

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 16th, 2023 6:30 PM – via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Sarah Lunn, Jim MacCartney, Carol Hickey, Susan Staples, Wendy Scott, John Little, Russ Ford, Jacques Couture, Dan Seeley, and Lindsey Wight; guests included Kimberly Kreig, Marie A Gagne, Dea Devlin, Nancy Fitzgerald, Pat Sagui, Hanson, Ann Ingerson, Alison Hope, Carmen, Dawna, Roland Berube, and presenter Julia Cavicchi

**Urine My Garden Presentation:** Julia Cavicchi presented on “Why and How to Peecycle at Home”. Summary: We learned how reclaiming urine as a fertilizer is a safe and simple practice that enables gardeners to reclaim waste, access free fertilizer, and prevent downstream pollution. “Fertilizer from Urine: Clean Rivers. Sustainable Farms.” Excellent presentation and Julia’s enthusiasm for the topic is contagious.

Additional details: Julia is the Education Director at Rich Earth Institute, which is working to connect with people in the Lake Champlain Basin and beyond their southern Vermont hub of activity. Flushing nutrients from our bodies means that those nutrients get into our waterways. As we all know, Lake Champlain has a nutrient problem. There are lots of septic systems in Vermont, and these can contribute to growing problems. Additionally, producing the nutrients that we use to grow our food takes a lot of energy. If we are able to capture the nutrients that we are flushing, we can reduce both nutrient issues AND use less water! Every 5 gal of urine collected for pee-cycling saves 100 gal of water from flushing. “Every day our bodies produce enough fertilizer to grow the wheat for a loaf of bread.” Rich Earth has been doing this reclamation with local farms for a decade+; it was the first and is the largest such effort in the US. Research shows that it works as well as synthetic fertilizers, and that soil microbes break down the pharmaceuticals that are in our urine better than water (WWTF’s don’t remove much) – addressing concerns about eating food on which pharmaceutical-laden urine has been used: you’d have to eat a lot. Urine collecting kits are available for anyone in the Lake Champlain Basin (with suggested donation to support Rich Earth). The NPK of urine is 0.6-0.1-0.2 – apply your urine to plants when they are actively growing. Use on N-loving plants, and apply ~1 gal of urine per 200 sq ft every couple of weeks. Anecdotally may also deter insects or rodents. A FB group exists: Urine My Garden. Julia’s presentation is up on our youtube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PS4LGjAh3c>

**Business meeting was called to order at 7:07pm**

**Review of the January meeting minutes:** JL motioned to approve minutes; CH seconded; minutes were approved as written.

**Administrative: Committee Officers:** CH stepping down as Vice Chair – SS willing to fill that role. Our officer’s slate: JC=Chair, SS=Vice Chair, WS=Secretary, CS=Treasurer. JL motions to vote in this slate; RF seconds; all in favor.

- **Staffing:** Officers zoom meeting to discuss the results of the evaluation survey (Lindsey will resend), and Lindsey’s performance. Let Sarah know if you have any issues accessing the online survey: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfaibXrgZwM1pgitpHAz - B4b8vSOpoA-gh2S0kLR7QNcKPQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfaibXrgZwM1pgitpHAz - B4b8vSOpoA-gh2S0kLR7QNcKPQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)
- **ECO AmeriCorps:** MRBA is not going to host next year; we could inquire about options for hosting a half-time member. Discussion of benefits of program vs capacity constraints and

concerns; decision to skip a year and see if we can get better systems in place so that the member will have a more established program of tasks.

**2024 Budget:** Discussion of drafted budget options. Proposed increased staffing costs (additional position) – could decrease grants, events, projects to make up for this. Decreasing grants may make them more competitive, which wouldn't be terrible; but our grants are an important part of our budget. What value are the grants that we've given out continuing to provide to our communities? We would like to bring back River Explorers, if we can find a guide service to take it on for 2024. Could reduce the grant caps for our RGCs. Lindsey will make a few options for different grant funds and send out another draft before the next meeting. Vote next month.

**Grants/Projects:** Access point for NFCT: JL will stop by the landowner's in East Richford. Unlikely for this year, so perhaps remediate the access point by the railroad bridge on 105A. Someday it would be great to put an access point at Boston Post Bridge. Perhaps Horseshoe Rd by the Pine Cone?

MRBA has funds for a bank stabilization project: Montgomery near the pavilion? Jacque's has a spot on his land, but likely larger than this project's budget.

Newsletter: will be out soon!

Brook Trout signage: request from the Native Fish Coalition to put up signage about Brook Trout habitat. Possible spots in our region: picnic area at Avery's Gore, Big Falls, 3 holes, Riverwalk Park, at the covered bridge crossings, Black Falls Brook – cement berm at the bottom seems to be a parking spot, Tyler Branch, Lane Rd, NFCT kiosks.

**2023 Upcoming Events:** Saturday Feb 25: Snowshoe in Orleans County – 10am-12 in North Troy; Saturday Mar 4: Snowshoe in Franklin Co – 10am-12 in Montgomery. Sunday Mar 19: New Office Open House – 9-11am. Tuesday Mar 21: Amphibian Road Crossing Training – 7-8pm via Zoom. Winter Speaker Series – March = beavers; April = geology?

**Other/Public Comment:** Nulhegan and Paul Stream – bill for the W&S Study of these waterways was introduced by all 3 VT reps.

**Upcoming meetings:** Mar 16<sup>th</sup> via Zoom (speaker series) – Beavers. Also vote on 2024 budget.

SS motioned to adjourn; JL and DS seconded; meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.