

VOREC Meeting Agenda: February 13, 2020

Advance Packet:

- December Meeting Minutes
- Governor's Letter re: Health and Wellness Pillar
- Draft proposed language re: Health and Wellness Pillar
- VOREC Action Plan

Steering Committee Meeting: 1 pm- 4pm Dewey Conference Room in the Dewey Building at National Life

1:00 pm-1:05 pm: Welcome: Michael Snyder, Chair

- Review and Approve Minutes from December Meeting

1:05 pm- 2:00 pm: Updates (there's a lot happening!): Q and A and Discussion to be Included

- Mike/FPR: Legislation, NBRC Update, VOREC Community Grant Program Update
- Josh (ACCD)
- VTA
- VTGC
- VOBA

2:00 pm- 3:00 pm: Follow Up on Recent Email Conversation re: KTA/Landowner Relations: Abby Long, Background. Group Discussion of Implications and Possible Next Steps for VOREC

3:00 pm-3:20 pm: Health and Wellness Pillar: Discussion and Possible Vote on incorporating the Confluence Accords health and wellness pillar. Discussion of possible actions.

3:20- 3:30 pm: Other Business

- April date, Montpelier location and call for topics/guests
- June Meeting: location and call for topics/guests

3:30-4:00 pm: PUBLIC COMMENT

4:00 pm: ADJOURN

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

February 13, 2020 at the Agency of Natural Resources Offices, National Life, Montpelier, VT

Steering Committee Attendees: Josh Hanford (chaired meeting in Mike Snyder's place), Abby Long, Hal Ellms, Drew Simmons, Bill Supple, Josh Ryan, Karrie Thomas, Cindy Locke, Mike DeBonis, Mike Snyder (joined by phone from 1-1:30pm)

FPR Staff Attendees: Jessica Savage, Craig Whipple, Becca Washburn, Caroline Zeilenga

Public in Attendance: Kelly Ault (VOBA), Matt Williams (CTA), Dave Garbose (Mt. Philo Inn)

Steering Committee Members Absent: Sarah Lang, Marc Sherman, Jeanne Gervais, Frank Stanley

Josh H. Welcome and Introductions

December Minutes Approved: Mike D. motion to approve; Drew second. None opposed, no abstentions.

Chair Updates

Mike S. joined this portion of the meeting by phone. He provided legislative updates on the status of Act 250 and recreational trails legislation, which was not included in the Act 250 bill that passed out of the House Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife committee but alternative plans are underway for where and how to include the language. He also shared that he would be speaking with the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee about VOREC and FPR/FWD marketing for outdoor recreation, and that in recent testimony in the House Appropriations Committee representatives were supportive of the VOREC Community Grant Program.

Mike S. also provided an update on the NBRC funding, which the Governor is supportive of and is now deciding on the most appropriate way to use the funds. Mike S. also shared that he has made a recommendation to the Governor, in collaboration with ACCD, for a steering committee member to replace Trey Martin, to be announced as soon as possible.

Additionally, Mike S. provided background on the Confluence Accords and health and wellness pillar conversation scheduled for later in the meeting agenda.

Jessica shared the forthcoming Vermont Vacation Guide, which includes an article on VOREC communities. She also shared that FPR is working on an e-bike policy for state lands, and requested input if there were other stakeholders who should be engaged on this policy. The group suggested the Agency of Transportation, e-bike manufacturers like Specialized and Trek, VOBA, and communities in Europe and Quebec who have already implemented similar policies.

Vice Chair Updates

Josh H. provided an update on the \$1 million budget request for ACCD's Chief Marketing Office, which includes the \$250,000 FPR/FWD funding Mike S. mentioned in his update. The group discussed the

overlap between outdoor recreation and tourism, marketing campaigns, and employment and workforce training. Josh H. recommended further discussion of marketing ideas and funding at future meetings, and suggested inviting Tourism and Marketing Commissioner Heather Pelham to a meeting.

VTA Update

Cindy referred to the Act 250 and recreational trails update Mike S. had provided earlier in the meeting, and Cindy, Abby, and Mike D. described the work VTA has put into the collaboration with the Forest Partnership and the expenses they've incurred, and outlined the interim and long-term processes being proposed.

VTGC Update

Abby shared updates from the recent VTGC meeting, including defining roles and responsibilities with FPR, preparing for new Vermont Trail System applications anticipated in response to the Act 250 process, offering input on FPR's draft e-bike policy, plans to discuss a code of conduct for all trail networks at the next meeting, and the creation of a nominating committee to fill executive board positions. VTGC's next meeting is May 13.

VOBA Update

Kelly provided information on VOBA's newly formed policy committee, which is building and working in coalitions and is engaged in outdoor recreation economy policy on the pillars of conservation, tourism and marketing, workforce and economic development, and the climate economy and healthy landscapes.

Kelly also described VOBA's work to better match educational programs with workforce needs, including a request to bring this conversation and connections to VOREC, and recapped VOBA's experience at the Outdoor Retailer winter show in Denver and the Tourism Day at the State House.

VOREC Community Grant Program

Jessica provided an update on the VCGP. Eighteen applications were received for a total request of \$856,000, and although this financial request is lower than last year, the applicants are of higher quality, indicating the grant program is now better understood. The ranking committee will meet next week and an announcement of the recipients will be issued in the next few weeks. After this year, there will likely be enough of a cohort of communities to build a designation program.

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

Cindy requested to provide an update on the LVRT, asking for support of the Governor's budget proposal to complete the LVRT. Josh H. shared that one outcome of a recent discussion with legislators was to consider rebranding and renaming the LVRT to better represent the many landscape features and communities users would experience on the trail.

KTA/Landowner Relations Discussion

Abby led a discussion of recent events at Kingdom Trails, providing background on four landowners in the network who have recently restricted mountain bike access and KTA's response, including writing an open letter to the community, implementing a grant for a feasibility study and beginning the study with

a community forum that drew 200 participants, canceling NEMBAFest and moving other festivals into town, adding eight miles of new trails to continue offering the same amount of groomed fat bike trails, and recognizing the need for a better dialogue with landowners.

Abby also provided information on a recent request an individual made for an Act 250 jurisdictional opinion for Kingdom Trails, and on KTA's work to acquire a 240-acre property on Darling Ridge, to be conserved with the Vermont Land Trust.

The group discussed whether the Act 250 and recreational trails process currently in the legislature would affect the outcome of the Kingdom Trails jurisdictional opinion, the Governor's reaction to these events, the general Act 250 process, and inquired about next steps and ways to support KTA. The group expressed a desire to create a fundraising page for legal fees, an information campaign about the value of trails and private landowners, and a letter of support signed by VOREC and VOBA. They discussed the benefits of creating a landowner incentive program like Current Use for recreation access. Abby described a code of conduct KTA is working on, and asked the group to help share the message that Kingdom Trails is "alive and well."

Confluence Accords and Health and Wellness Pillar

The group discussed the draft Vermont preamble to the Confluence Accords, which adopts health and wellness as one of VOREC's pillars. Drew requested the word "diversity" be removed from the document, and the group agreed and approved the preamble with this revision. None opposed, no abstentions.

Other Business

Jessica invited suggestions for topics and guests for the April and June meetings. Drew suggested focusing on the grant program recipients.

Karrie shared that the Outdoor Writers of America is having their annual conference at Jay Peak in June. Karrie and Mike D. will be leading outings for the group.

Public Comment

Dave Garbose, owner of the Mt. Philo Inn, expressed concern about the long-range management plan for Mt. Philo State Park, including the lack of a welcome center and trails that navigate the perimeter of the park but don't bring users through the center of the park. He indicated that he had expressed this concern to the Governor and the Governor suggested he voice his complaints to the VOREC steering committee. The group discussed reasons why these features may not have been included in the long-range management plan and appropriate ways to address Mr. Garbose's concerns, including fundraising and mobilizing community groups to offer input and assistance to the park.

Kelly shared that VOBA was considering writing a letter to Rep. Peter Welch thanking him for his support of recent federal legislation doubling trail funding, and asked if there were any concerns related to this legislation that the group should be aware of. Karrie noted a concern some motorized vehicle proponents had with a gas tax that was included, and suggested Kelly contact Cindy for more information.

Meeting adjourned.

VOREC Meeting Agenda: April 23, 2020

Advance Packet:

- February Minutes
- Summary of OR Confluence/NGA-ORLN COVID-19 responses
- VOREC Action Plan

Steering Committee Meeting: 9 am-12 noon

Skype

9:00 am-9:05: Welcome: Michael Snyder, Chair

- Introductions, Review and Approve Minutes from February Meeting

9:05-10:00 am: Updates: Q and A and Discussion to be Included

Introduction and Updates:

ACCD: Commissioner Josh Hanford, Vice Chair (and possibly Ted Brady, schedule depending)

Chair Updates:

- COVID-19 and OREC offices
- VOREC Business Updates

VTGC

VTA

VOBA

10 am-11:30 am: Roundtable Discussion: VOREC and COVID-19: (All Steering Committee Members)

- Discussion of the current status/challenges/needs for outdoor business sector and outdoor recreation activity/stewardship organizations.
- For both sectors: what might be an appropriate, helpful role for VOREC in the current response and in the recovery we hope is coming?

11:30 am- 11:55 am: PUBLIC COMMENT

11:55 am- noon: Other Business: June Meeting Date

12:00 pm: ADJOURN

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

April 23, 2020 via Skype for Business

Steering Committee Attendees: Mike Snyder, Josh Hanford, Abby Long, Bill Supple, Drew Simmons, Hal Ellms, Karrie Thomas, Marc Sherman, Mike DeBonis

FPR Staff Attendees: Jessica Savage, Craig Whipple, Becca Washburn, Caroline Zeilenga

Public in Attendance: Kelly Ault (VOBA), Gabe Perkins (Mahoosuc Pathways, Bethel, ME), Jenille Scott (Audubon Vermont), Tracy Zschau (Vermont Land Trust), Joe Fox (St. Johnsbury, VT)

Steering Committee Members Absent: Sarah Lang, Jeanne Gervais, Frank Stanley, Josh Ryan, Cindy Locke

Mike S. Welcome and Introductions

Mike S. began by acknowledging the challenges many are facing and the need for this awareness as the group discussed and made plans.

February Minutes Approved: Bill motion to approve; Josh H. second. None opposed, no abstentions.

ACCD Updates

Josh H. provided background on the Restart Vermont teams working to review economic sectors and provide plans to the Governor for restarting the economy, including approaches to outdoor recreation and tourism, and noted that recreation and tourism would look very different this summer and this could be a challenge to VOREC's mission. The group discussed task force membership and the importance of representation from the retail sector, and the financial needs of small businesses, along with grants and loans available to them.

Chair Updates

Mike S. provided an update about FPR's COVID-19 response, including staff teleworking, understanding impacts to outdoor recreation and forest economies, creating a joint statement with VTA and VTGC about trail closures and trail use, and engaging with national outdoor recreation partners to share approaches. He also outlined the changes the department has taken to field work with the first phase of reopening.

Mike S. and Craig provided updates on state parks and decisions being made for this year's parks opening and operations.

Jessica shared work being done on outdoor recreation and COVID-19 messaging and trail etiquette.

Vermont Trails Alliance Update

Abby announced that trail maintenance is now moving forward, and Mike D. shared that recreation trail managers in the non-profit community are feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and this will impact

their ability to manage trail infrastructure. The group discussed the need for coordinated reopening and suggested creating a white paper on how to reopen the outdoor recreation economy in a coordinated and thoughtful way. Josh H. suggested sharing this white paper with ACCD restart teams.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance Update

Kelly provided an update on VOBA's role in the COVID-19 crisis. The organization has transitioned to support and recovery, to understand and connect businesses to available resources and help businesses determine how to reopen responsibly. VOBA is working with Maine Outdoor Brands to coordinate information and planning, and has released a survey to capture the full impacts of the crisis and understand what businesses need, how to advocate for them, and to submit an NBRC grant.

Drew noted that all elements of the sector are impacted, but that reopening will look different for different elements—and that some may not reopen at all. He suggested the group focus on those in the industry who will most need support.

Roundtable Discussion: VOREC and COVID-19

Mike S. framed the conversation by asking steering committee members to report on their current situation, challenges, and needs, for both the business sector and the stewardship representatives. The group discussed impacts to businesses and the need to be cautious now to avoid further impacts during foliage and winter seasons, as well as the benefits of more people participating in outdoor recreation.

The group decided to create a report describing impacts to the various outdoor recreation sectors and offering requests and recommendations for what will be needed in the future. Kelly offered to share preliminary insights from the VOBA business survey to include in the report.

Public Comment

Joe Fox asked the group to remember that the impacts of the crisis would be ongoing for years, and that local recreation representatives are looking to the state for guidance and willing to be patient.

Jenille Scott asked if anyone has any ideas they have been discussing about outdoor recreation and social distancing. She asked specifically if there was any consideration of a sign-in waiting list to access a recreation destination similar to how a waiting list functions at a restaurant. Jessica responded that people are currently being asked to leave a recreation point if it's too crowded, but noted that this was a good suggestion as FPR and partners continue to consider what outdoor recreation looks like this year.

Other Business

Mike S. shared that the next steering committee meeting will be the morning of June 18.

Meeting Adjourned: Bill motion to adjourn, Hal second.

VOREC Meeting Agenda: June 18, 2020

Advance Packet:

- April Minutes
- VOREC Special Report on COVID-19 to the Governor
- VOREC Action Plan

Steering Committee Meeting: 9 am-12 noon

Skype

9:00 am-9:05: Welcome: Michael Snyder, Chair

- Review and Approve Minutes from April Meeting

9:05-10:00 am: Updates: Q and A and Discussion to be Included

Introduction and Updates:

- COVID-19: National OREC response, Vermont outdoor recreation response
- Legislative Updates: Act 250, CARES Funding, other
- Updates on VOREC business

ACCD: Josh (or other)

VTGC

VTA

VOBA

10 am-11:00 am: Roundtable Discussion: VOREC and COVID-19:

Steering committee members: provide a snapshot from your world since we last met:
Review Special Report to the Governor and map out any needed action items in the short or long-term

11:00 am- 11:30 am: VOREC's role in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging: discuss actions and recommendations in current context

11:30 am- 11:55 am: PUBLIC COMMENT

11:55 am- noon: Other Business: June Meeting Date

12:00 pm: ADJOURN

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

June 18, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

Steering Committee Attendees: Mike Snyder (available only for beginning of meeting), Hal Ellms, Bill Supple, Mike DeBonis, Drew Simmons, Abby Long, Marc Sherman, Josh Ryan, Karrie Thomas

FPR & ACCD Staff Attendees: Jessica Savage, Craig Whipple, Becca Washburn, Caroline Zeilenga, Tim Tierney

Public in Attendance: Jessica Brodie (Vermont Recreation and Parks Association), Kelly Ault (Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance), Eileen Murphy (New Jersey Audubon)

Steering Committee Members Absent: Josh Hanford, Jeanne Gervais, Frank Stanley, Cindy Locke, Shelby Semmes

Welcome & Introductions: Michael Snyder

April Minutes Approved: Bill motion to approve; Mike D. second. None opposed, no abstentions.

Chair Updates

Meeting Chair: Mike S. announced that he needed to leave the meeting early to attend Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee testimony on Act 250 and recreational trails, and discussion with the Governor's Office regarding this issue. Owing to similar legislative conflicts, Josh H. was also unable to attend, so Becca was designated to chair the meeting.

Steering Committee Membership: Mike S. shared that Shelby Semmes has accepted a seat on the steering committee. Sarah Lang has stepped down, and nominations were invited for a replacement.

COVID-19 Report to the Governor: Mike S. thanked the group for their quick action to pull this report together. The report has informed many decisions about reopening and the Governor's approach to it.

Northern Border Regional Commission Funding for Offices of Outdoor Recreation: Mike S. shared that this funding is in discussion with ACCD Deputy Secretary Brady and, given current circumstances, an RFP will likely be issued for a contractor to implement the VOREC action plan and direct the initiative.

CARES Act Funding: Mike S. shared that a large sum of money has been included in the FY20 budget adjustment act for COVID response in State Parks (approximately \$1.3 million). The legislature is currently deliberating other uses of CARES Act money, and legislative committees have asked Mike to speak to State outdoor recreation needs, and at the end they inquired about other outdoor recreation businesses and organizations. He encouraged them to reach out to both VOBA and VTGC to understand the impacts and needs of both outdoor recreation businesses and non-profits.

Act 250: Mike S. provided an update on Act 250 reform measures underway in the legislature. The House passed broad Act 250 changes, including trails language that allows partners to continue work on

a long-term approach to the issue. The Senate is considering pieces of the House-passed Act 250 bill, including the trails component.

State Parks: Craig provided an update on state parks operations. Parks are opening June 26, with services adjusted to meet COVID needs. Cabins and cottages won't be offered this year, but lean-tos, tent sites, day use areas, and recreation activities will be open with some modifications. Although campgrounds are allowed to open at 100%, Parks is choosing to remain at 75% capacity. The group discussed how Vermont's state parks operations compare to surrounding states, how changes in operational procedures were being communicated to park users, and how many visitors might be anticipated this year.

State Lands: Jessica shared that trail counters have shown a significant increase in activity on state lands up to the beginning of June, and then a drop that could be related to people returning to work. A plan is underway for operating backcountry privies and shelters during COVID conditions.

Great Outdoors Act: Jessica announced that the Great Outdoors Act passed out of the senate at the federal level. Implications for Vermont's Land and Water Conservation Fund could be huge. This program funds state and municipal outdoor recreation projects at 50%, so this is very exciting news.

Temporary Trail Staff: Becca shared that FPR has usually hired temporary trail staff by this time of year for trail maintenance and infrastructure, but there has been a hiring freeze due to COVID-19. The department hopes that a reduced seasonal workforce may be approved to start before the end of the month.

Vice Chair Updates

Tim provided an ACCD update on Josh Hanford's behalf. He shared that the agency has been extremely busy with COVID-19 response and ever-changing guidance, and is shifting work to relief and recovery. ACCD is rolling out a new grants management platform intended to help those who haven't been able to receive relief through other programs. Marc encouraged the agency to start a committee for businesses to discuss and plan for the possibility of a future shutdown. The group also offered other suggestions, including issuing health advice that passing quickly within six feet of someone was acceptable when necessary in a retail setting, and to revisit the strict 14-day quarantine rule for out-of-state visitors out of concern that such a strict measure would cause people to discount the effort altogether.

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Update

Mike D. provided an update that the VTGC annual meeting was held in May and new officers were elected. The highest priorities for the 2020 work plan are to make sure that the Vermont Trail System process is clear and updated information is available, and to compile best management practices for trail management in Vermont, which will inform the Act 250 and recreational trails process.

Vermont Trails Alliance Update

Mike D. shared that the VTA's work has been focused on the Act 250 trails language and moving this matter through the complicated legislative process.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance Update

Kelly provided an update on VOBA's work with ACCD on efforts to support outdoor recreation businesses in response to COVID-19. VOBA continues to provide support, including understanding the implications of operational guidance to these businesses, support programs available, and VOBA's continued networking role connecting businesses on both COVID-19 response and diversity, equity, and inclusion. COVID and DEI resource pages have been launched on the website. VOBA has also been involved in legislative work related to outdoor recreation business needs, and on supporting the industry through workforce and sector development and marketing efforts. Collaboration also continues with outdoor business alliances across the country to share information and develop partnerships.

Roundtable Discussion: VOREC and COVID-19

Jessica provided an overview of the COVID-19 special report to the Governor submitted in May. The group discussed the need to link increased participation in outdoor recreation to stewardship opportunities, including connecting recreation users to the trail organizations that make their experiences possible and encouraging these users to donate to these organizations. They decided that once recommendations were fleshed out, they would be circulated by email for review and then submitted to the Governor as an addendum to the COVID-19 special report. Suggestions included:

- increased signage at recreation access points informing users about the organizations that create and maintain these areas
- "parking meters" or "parking tickets" soliciting donations at trailheads
- a messaging campaign about Vermont's stewardship ethic and the public health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation, and the possibility of using covid-related grant funding for this campaign
- recommending the Governor assign a VOREC presence to the \$5 million marketing Vermont effort at the Department of Tourism and Marketing, and that VOREC foster a connection with the Chief Marketing Office for opportunities to raise awareness about stewardship
- using trailhead steward volunteers to educate visitors about stewardship, the work it takes to maintain recreational resources, and the organizations who do this work
- consider using outdoor facilities on state lands for school and camp programming to help kids be more spread out while also connecting them to the outdoors

VOREC's Role in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Jessica began the conversation by reminding the group that diversity, equity, and inclusion have been priorities of VOREC since its founding, and asked the group to think critically about ways to take action. The group discussed how several organizations they represent have chosen not to release a statement or response to current conflicts to allow more time to create a thoughtful, meaningful response. Suggestions for actions included creating small grants to promote DEI initiatives in outdoor recreation, recommending to the Governor that someone with a DEI perspective fill the current opening on the steering committee, including time regularly on the agenda for this conversation, and revisiting VOREC's charter to consider whether it fully represents the progress the group would like to see.

Public Comment

Jessica Brodie encouraged VOREC and VRPA to work together, and shared that VRPA is drafting potential planning guidance for indoor recreation facilities for the fall. She encouraged the group to remember that schools and municipalities are also affected by COVID-19 and in need of support.

Other Business

Bill noted the recent increased participation in outdoor recreation and asked the group to think about ways to keep this momentum going in the future and Karrie asked the group to consider ways to encourage people to continue making space for outdoor recreation in their routines as they returned to work. Drew suggested exploring metrics from the public health sector that would be meaningful to VOREC initiatives. Kelly shared that VOBA and ACCD recently discussed ways for the business community, particularly ski businesses, to partner with first-time outdoor recreation users from more diverse racial backgrounds.

VOREC Meeting Agenda: August 27, 2020

Advance Packet:

- June Minutes
- VOREC Special Report Addendum on COVID-19 to the Governor
- VOREC Action Plan

Steering Committee Meeting: 1 pm to 4 pm

Teams

1:00 pm- 1:05 pm: Welcome: Michael Snyder, Chair

- Review and Approve Minutes from June Meeting

1:05 pm- 1:45 pm: Updates: Q and A and Discussion to be Included

Introduction and Updates:

- COVID-19: National OREC response, Vermont outdoor recreation response
- Legislative Updates: Act 250, CARES Funding, other
- Updates on VOREC business: nominations for Economic Development candidate, NBRC Funding

ACCD: Josh (or other)

VTGC

VTA

VOBA

1:45 pm-3:15 pm: Panel and Discussion: GEARING UP FOR THE 'DISRUPTED' WINTER OF 2021: If trends of high volume outdoor usage continue, and if 'traditional' ski resort business is disrupted as widely anticipated, what should Vermont anticipate for the coming winter? What impacts, challenges and opportunities lay ahead for trail operators, outdoor businesses, and State land managers?

Moderator: Drew Simmons

Presenters and Guests: Adam Howard (*Backcountry Magazine*), Alex Kaufman (*Wintry Mix* Podcast host), Zac Freeman (R.A.S.T.A. Executive Director) Craig Whipple (State Parks Director), Matt Williams (Catamount Trail Association Executive Director)

3:15 pm-3:30 pm: VOREC's role in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging: discuss training and learning opportunities

3:30 pm- 3:55 pm: PUBLIC COMMENT

3:55 pm- 4:00 pm: Other Business: October Meeting Date

4:00 pm: ADJOURN

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

August 27, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

Steering Committee Attendees: Mike Snyder, Drew Simmons, Hal Ellms, Bill Supple, Mike DeBonis, Josh Ryan, Karrie Thomas, Marc Sherman, Shelby Semmes

FPR Staff Attendees: Jessica Savage, Craig Whipple, Caroline Zeilenga

Public in Attendance: Kelly Ault (VOBA), Greta Hasler (Senator Sanders' Office), Jessica Brodie (Vermont Recreation and Parks Association), Molly Mahar (Vermont Ski Areas Association), Matt Williams (Catamount Trail Association), Joe Fox (St. Johnsbury Academy & St. Johnsbury Bike and Pedestrian Committee), Zac Freeman (Rochester/Randolph Area Sports Trail Alliance), Lisa Lynn (Vermont Sports/Vermont Ski and Ride Magazine)

Steering Committee Members Absent: Josh Hanford, Jeanne Gervais, Frank Stanley, Cindy Locke, Abby Long

Welcome & Introductions: Michael Snyder

Mike S.: Announcement of Director of State Parks Craig Whipple's retirement and remarks of appreciation for Craig's service.

June Minutes Approved: Bill motion to approve; Karrie second. None opposed, no abstentions.

Chair Updates

Mike S. reminded the group that we're actively seeking nominations to fill an available slot on the steering committee and are looking for someone with economic development expertise.

Mike S. provided an update that approval has been given to move forward with the request to use Northern Borders Regional Commission funding to support a position for a VOREC executive director to coordinate the initiative. The process is currently in the beginning stage with human resources and then would need to clear the COVID-induced hiring freeze with approval from the Secretary of Administration. Barring any challenges there, recruitment could begin in the soon thereafter.

Mike S. provided an update on the CARES Act: We were able to secure \$1.5 million in funding to support outdoor recreation businesses, and those grants are being distributed at present. Jessica noted that she, Kelly Ault (representing VOBA), and Mike DeBonis (representing VTGC) have been supporting Becca Washburn on approving applicants. A very small amount of funding is still available and businesses are encouraged to still apply. In addition, FPR has received \$3 million in funding for COVID response on state lands, with work already underway.

Mike S. provided a legislative update: Act 250 and recreational trails work is ongoing in the legislature. The Administration is still supportive of the language that passed the House and has been modified in the Senate, and we continue to work with the Forest Partnership and the Vermont Trails Alliance.

Craig: Craig provided an update on state parks visitation and operations during this season. Visitation is down, and there have been some issues with guests following safety measures, but staff are working through these challenges.

Mike S. noted that he continues to engage with other directors of outdoor recreation on the national level, and noted that while some states are facing significant challenges to operations due to COVID-19, Vermont continues to respond well and serve as a leader.

Mike S. shared that Vail (Stowe, Okemo, Mt. Snow in VT) has just released their operating plan for the season, and is likely to be a leader in their approach to opening and managing operations this winter.

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Updates

Mike D. provided an update that in the latest meeting, VTGC worked on best management practices for trail management, both to have available as a resource for others and as part of Act 250 and recreational trails work. There is also work to be done regarding mapping trails for the Vermont Trails System. Matt added that the group's focus is on both best management practices and online resources for other groups managing trails.

Vermont Trails Alliance Update

Mike D. provided an update that the group is working to have a system for managing trails in the state, even as the future of the Act 250 and recreational trails issue is uncertain in the legislative process.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance Update

Kelly provided an update: VOBA has been working to support the industry in response to the pandemic and as they look ahead to the next season for their businesses. There has been strong support for these businesses through programs at ACCD and the Tax Department. The group is also releasing an op-ed offering a business perspective on the exciting news about the Great American Outdoors Act.

Jessica and Kelly presented an upcoming grant opportunity for steering committee consideration of VOREC support. Jessica began by providing an overview of the seven communities who were recipients of this year's VOREC Community Grants. VOBA stands ready to assist these and future communities with their business network and resources. Kelly shared that there is an ACCD restart marketing and stimulus grant program that uses CARES Act funding to provide stimulus opportunities to businesses hard hit by COVID-19. VOBA is proposing to make a region-by-region guide of outdoor recreation business, assets, and related products and services in each community, with an immediate focus on winter recreation opportunities.

Mike S. suggested a vote on this matter. Drew motion to vote; Hal second. The motion to support the grant passed unanimously. None opposed; no abstentions.

Panel and Discussion: GEARING UP FOR THE 'DISRUPTED' WINTER OF 2021

Drew moderated the panel and began with an introduction: This pandemic has had many unforeseen consequences, including impacts to outdoor recreation that are both good and bad. The goal of this conversation is for VOREC to be thinking about this coming winter and considering what VOREC's role is in communicating to constituencies and the state about priorities for the season.

Panelist Alex Kaufman, creator of the Wintry Mix podcast, discussed variations in COVID-19 impacts and operations and the possibilities for disruptions to ski areas this season.

Panelist Adam Howard, Publisher of Height of Lands Publishing (including Backcountry Magazine), discussed how skiing changed last winter as resorts closed down for COVID-19 and uphill ski traffic and backcountry skiing in general increased significantly in Vermont and across the country, and some of the repercussions of this shift.

Panelist Zac Freeman of RRASTA discussed what the organization observed on their trails last winter following COVID-19: The numbers of users is down because of the pandemic, but the type of users has shifted as those with less experience are venturing onto the trails; the organization has also had more challenges drawing volunteers and promoting trail work days.

Panelist Craig Whipple, Director of State Parks, discussed the heightened interest in outdoor recreation, the Parks' planning and execution process for operations in COVID-19, and how fall and winter is impacted by how people will behave.

Panelist Marc Sherman discussed the trends he's seeing with the popularity of outdoor products and how these trends reflect intentional purchasing rather than browsing purchasing. He anticipates backcountry and Nordic ski products being very popular this year, and also anticipates related issues with backcountry ski trail popularity given Vermont's limited backcountry access.

Panelist Matt Williams discussed Catamount Trail Association's planning process for the coming winter, anticipating increased use and thinking about covid-19 health and safety measures, backcountry safety, and infrastructure impacts. They will be focusing on fall outreach that disperses users to less trafficked areas, and emphasizing stewardship and backcountry experiences for newer users in winter.

The group discussed additional planning for increased use, providing education and clinics for new users, and engaging children in backcountry or cross-country skiing when downhill ski access may not be available, as well as the importance of providing access opportunities directly in towns (such as short snowshoe or ski trails in town villages) to reduce use on popular backcountry destinations and reduce access barriers for participants. Mike S. stated he would return to FPR staff asking for consideration of state lands areas that may be especially appropriate to steer users to for winter recreational activities.

Karrie suggested that VTGC create a winter trail use etiquette statement. Mike D. suggested accessing the Tourism and Marketing Department to assist with disseminating these types of resources. Marc recommended utilizing Vermont retailers to help spread this messaging, too. Mike S. also suggested incorporating this outdoor recreation messaging into FPR fall foliage messaging, and the group agreed this would be valuable.

The group decided to draft a letter outlining the considerations recommended for the coming winter recreation season. Mike S. expressed a value in using this letter with colleagues, legislators, and for other purposes.

VOREC's Role in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Jessica asked the group whether anyone had found resources or information that would be beneficial to the group, and what would be most impactful to learn about in future meetings related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Drew noted that VOBA has located funds for a facilitator to assist with conversations related to this for their organization, and suggested that VOREC could be looped into this if VOREC is interested in this opportunity. Marc attended an online conference with Vermont Employee Ownership Association, and found the tools very helpful. The group discussed the ANR DEI Committee's resources and materials that have been informative and beneficial. Mike S. shared that a discussion is underway in the agency and administration regarding related messaging on state lands, and that Mike has advocated for a conscious approach that is communicated to partners as well. The group decided to invite a panel to the next meeting to address DEI. Karrie suggested that one conversation from her organization is the importance of equitable access, and recommended that Vermont Adaptive Sports participate. Marc recommended inviting a national voice to discuss how they see the best way to create this access and inclusion.

Public Comment

Joe Fox expressed appreciation for the Governor's commitment to funding completion of the Lamoyille Valley Rail Trail. He requested clarity on who the lead organization/agency is that is now in charge of this project, and spoke on behalf of multiple communities in advocating for the trail to become a state park with management under FPR to implement, maintain, and provide consistency in elements like wayfinding.

Mike S. clarified that the land will always be owned by VTrans, and that VAST will continue to be the trail manager at least through the build-out. VTrans will be the lead through the construction phase, with Mike's hope that FPR ultimately is able to manage it as a state park. He will be reporting to the legislature this winter on what would be involved in converting it to a state park. For the foreseeable future, VAST is the point organization for things like trail signs.

Other Business

New steering committee member Shelby Semmes introduced herself and her role as Northern New England area director of the Trust for Public Land.

Next Meeting: October 7, 9am-12pm.

Meeting adjourned.

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

October 7th, 2020

9 am until noon

Teams Meeting

Advance Packet:

- August Minutes
 - DRAFT VOREC Report and Recommendations to the Governor
 - VOREC Action Plan
-

9:00 am- 9:05 am: Welcome: Michael Snyder, Chair

- Review and Approve Minutes from August Meeting

9:05 am- 9:45 am: Updates: Q and A and Discussion to be Included Introduction and Updates:

- COVID-19
- Legislative Updates: Act 250, CARES Funding, other
- Updates on VOREC business: nominations for Economic Development candidate, NBRC Funding, VOREC Community Grant Program

ACCD: Josh

VTGC

VTA

VOBA: Winter Recreation Marketing CARES grant and BASECAMP events

9:45 am- 10:30 am: Review and Discuss VOREC Report and Recommendations to the Governor:

Jessica, All

Guiding Questions: for each opportunity or challenge we identify, what action should be taken, by whom and with what resources?

10:30 am- 11:30 am: Discussion on Existing and Future COVID-19 Response and Recovery Funding: Becca, Kelly, Josh

11:30 am-11:50 am: Public Comment

11:50-Noon: Other Business, Next Meeting

Noon: Adjourn

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

October 7, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

Steering Committee Attendees: Mike Snyder, Josh Hanford, Bill Supple, Drew Simmons, Hal Ellms, Mike DeBonis, Shelby Semmes, Karrie Thomas, Jeanne Gervais, Cindy Locke

FPR/ACCD Staff Attendees: Jessica Savage, Becca Washburn, Caroline Zeilenga, Tim Tierney

Public in Attendance: Grace Hawkins (outdoor industry), Jessica Brodie (Vermont Recreation and Park Association), Joe Fox (St. Johnsbury Recreation Department), Kelly Ault (VOBA), Molly Mahar (Vermont Ski Areas Association), Russell Hirschler (Upper Valley Trails Alliance), Tracy Zschau (Vermont Land Trust)

Steering Committee Members Absent: Frank Stanley, Abby Long, Marc Sherman, Josh Ryan

August Minutes Approved: Bill motion to approve; Hal second. None opposed, no abstentions.

Welcome & Introductions: Michael Snyder

Mike provided an update that work is continuing on the Northern Borders Regional Commission funding for a position to support the VOREC initiative. Funding has been secured and approved, a position has received approval, and it is now pending approval per the state government hiring freeze, with recruitment as the next step once final approval is granted.

Mike shared legislative updates: The FPR budget passed as requested, which includes \$100,000 for the VOREC Community Grant Program. The Governor vetoed H.926, the Act 250 bill, because although he supported provisions in the bill, many other important items had been removed from it. Along with this veto, the Governor created an executive order to make clarifications to how Act 250 considers recreational trails, directing the Natural Resources Board to conduct trail review according to these provisions and also issuing a directive to FPR to continue work toward an alternative program for oversight of recreational trails outside of Act 250. The group discussed how this executive order directs the NRB to hold off on any pending jurisdictional opinions on trails, and the potential for legal challenges to this order.

Becca provided an update on additional funding anticipated through the federal Great American Outdoors Act: although the passage of the act will result in increased funding, details aren't yet known and will be provided when there is an update. Becca also shared that the Vermont Housing Conservation Board has embarked on an effort to establish a policy to clarify goals and priorities on conservation projects that focus on outdoor recreation, and FPR has been working with them as they develop this.

Jessica provided an update on this year's VOREC Community Grant recipients: most grants have been executed, and any that are still pending are waiting on information from the recipients. There are seven recipient communities this year.

Vice Chair Updates

Josh H. provided a legislative update that ACCD has been working on Act 250 reform initiatives related to downtowns for years. The Agency was disappointed these provisions were removed from the Act 250 legislation the House and Senate passed, and agrees with the Governor's intent to continue working toward greater Act 250 reforms in the next session. Josh also encouraged the steering committee to

share resources located on the ACCD website for anyone struggling to pay rent, mortgage, or property taxes.

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Updates

Mike D. shared an update that VTGC is compiling best management practices as a recreation resource and for trail managers, and this process will also be helpful to the Act 250 alternative program work.

Vermont Trails Alliance Updates

Cindy shared that the VTA has been focused on supporting the trails portion of H.926 and work on Act 250 changes they would like to offer the NRB for future guidance.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance Updates

Kelly shared that VOBA, in collaboration with VOREC Community Grant recipients, received a marketing grant through ACCD to produce winter sports marketing materials and a winter recreation guide in their region, featuring local outdoor businesses to direct economic activity to these outdoor recreation-friendly hubs. VOBA has also been holding information and networking sessions to provide businesses with more information on existing support resources. In addition, VOBA will be hosting an upcoming session on diversity, equity, and inclusion in outdoor recreation spaces.

Steering Committee Member Updates

Hal shared that he has visited the recreational resources of the two towns who received the VOREC Community Grants in 2019, and congratulated both towns on their excellent work.

Shelby shared that the Trust for Public Land is sponsoring a grant to the City of Montpelier through TPL's 10-minute Walk to a Park campaign, for Montpelier Alive to conduct community outreach and park planning work, with the hope that VHCB may offer additional funding to expand the work. She also shared the Forest Partnership's work on the Act 250 alternative trails program.

Drew shared that he's been talking to factories about manufacturing trends in outdoor equipment and that the increase in orders is anticipated as a five-year increase, rather than a temporary trend. Drew also noted the summary report he recently provided to the group, and requested that it be added to the minutes and officially posted so that others can access it.

Cindy asked whether ACCD has any plans to promote winter sports in Vermont this year. Tim shared that the marketing team will be promoting winter recreation with the current travel guidance, and also that there is a grant rolling out soon for ski areas to implement COVID precautions in their operations.

Tim shared that the Vermont delegation of the NBRC recommended a large recreation project to the federal group, which looks very promising and he hopes to share more soon. Tim also stated that FEMA conducted a rapid needs assessment this summer in three Vermont communities for a long-term recovery plan, with five areas: childcare, forestry, agriculture, tourism/hospitality, and outdoor recreation. They would like to put a solution-based team together, hopefully through FPR, to create projects to support the outdoor recreation sector.

VOREC Report and Recommendations to the Governor

Mike reminded the group that an annual report is due to the Governor by September 15 each year, but that this year the deadline has been extended to October 15 due to demands from COVID-19. Jessica facilitated a discussion of the report, with the goal of highlighting several specific action items and what would be needed to implement them. She noted the four points emerging from previous discussion and surveys to the steering committee: Stewardship of places being used/lack of outdoor ethics, COVID impacts to for- and non-profit outdoor recreation businesses, health and wellness opportunities from increased recreation participation, and racial justice, equity, and inclusion as an outdoor recreation opportunity and a moment of reconciliation. The group noted that this is also a time to elevate business recruitment as new people move to Vermont, the real estate uptick in Vermont and related challenges to outdoor access, the need for continued support for outdoor recreation businesses who haven't been able to benefit from recent outdoor recreation trends or who have had to modify operations and incur additional operational costs, and the need for robust public messaging about stewardship ethics and incentives for private landowners who open their land to recreation.

Existing and Future COVID-19 Response and Recovery Funding

Becca shared that there is additional ACCD funding available beyond the outdoor recreation apportionment of the CARES funding ACCD has been administering, and an opportunity to help ACCD as they design their next round of grants. She also suggested consideration of winter outdoor recreation businesses that are soon to see impacts and are currently investing in COVID-related operational changes.

Josh H. reviewed the eligibility guidelines and noted that more appropriate guidelines for non-profits seeing revenue losses would be addressed this round. The group attested to grant recipients putting the funding back into the state, to Vermont employees and other Vermont businesses, and the need for funding for outdoor recreation assets that saw degradation from increased use earlier this year.

Jessica also provided information on a funding opportunity with Vermont Community Foundation for COVID response and recovery support to VOREC communities, including both those who received VOREC Community Grants and those who applied but did not receive funding. She invited input on how to distribute these funds fairly and equitably.

Public Comment

Molly Mahar spoke about the marketing money at ACCD and the many opportunities this provides. She shared that cross country ski areas are anticipating increased use this winter, and that summer operations at ski areas went well in terms of COVID precautions and visitor compliance. Winter COVID planning is underway and includes industry best practices. Base lodge access indoors will be limited, so ski areas are working on providing more space outside. The number of out-of-state visitors who can visit Vermont without quarantining will have a substantial impact on operations, as 80% of skier days in Vermont come from out of state. A robust communications plan is also underway to encourage visitors to research ski area guidelines, state travel guidance, and COVID safety precautions.

Grace Hawkins highlighted the DEI work already underway in the outdoor industry and ways this group can join those efforts. She invited the group to reach out to her for more information.

Next Meeting: December 16, 1-4pm

Meeting Adjournment: Bill motion to adjourn, Hal second.

VOREC Meeting Agenda: December 16, 2020

Advance Packet:

- October Minutes
- VOREC Report to the Governor: October 2020
- VOREC Action Plan

Steering Committee Meeting: 1 pm to 4 pm

Teams

1:00 pm- 1:05 pm: Welcome and Introductions Michael Snyder, Chair

- Review and Approve Minutes from October Meeting

1:05 pm- 2:00 pm: Updates: Q and A and Discussion to be Included

Introduction and Updates:

- Legislative Updates: Act 250, other
- Updates on VOREC business: Program Manager search; nominations for Economic Development candidate, NBRC Funding

ACCD: Josh (or other)

VTGC

VTA

VOBA

2:00 pm-3:15 pm: Panel and Discussion: Here we Are: THE Actual 'DISRUPTED' WINTER OF 2021: I

Moderator: Drew Simmons

Presenters and Guests: Ollie Burress, Craftsbury Outdoor Center; Luke O'Brien, VTFPR; RJ Thompson, VT Huts/Velomont; Steven Wright, president/GM, Jay Peak Resort; Laura McLaughlin, retailer, Pinnacle Ski & Sports

3:15 pm-3:30 pm: VOREC Community Grant Program: Updates and Next Steps (Jessica)

3:30 pm- 3:55 pm: PUBLIC COMMENT

3:55 pm- 4:00 pm: Other Business: 2021 Meeting Dates

4:00 pm: ADJOURN

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

December 16, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

Steering Committee Attendees: Bill Supple, Drew Simmons, Marc Sherman, Hal Ellms, Michael Snyder, Josh Hanford, Shelby Semmes, Abby Long, Karrie Thomas, Mike Debonis, Josh Ryan, Frank Stanley

FPR/ACCD Staff Attendees: Luke O'Brien, Jessica Savage, Caroline Zeilenga

Public in Attendance: Russell Hirschler (Upper Valley Trails Alliance & TrailFinder), Caitrin Maloney (Sustainable Trail Works), Carol Van Dyke (New England Nordic Ski Association), Jessica Booth (Newport Parks & Recreation), John Abbott (Former Director of Outdoor Programs at UVM), Jordan Rowell, Kelly Ault (Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance), Laura McLaughlin (Pinnacle Ski and Sports), Micah Mutrux, Molly Mahar (Vermont Ski Areas Association), Ollie Burruss (Craftsbury Outdoor Center), Sarah Pelkey (Town of Poultney), Silvia Cassano (Slate Valley Trails Alliance & Poultney Community), Gina Campoli (Town of Craftsbury), Stephanie Campbell (North Country National Scenic Trail), RJ Thompson (Vermont Huts Association), Amie Smith (New England Nordic Ski Association)

Steering Committee Members Absent: Cindy Locke, Jeanne Gervais

October Minutes Approved: Bill motion to approve, Karrie second. None opposed, no abstentions, minutes approved.

Welcome & Introductions

Introduction of steering committee members, staff, and guests.

Chair Updates

Mike provided an update on the VOREC Program Manager position: Recruitment is closed, there were 50 qualified applicants, and a search committee has been formed, which includes representatives from VOREC, FPR, ACCD, and VOBA. The team will be determining which candidates to move forward in interviews and hope to begin the interviews in January.

Mike provided an update on the Director of State Parks position: Recruitment is underway, with a panel in place and next steps being planned. He welcomed a VOREC steering committee member to volunteer to serve on the panel.

Mike provided an update on work on Act 250 changes related to recreational trails, and the executive order the Governor issued for work on an alternative approach to Act 250 for oversight of trails. FPR and ANR have been working on this internally, and will incorporate partners in the work soon.

Mike reminded the group that he is still inviting nominations for an individual to fill one vacant VOREC steering committee seat, in particular with a background in economic development.

Caroline provided an update on a recent press release from FPR about VOREC and trail projects at Mt. Philo State Park.

Jessica shared that FPR is working to ensure that outdoor recreation guidance is continuing to be in line with the Governor's COVID guidance, and that the department is happy to work with recreation organizations to tailor posters with this guidance to specific outdoor activities. She also shared that the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant round is underway, with projects received and now being ranked.

Vice Chair Updates

Josh provided updates on COVID assistance ACCD is providing through grants and business assistance.

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Updates

Mike D. provided an update that the VTGC working group is providing best management practices to share with FPR related to the Act 250 and recreational trails work, and that this has been their primary work recently.

Vermont Trails Alliance Updates

Mike D. shared that VTA is preparing to support the Act 250 and recreational trails work as it moves forward. Abby added that VTA is also thinking about 2021 and how they will be able to afford their lobbying efforts for the upcoming session, and asked the for-profit sectors to consider supporting the VTA's work.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance Update

Kelly provided an update on VOBA's work trying to match COVID economic support and technical assistance with the outdoor businesses that need them. She shared that VOBA and VOREC produced an insert in Vermont Sports, thanks to a Restart marketing grant, to feature the nine communities who have received VOREC Community Grants, highlighting the outdoor recreation opportunities in these areas and connecting them to the downtowns and local businesses, as well as a treasure hunt in local communities and outdoor recreation locations to draw attention to these communities and showcase local businesses and outdoor activities. VOBA is also working on ways for businesses to serve as ambassadors to visitors, sharing information about the Governor's health and safety orders, and work on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion is also continuing. Drew added that VOBA just added three new board members.

Panel and Discussion: Here We Are: The Actual "Disrupted" Winter of 2021

Drew introduced the panel and facilitated the conversation, asking each panelist three questions: What did preseason preparations look like this year, what have you learned, and what do you need to keep moving forward?

Laura from Pinnacle Ski and Sports provided background on the business and described efforts made to keep customers and employees safe in their retail operations. She discussed the increased demand for winter equipment and the challenges with ordering and receiving product. Continuing marketing support is needed to attract people from out of state, and long-term business support is needed to keep staff on.

RJ from the Vermont Huts Association provided background on the organization and preseason planning. He discussed operation plans that require guests to follow sanitization protocols in

backcountry huts and that allow flexibility with reservations and refunds. Creative thinking is needed to continue operating this season.

Luke from FPR described his work as a Forest Recreation Specialist. He discussed the department's work anticipating increased recreation demand and communicating COVID safety guidelines, and described the ways CARES Act funding aided in FPR's response to the increased demand. Looking ahead, patience, partnerships, respect, and common sense are needed.

Steve Wright, president and general manager at Jay Peak, described the company's preseason planning and preparations, and adjustments that have since been made, as well as COVID-related operational challenges. Government support will be needed to sustain the company, particularly if COVID impacts continue through the winter and into the summer wedding season.

Ollie from the Craftsbury Outdoor Center described operations changes and challenges, especially to programming and lodging. Looking forward, cohesive, longer-term guidance would be helpful.

VOREC Grant Program Update

Jessica provided an update that FPR staff are working to finalize the remaining 2020 VOREC Community Grants. She also shared a related funding opportunity for additional towns that did not receive the VOREC grants. Another round of VOREC grants is anticipated for 2021, with \$100,000 funding, and a process likely involving the new program manager.

Bill suggested steering committee members could have opportunities to be of assistance to community grant recipients, offering resources or mentorship where skills align.

Public Comment

Silvia Cassano offered appreciation for the panels and perspectives and the work of VOREC.

Jordan Rowell asked whether, as a new UVM student, there are partnerships opportunities with UVM. The university resources have potential to have a big impact on outdoor recreation in Vermont, and could perhaps be used to more full potential.

Josh H. thanked Jordan for his interest and agreed there is great opportunity for UVM to assist communities and play a role across the state and not just in the City of Burlington. He encouraged Jordan to continue to join VOREC and share ideas. Karrie noted a UVM student that provided an economic impact study years ago, and welcomed a new study for her organization, as well as more broadly, of economic impacts of trails across the state. Mike also noted an example of partnership with the Tourism and Recreation Program with state agencies and the Governor's Office.

John Abbott noted the connection between the UVM Outing Club and employment at Outdoor Gear Exchange. He also noted a gap between university training and the booming outdoor recreation sector in Vermont.

Karrie added that many trail organizations offer internships to students to provide training and give them a better understanding of the fields of resource management and trail management, and welcomed the idea of formalizing these relationships with students.

Amie Smith thanked panel for sharing their insights, stating that Vermont has been exemplary in its COVID health and safety guidance.

Carol Van Dyke referenced a VT Digger commentary advocating for getting kids Nordic skiing as a safe outdoor activity to balance mental health.

Next Meeting

Mike asked steering committee members to look for communication soon to schedule upcoming meetings.

Motion to adjourn: Bill motion to approve, Josh H. second. Meeting adjourned.