

# Act 171 Forest Integrity Study Committee

## Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2016, 8:30am – 11:30am

The ANR Montpelier Room, National Life Building, Montpelier

1. The meeting commenced at 8:45am with introductions and a review of the agenda by Commissioner Michael Snyder.
2. Commissioner Snyder reviewed the outline of the draft report to the legislature and the process of drafting by FPR staff followed by review by the study committee. All study committee members agreed with this process.
3. Commissioner Snyder reviewed the state's policy on the importance of forests and opened the floor for proposed recommendations by the Study Committee.
  - ANR proposed a general recommendation that Act 250 be examined and reviewed to support forest integrity. Review should encompass Criteria 8(a) and 9(C).  
**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Chris Cochran, Joe Nelson, Put Blodgett, Michael Snyder, Karen Horn, Brian Shupe, Diane Snelling (with concern for language used to characterize Act 250)  
**Non-committal:** Sam Lincoln, Bonnie Waninger  
**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** None.  
**Action item:** Michael Snyder will draft language for this proposed recommendation.
  - NRB proposed supporting a process to examine creation of a jurisdictional trigger based on the location of a project within certain areas of ANR's Forest Block Project map.  
**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Diane Snelling, Put Blodgett (in support of process), Chris Cochran (in support of exploring idea), Brian Shupe  
**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Sam Lincoln, Karen Horn, Joe Nelson, Bonnie Waninger, Michael Snyder
  - ACCD proposed a recommendation to develop model driveway standards that town can use to minimize erosion and protect water quality.  
**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Karen Horn, Joe Nelson, Put Blodgett (without any driveway length), Brian Shupe, Sam Lincoln (suggested using "mirror" instead of "develop"), Bonnie Waninger, Michael Snyder, Diane Snelling, Chris Cochran  
**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** None.  
**Additional request:** Diane Snelling would like to see this recommendation included in a list of all enabling tools for the towns as recommended by the study committee. ANR will compile this list for committee review  
**Action item:** Chris Cochran will refine language for this recommendation.
  - Vermont Forest Products Association proposed a recommendation to address the root causes of forest fragmentation by encouraging viable economic options for forestland

owners. Michael Snyder suggested using the language of this proposed recommendation as text in the introduction of the report appendix addressing concepts for forestland protection other than regulatory intervention through Act 250 and Chapter 117. The group concurred with this suggestion.

**Action item:** Sam Lincoln will draft this text. Michael Snyder offered assistance.

- ANR proposed a recommendation to consider expedited permitting processes for forest product processing enterprises.

**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Michael Snyder, Sam Lincoln, Joe Nelson, Put Blodgett,

**Possible support:** Chris Cochran, Bonnie Waninger, Brian Shupe (would consider provided there is balance with greater protections for forest resources from fragmentation)

**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Diane Snelling (specifically with regard to protecting critical forest blocks prior to considering deregulation)

**No vote:** Karen Horn (absent)

**Action item:** Michael Snyder will draft language for this proposed recommendation.

- VNRC proposed recommendation of potential changes 1.7 and 1.8 that enhance Criterion 8(A) to include consideration of significant forest blocks and connecting habitat.

**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Bonnie Waninger, Joe Nelson, Put Blodgett, Diane Snelling, Michael Snyder, Brian Shupe

**Possible support:** Sam Lincoln, Chris Cochran

**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** None

**No vote:** Karen Horn (absent)

**Action item:** Brian Shupe will draft language for this proposed recommendation.

- VNRC proposed recommendation of potential change 1.20 that adjusts triggers prompted by the number of lots/units and amended it to apply to those lots within forest blocks.

**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Diane Snelling, Brian Shupe, Put Blodgett (as modified)

**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Joe Nelson, Sam Lincoln, Bonnie Waninger, Chris Cochran, Michael Snyder

**No vote:** Karen Horn (absent)

**Action item:** Brian Shupe will draft language for this proposed recommendation.

- VNRC proposed decoupling density requirements from lot size limitation. A similar potential change was put forward by ANR as 2.6.

**In support of drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** Bonnie Waninger, Joe Nelson, Put Blodgett, Diane Snelling, Brian Shupe, Michael Snyder, Sam Lincoln

**Opposed to drafting language for this proposed recommendation:** None

**No vote:** Karen Horn (absent)

**Action item:** Brian Shupe will draft language for this proposed recommendation.

4. Study committee members were asked to review definitions in Section 15 of Act 171 and provide an evaluation of these definitions electronically to Commissioner Snyder by **Friday, December 16.**
5. Study committee members are asked to provide draft text by **Friday, December 16.** Commissioner Snyder will compile the input for a pre-final draft. The report will be circulated for review by the study committee ASAP in advance of a vote on the report by Dec. 23. The report is due to the legislature on January 1, 2017.
6. The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Study Committee members in attendance:

Put Blodgett, *Vermont Woodlands Association*  
Chris Cochran for Lucy Leriche, *Agency of Commerce & Community Development*  
Sam Lincoln, *Vermont Forest Products Association*  
Joe Nelson, *Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board*  
Brian Shupe, *Vermont Natural Resources Council*  
Diane Snelling, *Natural Resources Board*  
Michael Snyder, *Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation*  
Bonnie Waninger, *Vermont Association of Planning & Development Agencies*  
Karen Horn, *Vermont League of Cities and Towns*

ANR staff and interested parties in attendance:

John Austin, *Vermont Fish & Wildlife*  
Diane Bothfeld, *Agency of Agriculture*  
Warren Coleman, *MMR*  
Billy Coster, *Office of Planning, Agency of Natural Resources*  
Rebecca Ellis, *Department of Environmental Conservation*  
Joanne Garton, *Forests, Parks and Recreation*  
Pete Gill, *Natural Resources Board*  
Jon Groveman, *Vermont Natural Resources Council*  
Matt McMann, *MMR*  
Kim Royar, *Vermont Fish & Wildlife*  
Steve Webster, *Landowner*  
Eric Sorenson, *Vermont Fish & Wildlife*