royalton, but the possibility of a trail connecting our towns, with two trailheads/parking areas is exciting.

Following the railroad bed east, it eventually intersects with the powerline and rises to a great view to the east near the eastern property line. From there, there are remnants of old trails that could be made into a loop to the north. This impinges on the deer wintering habitat area so would have to be posted if the Landfill Solar Project happens.

From the intersection of the railroad bed and powerline, there is an old road, bordered by a stone wall that slopes gently back to the solar array and parking area. Other than a boggy section in the middle, this trail could also be easily re-established. The boggy section once had a nice wooden walkway which has rotted. This would either need to be rebuilt, re-routed, or excavated so it could drain and dry out, or some combination.

Land management projects, such as selective girdling, mast tree releasing, invasive plant control, and the possibility of firewood and softwood timber harvesting in the future, as recommended by Redstart Land Management and the Windsor County Forester should be considered, as this would greatly increase the forest value and wildlife habitat.

Finally, there is a meadow, probably close to an acre in size, behind the kiosk that should be managed and maintained as a meadow for birds, pollinators, wildflowers, and wildlife. Chervil has already established itself in a portion of this and will likely expand within the next couple years without management. Best management techniques would have to be further discussed and presented to the Select Board for advisement.

Next Meeting: August 20, 2018 – 6:30 pm Town Offices Meeting Room

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Salzmann

APPROVED