

## VOREC First Meeting Agenda: June 20, 2017

### **Advance Packet:**

- Executive Order
- Framing Document
- Draft VOREC Charter
- Links to other resources (Google Drive folder)

### **12:30 pm-1 pm: Welcome and Introductions**

### **1 pm-2 pm: Present overview concept:**

Core Concept of VOREC

Timeline and Deliverables

Charter Discussion

### **BREAK: 15 Minutes**

**2:15 pm- 2:45pm: State of the Nation-** case studies, lessons learned and how Vermont can learn and adapt

**2:45 pm-3 pm: Reactions:** what does success look like for VOREC from your organization's perspective?

### **3 pm- 3:30 pm: Grafton Conference planning:**

- Context of Grafton Conferences
- Purpose: what do we really want to know?
- Invitees
- Committee

**3:30 pm- 3:40 pm:** Public Comment

**3:40 pm- 3:50 pm:** Open Discussion

**Next Meeting July 14th:** Little River/Waterbury area?

**3:50 pm - 4:00 pm:** Future meeting discussion

**4:00 pm: Adjourn**

VOREC first meeting, June 20, 2017 at National Life, Montpelier

Attendees:

Michael Snyder  
 Jessica Savage  
 Craig Whipple  
 Marc Sherman  
 Bill Supple  
 Frank Stanley  
 Trey Martin  
 Tom Stuessy  
 Shane Prisby  
 Amy Kelsey  
 Hal Ellms  
 Sarah Lang  
 Alicia DiCocco (for Mike DeBonis)  
 Drew Simmons  
 Wendy Knight  
 Steve Cook  
 Josh Ryan

Michael Snyder:

Welcome!

Thank you for being here and for your interest to serve, this is very exciting and a long time coming

Around the table for introductions and each person's take on this initiative

Mike Snyder, Commissioner FPR

Gov Scott EO named him chair of VOREC

This is important and exciting – not just about state govt, we're providing the framework – it's really more about the private sector – for landscape and economic power combined and what, together, they can bring

This is more about the group here than state

Comm Wendy Knight is principal designee of ACCD Secretary (others from that agency will participate in different ways as well)

Background: forester by training and experience, passionate about it, through work and private life is engaged in outdoor rec (skier, hunter)...having seen mountain biking start up to becoming commissioner, has seen partnerships evolve between forest management and outdoor recreation

All types of use can be managed in harmony and coexist

Role as comm is taken seriously, thrilled for the chance to do more

Jessica Savage, Rec Prog Mgr FPR

Background: trail project manager for state and feds in USA, out west in Glacier, Yellowstone, others Came back to VT for the love of this state

Excited about VOREC...incredible groundswell from towns to outdoor recreation users and coming together

She'll be project manager for VOREC, helping with structure for Mike – although this group is fully participatory

(Michael: to be clear, Jess and Craig are well-engaged professionals who will help this effort – they're not just govt staffers)

Craig Whipple Dir of State Parks

Decades-long advocate of outdoor rec in VT

Over time, initiatives have come and gone....all of a sudden this one comes along and it's time!

Everyone is jazzed – this is extremely timely

Craig is part of FPR, but he's here to help the group help figure it out and do great things

Josh Ryan, Timber & Stone LLC

Builder and designer of rec trails in VT and northeast (6 different states)

VYCC experience

Building trails can help personal growth

Worked with young people, then went into his own business

Currently building bike path in Wilton, CT (they have no rec space there – community is so appreciative because they've been an indoor culture, work in NYC)

Sees himself as ambassador from VT to the other NE states when he works there – recommends places to go and things to do and buy

Wendy Knight, Commissioner of Tourism & Marketing

New to public sector

Previous journalist

Marketing and tourism background

New at ACCD: holistic marketing, to not only visitors but to potential new residents, working with econ dev team

To retain business and recruit new workers (website page name insert here....)

Share resources and work collaboratively inside and outside state govt

This project fits well with larger projects and strategies in their marketing process

Drew Simmons, Pale Morning Media

PR agency, started 16 yrs ago

Specialize in outdoor rec and industry

Previous journalist Jackson Hole

To VT 14 years ago (from CA, lived in Boulder)

Was doing PR for Garmont, when they left the state the media wanted to know why

At national trade shows, runs into VT business owners and retailers, and sees how VT has cache – but come back to VT and there's no connection between all these folks –

Wash, DC lobby events show how we really need to be active at the local level

Noted: when VOREC was announced, he got a lot of responses from out of state folks, more than VT folks

Recently created a group of outdoor industry people to do an event at Statehouse – and got their attention

So, the challenge was: what do you do when people say “yes”? what does this coalition want?

Well, what's happening in the rest of the country? There are point people in charge of different sectors – and they can help be the business development voice – this gives the conversation more weight

Re last week's announcement, in VT people are already sending letters to the editor

Find some alignment and common values to move this initiative forward  
 Vast majority of people in outdoor industry have so much in common –

Alicia DiCocco – sitting in for Mike DeBonis at GMC  
 GMC maintains and protects Long Trail and Appalachian Trail in VT  
 Excited for this opportunity to be part of VOREC  
 Rely on local business and individual donors to support trails  
 Use has increased by 23%, sustained – need support for this

Sarah Lang, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp  
 Region development corp  
 Manages southern VT economy project (started in March, and she's a new VT resident)  
 Background: varied, worked USFS out west, enviro degree, outdoor rec industry in No Calif  
 Tie interests and hobbies with career goals (economic development)  
 Be a voice for southern VT (Windham & Bennington counties) and bring ideas to rural communities to stimulate economy

Hal Ellms, Pinnacle  
 Wholesale sales agency, based in Middlesex  
 Represents Bass footwear and Darn Tough  
 Distributes to LLBean, etc  
 Territory goes from tip of Maine to PA,  
 Offices scattered but based in VT  
 35 years in outdoor industry  
 Travelled, mtn bike and skied in Moab, Asheville and sees these towns revived by outdoor recreation – he's  
 excited to bring that process here  
 East Burke is good example  
 Opportunity to capitalize on things already going great – facilities, beer, food – key elements to tying in with outdoor recreation

Tracy Zeno, FPR – scribe for today

Amy Kelsey, VTGC (non-motorized use)  
 Council created by leg to make recommendations to FPR re trail policy etc  
 Motor and non-motor trail groups convene at this council to make positive changes  
 Excited to share VOREC with other trails groups, and to parallel VTGC  
 Dir of Catamount Trail Assoc – growth of bc ski scene in VT, and recent organization of user groups – re use of public lands – part of VT BC Alliance  
 Excited to be here, thanks to folks who did work to get us here  
 Partnerships – many small trails orgs who have very small capacity – depends on volunteers  
 Leverage all these groups and find efficiencies to enable to do more – how could we do this better?  
 Make recommendations to support local trail groups in other ways (policy work, etc?)

Shane Prisby, VTGC (motorized use)  
 VAST trails manager, the only non-profit in US running this per statute  
 Involved with Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, too

Infrastructures built by tax base and tourism \$\$, run by competent and amazing people – find new volunteers and work within budget each year  
 Avg snowmobiler is 55 y.o., and many older members as well – this model worked for a long time, but how to sustain for increased use being seen statewide  
 Opportunity to have one big conversation – how to grow and remain sustainable

Tom Stuessy, VMBA  
 (Jess, I left the room and missed this -Tracy)

Trey Martin, Attorney with Downs, Rachlin, Martin LLC  
 Environmental attorney  
 Works with ski groups and trail groups in his day-to-day  
 Excited to be here, wouldn't miss it  
 Worked with last Gov admin on 5<sup>th</sup> floor, has seen economics in VT  
 Clearly, outdoor rec is key to VT econ development  
 Wise use of the land is the econ dev tool we want in VT – leads to better community connections, conservation connections – helping to hold onto our working landscape  
 How do we attract new taxpayers to VT? Building on sales & use, rooms & meals taxes  
 This is the right time, this is the right way to do it  
 He has lots of ideas  
 This roundtable will help us figure out how to break down barriers and create results

Frank Stanley, VOGA  
 Grew up in VT, went to UVM, lives in Monkton with his family  
 Background: always interested in outdoor industry  
 Started VOGA in the 1990s, connecting tourists with accommodations  
 Ran Outdoors magazine (hunting and fishing)  
 Started govt affairs and public relations, is a lobbyist for outdoor interests, past 11 years  
 Organizes Yankee Sportsmen Classic and has done LCI org  
 Here to listen, learn, study, communicate, contribute – great opportunity

Bill Supple, Pres, CEO of Mammut  
 In outdoor industry since 1981, retail mostly on vendor side with int'l brands (he's a forester)  
 Non-profit work as well, Access Fund – is on board of VPF  
 Happy to be involved, been involved in core industry group recently  
 VT is a small state, the scale will be in our favor – connect the dots and raise level of awareness  
 Attract real outdoor business here, but more important: generate environment and quality of life to attract other types of businesses here  
 Excited to bring experience from commercial side to this

Marc Sherman, Outdoor Gear Exchange  
 Owner  
 In VT 25 years – lakes, river, mtns are value proposition  
 VT “overregulation” gets bad rap (reg is important, what makes VT the way it is)

Connected with most of the people in this room today  
 Excited to see what VOREC can do  
 Focus on this important aspect of environment and economy, do from a pure direction and it will achieve economic strength

Back to Michael Snyder:

Even more excited now – this is quite a group  
 THANK YOU for making this commitment  
 This is a public task force advising the Gov  
 We want to get organized about how we function – we'll start that today  
 Apologies for meeting on short notice – it won't be like this going forward  
 Context for VOREC concept:  
 Please refer to advance packet for today's meeting  
 This is an economic dev initiative  
 What's unique: chaired by FPR, instead of ACCD, because we're capitalizing on landscape  
 To be successful, must be rooted in environmental quality (high quality is our brand at FPR)  
 Proud to host this group  
 Grow the economy while sustaining the natural assets that we have  
 Consistent with local food, working landscape, water quality protection  
 Built infrastructure of parking lots at trails, etc –  
 Tradition of vigorous outdoor life  
 We have world-class facilities (ex: mtn bike trails) here, we want to build on that  
 Sustain / grow / leverage for more / protect what we have and capitalize on it  
 Idea of a collaborative is very important – increase this, and communication  
 Determine what the framework and mechanism will be  
 “Constellation of interested parties” (stakeholders, partners, etc) has a remarkable diversity  
 This could run the risk of being all over the map, and ineffective  
 Build a collaboration of communication  
**Characteristics of this group are:**  
**Openness, inclusiveness, transparency, representativeness (coin some words?) = all are welcome**  
 Many others are interested in being part of this – the VOREC group was appointed by Gov  
 Think of yourself as focal point of input from everyone in VT – VOREC members will **represent** broadly,  
 and we all should bring more to the group than just the entity we represent  
 Gov has given broad charges in E.O., with some dates – so we'll develop a timeline  
 We'll discuss charter (operating principals, bylaws)

Jessica Savage:

Thanks for the introductions, everyone!  
 Timeline, next 6 months:  
 6/20/17 – first meeting of VOREC  
 7/1/17 – deadline for adopting bylaws (will vote electronically) and deliver to Gov's office  
 7/14 – second VOREC meeting – please come or send a designee – talk about Grafton and reg summits  
 8/2 and 8/3 – event at Grafton conference (will have planning comm), frame up the large categories/buckets  
 TBD - third VOREC meeting following the Grafton conference

Then, get materials ready for regional summits statewide (5) in Sept and Oct

Break from meetings, between Aug and Nov

Prepare action plan, which will include results of Grafton conf

The draft charter was read and reviewed by the group

Wendy suggested adding another bullet:

“Align and share resources and strategies” (group: OK)

Change wording “contribute to market.....”? Mike: maybe “support efforts to market”? (group: OK)

(suggestion from Mike: input can be taken and changed as a group, maybe not line-by-line today – work on key points today)

Mike: Come up with shared definition of “outdoor recreation” (NOT Parks & Rec) – connection to natural environment

Amy: can we look at what other states have? (Yes)

Jess: Wyoming has a great definition, group liked it

Drew: lifestyle component (including where you stop for coffee when you’re on your way to ride)

Hal: “outdoorsy” is one thing and “outside-sy” is another

Mike: these all qualify, for big picture – but maybe we focus on and limit to

Drew: “minimally enhanced outdoor recreation” – being outside is good, wherever it is

Shane: even a cemetery can be enjoyed, but should this be part of definition? Maybe narrow it down

Drew: list of direct activities and indirect activities, what are the categories we’re talking about?

What is meant by minimally enhanced (ex: Kingdom Trails vs a golf course)

Mike: maybe create a very broad definition of outdoor recreation, and then decide what it gets narrowed down to for VOREC purposes

Bill: many activities exist because of natural resources

Trey: doesn’t golf qualify? (outdoors, exercise, fly to destination)

Mike: golf is already covered in other ways, it has developed features – how do we bolster the activities that need a boost

Amy: does paying a fee for something have a bearing?

Drew: non-competitive, non-fee-based activities are where a lot of this started

Mike: where are the impact opportunities? Maybe for now, just do a generic definition and go from there – what are the sectors, components, most available for growth?

Bill: big ski?

Mike: they already have efforts and resources going to them, so this was left off VOREC group

Bill: what constituencies does this group represent? How do you exclude big ski

Wendy: important to have definition more fully formed, what we think it should be, before the public meetings

Encompasses a wide scope of activities, VOREC’s scope will be traditional outdoor activities,

Mike and Jess will work up the definition and share it later with the group

Mike: should we do this same exercise with “outdoor recreation business”? is there a clear sense of this within the group?

Amy: is the coffee shop a business or a resource/asset, culturally or otherwise?

Mike: directly related business

Marc: significant portion of income directly derived from outdoor recreation

Wendy: Hotel VT isn't, Trapp's and Blueberry Hill are

Alicia: add "and organizations", i.e. GMC is supported by non-profit organizations

Frank: differentiate between for- and non-profit?

Marc: VMBA, GMC are resources rather than business – would that be the distinction?

Shane: VAST, by statute, provides the trail systems – and exist to provide that physical asset, there's a grey area –

Marc: how to include these organizations in the broader definition of resources (through dues or contributions help provide assistance to an existing natural resource)

Mike: consensus is building on this, these are more like assets

Trey: outdoor rec business and organizations, and outdoor rec assets

Mike: businesses / organizations / assets

Drew: acknowledge some of these businesses have a physical presence in VT but operate nationally as well (ex: Mammut)

Mike: he and Jess will distill this definition and send it back to the group  
(Jess then read the definition to the group)

Trey: outdoor recreation organizations = non-profits, providing and managing access

Mike: FPR would be in this category

Frank: smaller orgs, too – like friends' groups

Mike: definition of assets? (natural, physical, cultural?)

Marc: include VT's culture of outdoor activity

Trey: isn't the outcome desired a recognizable outdoor culture (intellectual properties)

Drew: sustain, grow and leverage the cultural asset - are Vermonters out in the world an asset

Shane: (missed it)

Mike: we have broad agreement on asset, we'll find a better word

Marc: list all the other assets, and then say "the culture and history of these assets...."

Mike: "outdoor traditions" "human assets" – we don't have to sell it but build on it (we just need to find the right word....)

Wendy: why taking off "economic"

Mike: it's a typo – that word is built into VOREC – growing the economy will be the outcome

Josh: final written notes, please include the references (coffee shop, golf course, etc)

Michael:

Second page is suggestions, nothing flagged for editing – but comment at will after reading

Josh: please spell out things like "ACCD", so the reader knows what they are

Mike: yes, and this will be all open to the public, including meeting attendance, share the info -

This is a collaborative network –

Trey: noted, emails are public property so keep this in mind

(at halfway point, Steve Cook took over for Wendy Knight)

Steve Cook, Dep Comm Tourism & Marketing

Has already worked with many partners at the table today while jump-starting this project

He's up to speed, has had chance to talk with Mike

Outdoor rec industry, he works with lots of members – and are largest marketer in promoting the State of VT



Continuing with the charter:

2 more reps of economic development, to be named

1 is here today, Sarah Lang

1 more person will be named, the Governor is vetting now

Trey: note, please change wording to “voting members” rather than “members voting”

Drew: note where members are from, media will notice things like this and it will spark interest by area

Jess: re conduct section, talk about how group members will operate, communicate, strive for consensus

Marc: disclosure of potential conflicts? Should each member sign off on this?

Mike: yes, this is SOP and good idea

Frank: “economic” becomes “natural”

To Page 3:

Mike: noted, this will be revised and sent back around

To Page 4:

Trey: re meetings, split “meetings” and “vote”

Mike: postings to website – send these to Jessica

To Page 5:

Trey: will terms be staggered?

Mike: it was left open in the E.O., will discuss this as a group

Amy: 2 year terms?

Steve Cook: Travel Rec Council has 3-year term

Marc: set parameters for Commissioner Snyder to remove a board member

Mike: 2 years is good, with language re what might trigger a change

Jessica: will take a stab at ground rules for meetings, and distribute it to the group later

Mike: can we all agree that, as discussed, the charter will be amended for final review and subsequent vote (Yes!)

BREAK - - - - -

(Frank Stanley may have to leave a bit early, go to the airport)

#### Jessica Savage: Presentation

Spending on outdoor recreation in US

Spending on outdoor recreation in VT

Other states have these initiatives, too

Utah was first, in 2013

Gov created office of outdoor recreation

Did statewide summits, bringing industry and other sectors together

Priorities: eco

Colorado, 2015 (Luis Benitez is lead)  
Economic development, conservation and stewardship, education and training

Washington, 2014  
Blue ribbon task force  
Listening tours  
Economic impact study, combined with their SCORP  
Grow the economy, position in Gov's office, inspire outdoor rec culture, sustain outdoor rec

assets

Specific outcomes were listed and they've met most of those (policy makers were involved along the way)

Oregon 2016  
25-member leadership team, with 15-year vision  
Priorities: world class experiences and infrastructure, diversity of enthusiasts, transportation and distribution of impacts

Rhode Island 2016  
Public meetings  
Sustainable funding, support active lifestyles  
Proposed metrics for success (link provided by Jessica)

Wyoming 2016  
State Parks Director is the lead  
Stakeholder assessment survey started this out  
Listening tour

Montana 2016  
Intent is to create office of outdoor rec  
Hired public access specialist  
Fund Habitat Montana  
Against transferring or selling public lands

Vermont: it's already a great state  
FPR always focused on recreation, more in recent 4 years  
Recreation action plan, 2016 (improve partner communication, support public rec on private lands, improved info to public, meet demand for rec, address resource needs (staff, time and money)  
Resource: ThinkVermont.com (ACCD)

VOREC

What does success look like for VOREC, from your organization's perspective?  
How can you represent stakeholders to VOREC?

Time for broad discussion:

Bill: other states, a lot going on behind the scenes, aggressively pursuing business owners to set up shop there

Trey: has anyone done a study on taxes paid by outdoor business vs gains to be made by tourism?

Marc: baseline survey, tourism, where does VT fall within the top 10 states, for example – do a baseline now and then another in 10 years to say where the needle has moved – increase the perception of VT as place to recreate outdoors – in theory, economic impact should show –

Drew: what does success look like? For his business, 97% rooted in outdoor economy, a good business in VT reflects well for him nationally – even though it won't move the bottom line, it will raise the profile of outdoor rec in VT – get buy-in from state and local munis but also citizens to realize this is a business sector – ex. See a kid at farmer's market selling widget to use for outdoor recreation – to get general success here we need a couple of easy wins to get the momentum going – get one on the scoreboard

Josh: farm to table movement really nailed it – why can't this be just as big? For success, don't just root it in single track mountain biking and associated purchases – what kind of formula did farm to table use?

Mike: model VOREC plan on this – there are parallels (not to spend a bunch of time on strategic plan, but create a roadmap similar to this)

Shane: it's not about a product, but about a process

Marc: we already have the product, but can enhance it by the work the organizations are doing – make sure infrastructure is there to get to the spots for outdoor recreation (ex: island line bike ferry) – make people aware of what's out there and how to get to it

Tom: VMBA sent letter to members, work together toward a common goal, get the word out

Alicia: 7<sup>th</sup> generation has a lot of people who came from somewhere else to work there – how to work together to address how to get businesses and workers to VT and enjoy the cultural experience

Mike: attract business who have left VT, and also start-ups and newcomers

Sarah: plenty of jobs in southern VT, the issue is getting good employees – market to people to come here, “we have the jobs”

Mike: we have the jobs, we have the playground, what are you waiting for?

Tom: partner with headhunter agencies, what kind of feedback to they get about VT

Sarah: commuted from Amherst for 2 months before getting a place to live, high end and low end are out there but not middle range

Mike: mid-level housing is needed, this is a missing piece – it's not a recreation recommendation, but it is related – Gov would want to hear this

Marc: measure of success comes from employers being polled, saying how their businesses are doing – stats of who's using Catamount, Long Trail, etc – and see what the trends are that go along with businesses – but we need a baseline for this

Bill: find out what attracts the businesses – i.e. Goldman Sachs relocated to Utah for the recreational access

Sarah: GE moving to Boston from CT, the biggest reason was culture the employees wanted – also, some people would give up a cut in pay to gain the lifestyle they want

Drew: re baseline data, in CT real estate is sagging – message is: unless your property is near something you want to do, it's not worth as much – in VT there's proximity to recreation so it's a draw – Rep. Welch

Amy: what does success look like: infrastructure – from VTGS perspective, there's already a lot of collaboration rather than competition – overlapping membership – local orgs want to build trails in all seasons, but do different things under different umbrellas – so, what kind of platforms would VOREC offer them to find efficiencies – think about ways to build infrastructure to benefit economy and employers among all the little non-profits

Alicia: to add more people and users to trails, for example, the first priority is conservation \*(ex, how to deal with mud season)

Mike: reinforced, conservation has to be part of this – good trails cost money – new revenue streams are needed –

Tom: admin efficiencies are needed – ex VMBA pass for one area, then add on another area, and so on – apply this to trails, buy a pass to VT trails and when doing so click on a box to give money to other orgs while you're at it

#### Michael Snyder – Grafton Conference:

Background: had conversation with Windham Foundation and VT Community Foundation, philanthropic orgs who offered to fund a "Grafton Conference", a 2-day event at their facilities for about 40 people (housing and food), along with professional facilitation. Scheduled for August 2-3. (Passed around a booklet from the recent forest economy meeting – the end product of that conference.)

Event starts with lunch on the first day, then a mtn bike ride for who wants to. All VOREC members encouraged to attend. An additional 20-25 people get invited. After lunch, maybe a keynote (Luis Benitez?). Then, take the top 4-5 ideas for VOREC and some conversation, then evening social time. Day 2, facilitated small groups – would any VOREC members be active participants at this event – and try to nail down the large categories of VOREC (which would be identified during this conference). Then, the report gets created, we work with stakeholders to reach the goals.

Hoping all VOREC members will be able to attend.

Short list of stakeholders/partners has been generated, beyond VOREC group, who might be invited:

- a couple of legislators (pro tem, speaker)
- big ski (Parker Riehle, Vail?)
- fish and wildlife sector
- tech sector (Trevor Crisp, Inntopia)
- climate change (Jon Copans)

- rural development (Paul Costello)
- transportation (VTrans)
- RPCs, ec dev ( )
- municipalities ( )
- businesses (Ted Manning, Alex Ibex)
- conservation & stewardship ( )
- diversity (disadvantaged, underserved populations)

Suggestions of who to invite? How do we get the right people in the room?

Has a category been missed that should be added?

**Input from group is encouraged**

### **Invitations need to go out by early July**

There's some wiggle room on the meeting spaces, but the overnight space is limited to 40

Hal: suggestion = retailers, like Sam's or Farmway, broaden the geographic area

Bill: services (like guides) and hospitality sector

Marc: Burton, chill program

Shane: timber interests? Landowners? (VWA)

Sarah: young professional groups

Drew: educators (Johnson, Champlain, VTC)

Marc: health care (Fletcher Allen)

Josh: TNC, VLT, water recreation

Alicia: UVM student or Burlington HS or VT refugee resettlement program – youth ambassador

Marc: earned benefits instead of "gimme" – market this resource as something Vermonters have earned the right to have

Craig: VOREC is the core group, then the conference attendees will be involved, then the public meetings will happen – this is inclusive

Mike: possibility of more than 1 conference

Marc: Orvis

### Public Comment:

Nobody here from the public

### Next Meeting:

Propose July 14 for the next VOREC team meeting, potentially somewhere other than National Life

By then, charter will be finalized and sent to Governor – and agenda for Grafton will have been distributed

### Open Discussion / Roundtable:

Drew: how will workflow go, communication-wise?

Mike: Jess will be point of contact – reach out to Mike any time

Jess: will be email follow-up with attached documents – docs will be stored in Google, editable by everyone – can edit in Google drive or send it in track changes mode – further communication needs will be addressed as necessary –

Mike: email distribution list?

Jess: will share with everyone in the group (and if anyone wants to, just send your email to Jess and she'll distribute it to the group for you)

Mike: media requests, please feel free to do as you wish, but please share VOREC info back with the group so everyone's aware – helpful for Mike to know what's going on

Drew: will there be a list of VOREC in the news?

Jess: easy to put links on the website

Hal: have had lots of questions – trying to find the right wording for this – could talking points be added to the dropbox so everyone could be on the same page?

Mike: yes, he and Jess will work together and get this onto the website for all

Drew: he has parting gifts (VT UV buffs – the company that makes them has made a few, VT is the third one

Mike:

Ready to adjourn. Tanks again to everyone, for taking the time out of y our day. Deeply appreciated.

## VOREC Second Meeting Agenda: July 14, 2017

### **Advance Packet:**

- Adopted Charter
- Draft Grafton Conference Agenda and Invitation List

**8:45 am- 9:30 am:** Optional Press and Photo Op with the Backyard Alliance

Camp Smith, Little River State Park

**Meeting Begins 10 am: Green Mountain Club, Waterbury Center**

**10:00 am- 10:45 am:**

Introductions (new member to welcome)

Minutes from June Meeting approved

Updates on Grafton Conference: Grafton Conference Subcommittee

Data Assets and Gaps

**10:45 am-11:30 am:** Communications

All: Report on communications with constituents

Communication Strategy

**11:30 am-12:30 pm:** Regional Summit Planning

**12:30 pm- 1 pm:** New Business and Next Meeting

**1 pm: Adjourn**

**VOREC Notes – 07/14/2017****10:00 – 10:45**

Introductions/New Member

Attendees: Sara Lang, Jeanne Gervais, Mike Snyder, Jessica Savage, Shane Prisby, Josh Ryan, Marc Sherman, Amy Kelsey, Steve Cook, Craig Whipple, Roger K, Tom Stuessy, Mike DeBonis, Hal Ellms, Drew Simmons, Frank Stanley

June Meeting Minutes Approved

- Motion to Accept Minutes Tom S; Mike D Second
- Accepted Minutes

Grafton Conference Updates: Grafton Conference Subcommittee

- Issues for conference – limitation on number of people that can attend.
- Proposed Grafton event committee. Where does the subcommittee stand?
  - Gotten a lot of “Yes” RSVP’s. Open through today. Recommended all present members to RSVP today.
  - Still determining keynote speaker. Governor might kick off event. Also requested Congressman Welch. Welch active in outdoor recreation; sponsored bill requiring feds to quantify economic development in this sector.
  - Funders clearly want deliverable/report/roadmap of steering committee work. Locking down facilitators to make good on report. Asked for feedback from committee.
    - Mike D.: Anything we can do beforehand to make sure people’s voices are heard? Gap analysis? Understand draft attendee list.
    - Tom: Maybe a panel more appropriate than single keynote speaker in order to represent all voices.
    - Steve: Any part of panel or keynote that we could broadcast? Sections of conference that we could promote?
    - Mike S.: Supported idea. Great thought.



- Roger: Can you describe the report? Something that's going to dictate path? List conclusions?
- Mike S.: Facilitated small groups reporting out to full group that then votes on ideas. Report notes on meeting and key points agreed to in meeting. Basically, report and actionable items. Funders have considered this being first of three Grafton meetings and possible regional summits.
- Roger: People might feel left out if report denotes final decisions rather than roadmap.
- Mike S.: Agreed. Separate point. Governor addressed interest in steering committee after it was finalized by encouraging interested individuals to participate though there is no room on committee. Asked committee to encourage the same spirit.
- Amy: More definition about what we're communicating and how? Need to get ahead of thought, "How am I not excluded?" Need consistent plan.
- Mike S.: Yes, that is big part of this meeting. But we're still on Grafton.
- Craig: What is the timeline?
- Jessica: Once facilitator locked down, will establish schedule. 3 or 4 conversations or phone calls before meeting. Will send out second wave of invites if all 42 spots not filled before meeting. Still have talk with facility staff. Been focused on getting invites out and getting facilitator.
- Drew: Almost too many deliverables in last report.
- Mike S.: Could address that.
- Josh: What exactly is going to happen at this conference? What are committee member responsibilities?

- Mike S.: Essentially just ran through conference agenda. Member responsibilities – be present, engaged, active. Be leaders.
- Jessica: Additional responsibilities – do what facilitator asks and maybe debrief more thoroughly afterward.
- Frank: Maybe topic we could design. List top 15 important questions?
- Mike S.: Maybe we could establish those before? Yes. Move to next in agenda.

#### Data Assets & Gaps

- Dave: Asset map allows for communication between user groups (ex. Climbers v. Hunters).  
Allows communication and alleviates friction. Communication from outside industry very fear based.
- Mark: Definitely could use a venn diagram of some sort. Need way to communicate other side of story. Quick 5-bullet-point assessment of what other side is saying and why it's valid.
- Jessica: Showing data about what we know leads discussion about what we do not know. We do not have data asset map right now, so maybe we could use one.
- Mike S.: Governor (before he was governor) seemed really interested in painting picture of "What is the outdoor economic industry in Vermont."
- Sarah: I have a lot of relevant data. Could do snapshot.
- Mike S.: Good. You're committed.
- Dave: Issues that affect outdoor industry also affect others. Don't need to limit them to outdoor industry.
- Mike S.: Agreed.
- Steve: Have spending data from Visa that we could use. Propose sitting down to consolidate in order to avoid double dipping in data points. One report instead of smaller fractured reports (ex. Economic effects of fishing or hunting).

- Shane: Placing trail data in our GPS revealed some undiscovered areas. Maybe aim to preserve some areas to promote since of discovery.
- Mike S.: Maybe use one map that displays diverse info (ex. Trail info, shop info, etc.), so users can plan trip around different topics. Think Vermont?
- Steve: Economic marketing strategy of Think Vermont. Promote quality of Vermont through outdoor recreation.
- Mike S.: Maybe we could link up with Think Vermont.
- Josh: We could promote locally-sourced construction and maintenance of trails. Similar to think local movement. Way to attract people and another layer of jobs.
- Drew: Maybe third on the tier. Microstories. All this work that goes in behind the scenes. Another great thing to incorporate is the people behind these stories.
- Mike D.: Set tone. Could go into this on a wave of positivity.
- Hal: Consider topics for legislature at conference?
- Mike S.: Certainly. Can be another bucket to cover at conference.
- Tom: Could write three question survey for council members. Might add to data about volunteer hours, which could be profound. Maybe show video of volunteers working.
- Josh: Maybe looping powerpoint presented throughout conference?
- Mike S.: If you've got any stuff or ideas, send to Jessica.
- Mark: Need to consider more than those who use trails. Reach those people who sit out their couch. They still need an economically viable state. Need to stay focused on top tier – what resources do we have, and why does that draw people here?
- Mike S.: That “top tier” is priority of the governor and what got us here.

**10:45 – 11:30**

Communications

- Mike S.: What is everyone hearing? What questions are you getting?
- Shane: How are we focusing on younger generation?
- Drew: Thoughts – need to communicate success stories like western states.
- Drew: Can we actually promote what we're doing? Need to be careful of spreading information before anything actually happens because we're a steering committee?
- Steve: Communication from VOREC vetted through state agency probably wouldn't be issue. Can be quick and efficient.
- Drew: What does that mean in terms of the state?
- Steve: 2 or 3 days?
- Drew: Why don't we create subcommittee responsible for communications, media, newsletters, etc.?
- Mike S.: I accept the endorsement.
- Drew: Would we need entire committee consent or just subcommittee consent for releases?
- Mike S.: Maybe I could be on subcommittee. Don't want subcommittee going off reservation but also don't want entire committee to have to meet for every release.
- Mark: Need some kind of social media. What kind of vetting is needed for social media communications?
- Amy: Need guidance on how to collect community feedback.
- Steve: Could open meetings to public.
- Mike S.: Will have public comment period.
- Craig: There are things we cannot communicate yet (ex. When summits will be), but there are also things that we can communicate (ex. What VOREC is about or what type of feedback it would like from the public).

- Drew: Going through state probably best way to go for communications. Need easily distributed summary of each meeting. Could also reach out to younger contributors for blog posts, etc.
- Hal: What type of feedback are people getting?
- Mark: Purpose does not really step aside from outside recreation piece to focus on top tier priority.
- Mike D.: Lot of feedback – is this going to accomplish anything, or is it a mere paper exercise?
- Mike S.: That’s certainly the perception we want to avoid.
- Roger: Ranked 2nd in quality of life. 35th in business opportunity. Need to focus on everything.
- Sarah: Group in Bennington County trying to accomplish what VOREC is accomplishing.
- Drew: Colorado Springs similar City initiative that has been successful.
- Dave: Only qualified hires that they’ve made were from out West. Only knew stereotypes about VT.
- Mark: Need to sell big picture, not just individual parts.
- Drew: Could spread word at conferences and see how other states market themselves. Could host a similar event.

#### Report on Communications with Constituents

#### Communications Strategy

**11:30 – 12:30**

#### Regional Summit Planning

- Jessica: Need general availability in the fall from committee members. Also need venue advice. Want to lock us into dates.
- Mike S.: Will need members help to reach all corners of the state.
- Sarah: What is purpose?

- Jessica: 2 purposes. Will take report and ask what people think of it. Have second part of meeting be region specific. No predetermined set of expectations. Set 5 regional summits and an alternative to being at those meetings.
- Mike S.: Thoughts? Anyone want to tweak it?
- Mark: Maybe set up event on social media to get feedback.
- Hal, Tom, Sarah joined regional summit subcommittee.
- Mike S.: Agenda saves time for public comment. Any public comment? None.

### 12:30 – 1:00

#### New Business and Next Meeting

- Mark, Drew, Frank joined communications subcommittee.
- Mike S.: Short term, would like communications subcommittee to establish answer to question, “What are you doing, and how do I get involved?”
- Mike S.: Contemplate next meeting and agenda.
- Hal: Any possibility of attending trade show?
  - Mike S.: Yes, but need to talk about it. Maybe conversation at another event about what it would look like.
  - Steve: What departments go? Tourism and commerce?
  - Hal: Yes, collaborative like that. Really need to enforce brand of Vermont.
  - **Mike S.: Make topic of future meeting discussing trade show.**
- Tom: Want to meet again before regional summits start?
- Jessica: Yes, thinking of August, but have not nailed down dates. No need for monthly meetings during regional summits. Want me to set a date in August? Will need debrief after regional summits.
- Mike S.: Will reach out to set next meeting.

## VOREC Third Meeting Agenda: August 18, 2017

### **Advance Packet:**

- Draft Executive Summary from the Grafton Conference
- July Meeting Minutes

### **Meeting Begins 9 am: Rockingham Town Hall, 7 Square, Bellows Falls VT**

#### **9:00 am- 9:30 am:**

Welcome and Introductions

Minutes from July Meeting approved

Updates and Reflections on Grafton Conference: All

**9:30 am-10:00 am:** Communications from Constituents and Subcommittee Report, Upcoming Event Possibilities (Rutland Young Professionals event etc.)

**10:00 am-10:30 am:** Guest Speaker: Betsy Bishop, Vermont Futures Project  
(<https://vtfuturesproject.org/>)

**10:30 am-11:30 am:** Regional Summit Planning

**11:30-11:45 am:** Visionary Recreation Projects: how does VOREC's work overlap?

**11:45 am- 12:00 pm:** Public Comment, New Business and Next Meeting

**12:00 pm: Adjourn**

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

August 18, 2017

### Rockingham Town Hall, Bellows Falls

**Those in Attendance:** Mike S., Josh Ryan, Sarah Lang, Craig Whipple, Marc Sherman, Trey Martin, Amy Kelsey, Jeanne Gervais, Crew Simmons, Bill Supple, Hal Ellms, Wendy Knight, Frank Wollington, Tim Tierney, Dave Furman, Jessica Savage, Frank Stanley (phone), Shane Prisby

Minutes from July: Add Frank Stanley, Dave Furman, GMC staff, full VOREC representation

Minutes approved as amended (Addition of names)

Grafton Executive Summary Discussion: recommendation to GOv by 9/15, take them to regional summits, executive summary could be used for recommendations, we do need to also create a report. Proposal for planning committee help with drafting the report: accepted.

**Discussion:** Wendy: at what point do we want to bring in the Grafton group? Send to attendees after approved today.

Drew: discussed in car, agreed that conference was great and positive, and since then crystallized that the three-legged stool of business, participation and stewardship is solid, now we can convey that, and it now is about harvesting specific ideas from our contacts/constituents, lots of soft targets, but we want to have specific asks for Governor by Sept. 15

Mike: affirming of us being on to something, those pillars are valid, and there's a lot of buy-in.

Mike D: nothing from out of left field, good group make-up

Josh: need to work on vernacular, be inclusive in language and content (skiing and riding, motorized, etc.) Be open to the wide spectrum of recreation and needs to be included in public documents

Dave: diversity in participation, all the different activities and open to overlap and inclusivity

Josh: Farm Way: she advocated for farm, built trails on farms, need to get her bought in to the idea

Marc: diversity of participation and socio-economics, first one will be set of silos people making comments in and how they will fill in. Benchmarking against other communities who have attempted these efforts. Need resources from state to make this happen, and justify this investment (other communities that can prove the success). Need to figure out a funding source, how can we justify getting it? Don't have access to it, create the direct link between investment today and pay off tomorrow: health, recreation tourism, sales and use tax benefits

Mike: came up a bunch in informal conversation, how do we justify choosing to invest in this? Massive positive impact. Make a case to invest in this sector.

Marc: huge health savings, we believe strongly in need to invest in this idea, but the belief isn't enough. Need to justify it.



**Add Strategy/Action to Create Justification for Resources: show economic health benefits, environmental awareness and connectedness, economic development benefits. Add to text about benchmarks needed in this regard.**

Drew: initial conversation about three priorities need to be balanced, then in reflection, vast majority of conversation was about participation. Light on increasing business opportunities at the event: need to add this in more

Marc: with a little extra push and incentives, can create huge opportunities: lots of trails near town, encourage someone to open coffee shop nearby by offering a grant.

Drew: primary consideration to offer incentives to OR businesses, like Frank the Welder.

Mike: expected more business ideas, want us to all make sure we drive at that.

Wendy: from ACCD, heard a lot of business conversation. So much is happening with economic development that synchs with this: we need to start educating people about opportunities already happening. Need to know what ACCD is doing

Mike: How do we do that? Before next meeting to get information out to VOREC

Tim: already existing trail hubs, lots of examples out there, they can be enhanced, economic development corps will put emphasis.

Shane: asset mapping: what are we already doing? AOT, ACCD, tying existing initiatives together, slicing off from existing efforts from the state

Trey: magnify on Objective 1: Executive summary needs to be more specific, need to understand development corporations, etc. Want to go beyond ROI with just economic and other benefits: stewardship and conservation: there are lots of monetary values associated with conservation and needs to make that jump out

Mike: need to make some tweaks to this document as is, and go further. People send edits and thoughts to Jessica, Wendy will help.

What is the take of people who were not at Grafton?

Amy: it's what we've been talking about, struggle with 40,000-foot view, still at that level, waiting for actual concrete steps

Dave: surprised I didn't see how reliant this economy is on the overall economy. Other companies looking to come here, it's not the outdoor companies that are here, it's someone who wants to move or visit here, what other things are here? Integrating with overall economic development is essential. Going to the public perspective: hard sell in that OR investment takes away from the economy, not contributing to it, so focusing on overall economy is vital.

Bill: Business focused on OR, which would be great to develop more OR businesses, getting them back, but It's a stretch. Brand level: tough to get them here. Can do more with small and start-ups, attracting businesses outdoor rec. b/c of QOL. Increasing revenues and decreasing costs

Wendy: ACCD perspective: leveraging OR for overall economy

Bill: dealer.com signed up for VPF program, really paying attention to this

Sarah: S VT Young Professionals group: need friends, jobs and OR

Marc: once infrastructure gets built, people get excited about it

Drew: OR sector is the one we are authorized to press.

Betsy Bishop from VT Futures Project: president of VT Chamber of Commerce, spearheaded VT Chamber Foundation: looking at econ future of VT. We have social justice, environment and business needs strengthening

Betsy: partners with VTDM, vacation guide. VT Futures Project: introductions. Help businesses thrive and grow the economy. Need to base our decisions in reality. What are we going to be like in 20 years? We work in a two-year timeframe, no long term policy. Clear vision of where we're headed so that we can know where we're going. Demographics: less Vermonters and we're getting older. How do you change the demographics of our state and bring more people here? Economic dashboard: [vtfutures.org](http://vtfutures.org). Very data based but not difficult to understand. Six key buckets: economic activity, demographics, workforce and talent (others). Pulled from independent sources: then figured out how we are doing? Standout econ indicator is quality of place. Pretty good but need things to be affordable (housing etc.). 2 years ago put out dashboard and figured out where we were. January: put out vision for 2040. Asked people about the data around the state, asked whether they were on task, then came up with vision statement for future. Passed out growth targets.

Defined mid-sized businesses: 50-499 employees (federal). Local definition is 20-200 employee companies (communities can really handle it). This will help our downtown and local economies thrive.

Increasing workforce is one of the biggest challenges

Housing starts only 1250 in 2010: Marc: is 1000 units in Chittenden county disproportionate to the rest of the state?

Betsy: Need to go to communities and understand what it will look like in localities. We as a state need housing in x place with employment plan in y place.

Sarah: is housing broken out into affordable housing?

Betsy: not yet: that's phase III. We need to take into account what the customer wants if we want them to come here.

Drew: required at planning commissions to ID locations for 3% growth for housing, so already done in some places

Betsy: will plow new ground in places where it hasn't been done, need to focus on economic development

Tim: need community buy-in, Betsy agreed, b/c it's key to how this works in VT.

Setting goals is key. Econ dashboard: published in 2015, updated in 2016 to benchmark. Not much had changed in economic activity (want to drive wage growth, need productivity to increase for that to happen), innovation and entrepreneurship (start-up rates dropped a little, but other states started doing

more, so need to focus on that), workforce and demographics: workforce shrank by 3400 workers, need to add 25-60-year olds here, infrastructure: pretty ok, but access to broadband isn't that great. At the root of what we're trying to do: social justice, environment strong, need economic growth piece. Reaching out to create collaborative effort, business groups as well as colleges and universities, RPCs, reached out to VNRC, Sustainable Jobs Fund, VBSR, AARP, Let's Grow Kids, can't just be the business community in order to sustain what's good about VT. That's why she's here: how can our work inform each other's? Rutland county adopted and adapted data, workforce collaborative in various locations, CEDS talks about data dashboard as way to measure progress.

Workforce supply gap of almost 11,000 workers needed per year. No one collects the number of HS grads or college grad retention. Workforce recruitment is key: employers can't find workers. Need to tell people outside of VT that we want them here, need economic development marketing money. Secured \$200,000 twice to write and publish marketing plan. Can we ask our tourism businesses and marketing campaigns to invite people to live and work here? Tourism magazine promotes Love Where You Live. Let them know if there are people with this story. Digital deployment plan as well.

Need hard demand study: what does that demand look like (types and numbers of jobs)? Need to target folks that have a drop of Vermont in them. Put up wall at business conference: Why Vermont? All about community, QOL and family, nothing about business. Best strategy might be to admit that jobs are not our strength, appeal to people who want to put those QOL things first.

Use their data, and if there are data sets that are missing let us know.

Marc: have you looked into \$15 minimum wage? Would that help fill this gap? Would we draw more people? Millennials want QOL.

Mike: we have a competitive advantage with this

Shane: not so much about coming here and getting a job etc. Gets harder to stay here as you get older and want to progress in their careers. How are we making it possible for them to invest here?

Housing is definitely big piece of that

Betsy left materials to review: follow up with her with questions etc.

Mike: wrapped up exec summary discussion to get changes to Jess

Regional Summit planning:

Open Forum, Open House, Town Hall, Input Session, Brainstorm, Vision, Public Forum: chose that one  
Vermont Outdoor Economy Public Forum

Open House style.

9/12: Trey, Marc, Amy, Bill, Mike D, Hal, Tim, Wendy, Tom

9/25: Jeanne, Drew, Josh, Marc, ACCD person

10/16: Sarah, Amy, Mike D, Wendy, maybe Bill, Josh, Hal

10/24: Sarah, Trey, Wendy,

Rutland, UV, and St. Albans set up by Monday

Maybe send a different invite to Grafton Conference to get them to be super participants

Recommendations to governor will be approved electronically (based on executive summary).

Drew: PR will be script to talk about these sessions, beta test these things with VMBA members or others? Maybe Waterbury is hometown enough.

Videographer: OGE guy might want to help out if we want to interview people or something.

Hal: elephant wall

Other events and how we participate: YP meeting in Rutland, panel opportunity, 9/9

Table for Ibex sale, first two weekends in October (Cherry Street in BTV)

Drew has powerpoint: create a basic one, Drew will share and we can go use it

Wendy: NBRC grant, Wendy will send me info

Hemp Fest 9/9

Catalysts of Climate Economy same weekend

No New Business

Public Comment: Frank the Welder, came to VT 10 years ago, decided to stay and make bicycles, worst way to make a living, like to do it, growing client base, kids keep showing up wanting to make bicycles, very encouraging, got involved with Bellows Falls Bike Coop on board, some interest from other places to talk about it, almost worked on Walton Family Foundation, but lost an employee to suicide, and changed what I want to do, need to bring jobs into the area, pedal assist electric bicycles are growth sector in transportation (1 million motors made last year). Taking care of Instagram brands: small batched of bikes, 200 frames in a recent order, building next door to my shop with everything I need, I would like to use my status and put an electric bike store, manufacture, rent space for a maker space, senior machinists and fabricators etc. who could help, tons of machines around here, that plus outdoor sports, terrain is a little too severe to get where you want to go, an e assist bikes are a really good way to use the trails, fire roads, snowmobile trails, no conflict here compared to other locations, Highlands freestyle mountain park gets hundreds of visitors a week, KT, Whistler, bike parks, there is no place for e bikes anywhere just for that: specialize in that here? Limited to 30 mph, idea is to make them so people aren't afraid of them (quiet), talked to someone with different ideas, people who are vets, seen trauma, access vehicles etc. could be great, get some race events etc. connect fire roads and trails to inns etc. tourism but also manufacturing jobs, good time for something like this to take place, handed out business cards and people can contact me.

Drew: e bikes are growing everywhere: what are the costs for consumers?

Frank: under \$1000 you can convert bikes, completed ones can be \$10,000, good one is \$5-6000.

Drew: framebuilder> are you creating a new geometry?

Frank: immediately noticed that there is not a way to get the power to go over an obstacle, things need to change so that the motor and weight is in the right place, less gears etc.

Cargo bikes: yes made a couple

Wendy: who is your target customer?

Frank: urbanites who get off at exit 5 or 6, and have extra income.

Mike: franktheweldervt on Instagram? Yes

Annual bike show is at the end of September, that would be when we'd launch a brand. Right now need \$100,000 to get into building next door, great package easy growth for area.

Drew: KT for e-bikes? What does that look like?

Frank: class 4 roads, you can get around here without disrupting traffic

Microtel right behind my shop: view of river, signage, battery charging areas, place to lock up, e-bike vacation stop, get gear etc.

Rebuilding lithium batteries etc. are great and needed tech jobs.

## VOREC Meeting Agenda: November 28, 2017

### Advance Packet:

- All public comments to date
- Public Comment Summary
- August Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Begins 9 am: Dewey Conference Room, National Life

#### 9:00 am- 9:30 am:

Welcome and Introductions

Minutes from August Meeting approved

Process for the meeting

**9:30 am-10:00 am:** Public Comment Summary (including position papers received by 11/27)

**10:00 am-10:30 am:** Create Ground Rules for Recommendation Selection

Suggestions:

- All ideas, even “non-starters,” are welcome
- Consensus? Or Majority Rules?
- Non-competition
- Equity
- Others

**10:30 am-11:00 am: Brainstorm:** Open Discussion: What has the steering committee formulated as powerful, effective recommendations?

**11-11:15: Break**

**11:15-Noon:** Combine public comments and steering committee as per E.O:

The VOREC Committee shall develop a strategy and specific action plan with measurable outcomes to, at a minimum, address the following:

- Contribute to efforts to market the outdoor recreation values and attributes of Vermont to effectively foster economic growth
- Examine and promote laws, policies and initiatives that encourage outdoor recreation business
- Strengthen stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and the organizations that support them
- Mobilize the members of the VOREC to develop and implement the initiatives of the VOREC Committee
- Encourage, incentivize and guide the development of community-oriented outdoor recreation assets increasing economic impacts

**12 pm- 12:30 pm: Filter and vote**

**12:30 pm: Lunch (provided)**

**1 pm-2:30 pm: Action Plan/Measurable Outcome development**

**2:30- 3:00 pm: Final Filter/Vote**

**3:00 pm: Public Comment**

**3:30: Next steps/meeting**

**4:00 pm: Adjourn**

## **VOREC Steering Committee Meeting**

November 28, 2017 at National life, Montpelier

**Attendees:** Mike Snyder, Hal Ellms, Marc Sherman, Trey Martin, Jeanne Gervais, Josh Ryan, Amy Kelsey, Mike DeBonis, Tom Stuessy, Cindy Locke, Bill Supple, Frank Stanley, Sara Lang, Drew Simmons, Wendy Knight, Jessica Savage, Craig Whipple, Caroline Zeilenga, Tim Tierney, Dave Furman

**Members of Public:** Kelly Ault and Randy Richardson

**Mike S: Introductions/new FPR staff**

**Mike S: Meeting Process**

Thank you for coming. We've been given the task of making recommendations to the Governor, and we need to populate each category of the EO with recommendations, knowing each will need further discussion/scrutiny. The focus today is on agreeing about what we want to put forward to the Governor from the enormous volume of public input and your representative interests/input. The list will be created today by the committee; Wendy and I will be in charge of how this list is messaged to the Governor.

A couple other principles to guide us: Don't hold back from offering any idea, even if it doesn't seem practical or feasible. Let's use majority rule today as a mechanism to move us along; we can add a minority opinion as a footnote. We've built this on being inclusive, but be aware that, while keeping the spirit of inclusivity, there may be "winners and losers" in some of these recommendations. We also operate in a spirit of equity—consider recommendations that reflect that one of our fundamental pillars is growing participation and recognizing we want to be equitable across all demographics. Finally, when vetting, characterizing, and voting on recommendations, I will take a lack of comment to mean that we have an agreement on our approach.

**August Meeting Minutes Approved:** Mike S. motion to approve; Wendy second

**Summary of Public Comment (with 15-Point Summary Document Jessica Created)**

Mike S: We're trying to use these comments, and input from each of you, to make our list.

Bill: Can you explain how you reached the 15 points?

Jessica: I read through every comment and used "sifting through" activities for the four guiding principles. This is different from what we used with the public, but these are specific to the EO. Everything on this list fits into one of the four principles.

Amy: One thing I don't see there but heard in public comments was whether we need to increase participation—concerns of impact.

Dave: A lot of people expressed idea of caution/overuse—not in built recreation, but in open space.



Mike S: If we're going to up participation, it will be in both generic access and infrastructure.

Hal: Also heard a lot about access to state land specifically.

Mike S: We probably need to reflect why we can't do some activities on wildlife lands that we can on forest lands (because of nature of federal funding).

Marc: We should create a ven diagram of public interest in different areas and what is allowed where.

Mike S: Agreed, it would be a helpful tool for public to see public lands landscape.

Trey: We heard a lot about this at meetings at local/regional level. State could lead on this on their lands, providing a template for towns to model.

Mike S: Another idea is balancing uses. Hunters and anglers asking for backcountry access. I want to secure that there are large chunks of land without trails for people to roam.

Marc: Do you have data on how many people hunt? Heard in meetings this population is declining.

Mike S: Yes, F&W does. How do we get more youth and women hunting and fishing?

Marc: But why? If mountain bike group is increasing and hunting is decreasing, does it make sense to build support in interests that are declining, at the risk of alienating other groups?

Mike S: True, but by that logic why get anyone outside, if the bigger group isn't interested.

Sara: Maybe part of that decline is people hunting out of state because they don't have what they want here.

Tim: You can have balance on large pieces of land—multiple recreation activities.

Cindy: We see wildlife, hunters, xc skiers on our trails on WMAs. They can all co-exist.

Bill: If our end goal is to tie this back to economic development, we need an inclusive approach.

Drew: We need an in-depth assessment and even metric for user groups, in order to compare apples to apples. I'd like to see resources committed to understand these user groups.

Tom: If hunting spaces were set aside the way land is set aside for mountain biking, I wonder whether that would improve access/participation.

Josh: What's missing here but in the comments is a comprehensive evaluation of where we stand now.

Drew: We need to go off data rather than anecdotes.

Tim: We also need to connect rec assets to downtowns.

Craig: One response we heard a lot not yet on this list is water quality.

Hal: And fisheries, related to water quality.

Craig: Also a lot of comments about on-road bicycling and working with VTrans on roads.

Bill: And that users are multi-discipline. They don't just do one activity, they participate in many interests. We need to lift up all activities.

Mike D: Also significant regional differences. Make sure there is capacity to make decisions about recreation locally.

Cindy: What Island Pond sees is vehicles leaving to go to New Hampshire because motorized access is so much broader there. These regional considerations are important.

Mike S: Perhaps we can develop point #15 (enhancing/promoting motorized rec) to reflect comments we've received regarding ATVs on public lands and roads.

Sara: On point #2 (local economies), small towns would love to have businesses but infrastructure isn't there. We need to think about regional economies—how a business in one town impacts the next town over.

Drew: Regionality should be acknowledged. Views and comments are very different by region.

Trey: On point #8 (business sector support), it was also suggested that State should make these investments, not just businesses.

Marc: How do we make recommendations without a study to produce data and demonstrate how those recommendations will pay off?

Tim: I heard a lot about connectivity—physically connecting recreational areas.

Craig: Focused attention on town access: town lands and Class 4 roads. Also comments about recognizing that trails are for multiple uses on same structures.

Dave: Connections comments included an information connection to allow networking and promotion. It's not just about new resources, but also about connecting existing resources.

## **Brainstorm**

Mike S: Moving on to a brainstorm session to produce recommendations. Go around the table, everyone will offer one idea at a time, draft a list. Brainstorm is only open to steering committee members.

Mike S: How do we reflect items that are outside of our domain but were commented on?

Marc: Yes—we can do all the work we want to attract people, but if there's no broadband it doesn't matter.

Wendy: Include a note in recommendations that these are separate issues that need to also be addressed.

Hal: How our youth fit into this conversation. Diversity is lacking in outdoor industry, especially youth. Make outdoor rec programs in schools, specifically tech programs: trail building, ATV mechanics, state parks management, etc. Also accomplishes goal of developing and retaining youth in our state. Maybe also a millennial advisor for this committee.

Cindy: The VT Business Roundtable is working on a 25-year plan that's all about youth. Health and education can tie in to this, too.

Marc: Our need for a study. What are the primary constituencies we're looking at (ATVs, bikers, snowmobilers, etc.), and what's needed for each of these groups to gain the access they want. Also mapping interest levels by age, economic standing, etc.

Trey: Does that include a map of state public land assets?

Marc: Yes. Should be mapping and combining all of this.

Trey: Look at current use supporting recreational uses of land. Allow this new benefit to apply to lands that are opened up and used for recreation.

Jeanne: We need to be able to utilize public lands. State relies on private lands for certain rec activities it doesn't allow on public lands. We just need a connector trail to provide access.

Josh: Formalize interconnectedness between rec agencies to create year-round employment. If I (trail building) partnered with a ski area, I could provide year-round work and pitch in to health insurance to provide steady jobs.

Amy: Need to identify mechanisms for creating revenue to make this all happen. User fees? Taxes? Consider user fees.

Mike D: Need more data to understand who has access and make sure we're equitable. Relates to diversity and inclusiveness.

Tom: Use our high schools, tech schools, and four-year schools to teach youth to be outdoor entrepreneurs.

Cindy: Regional connectivity. People use the LVRT to commute; businesses open up because of it. Regional Marketing Organizations are a good example of regions coming together to promote their areas. So are scenic byways. Promote what we already do and what already exists to promote regions.

Bill: We need an economic opportunity with deliverables. Identify an area or two we could use as test cases/pilot projects. Ask for a small investment to show an actual economic result. Hone in on a specific project in a specific area to show the power of this initiative.

Frank: Put landowners at ease by making sure they understand liability laws.

Mike S: Make the law known and tweak/improve as appropriate?

Frank: Yes.

Sara: Create "recreation-friendly towns." Have a town and its businesses understand what's in the area and speak that language. Create a label for these businesses and towns.

Wendy: There is a formal downtowns designation in our department.

Mike S: A designation that says we're friendly to this and we have information to share.

Marc: Make an economic plan; an exchange between businesses and the state. Maybe a decrease in taxes if a business reinvests that money.

Drew: Designate outdoor businesses as a key industry within our economic development strategy.

Wendy: Support outdoor rec entrepreneurs/startups with a Vermont competition to fund innovative ideas. Support with an actual funding mechanism.

Mike S: Allow free day-use admission to VT State Parks through motor vehicle registration. You can opt out of it. That would recoup money we could then allocate to trail stewardship. Multiple benefits: we can promote free access, they will use that money instead on boat rentals, etc.

Craig: It's money from the gate that we used to collect and wouldn't have to anymore. And it would be more than we collect now.

Hal: In support of Bill's pilot project idea, specifically focusing on motorized rec in Island Pond. Also, Bellows Falls is another specific area ready for a successful project.

Marc: State investment in business (not just private sector equity and investment). Tax credits, workers comp relief, unemployment insurance relief. Find ways to promote business by modifying existing system and structure of taxes and insurance—specifically for outdoor sector.

Trey: Add a statute tweak to landowner liability limitations to include municipalities (e.g., Class 4 roads)

Jeanne: Reach out to entrepreneurs to fill empty storefronts in towns.

Josh: Create a state position to oversee the data and asset management recommendations previously listed.

Amy: Evaluate how trails are regulated under Act 250 and make the process simpler for landowners.

Mike D: Related to closing the technical assistance gap, create a partnership where Greenways Council's time/treasure is matched with state support to smooth development process.

Tom: Find a mechanism to encourage outdoor businesses to participate in a funding coalition, specifically for trail support. VOICe could be the platform for this.

Cindy: Act 250 isn't needed at all for trails. Look at trail building permitting already in place and identify how much is duplicated by Act 250 process.

Frank: Get behind the LVRT: use this as a pilot project, support its completion, and see what it provides.

Bill: You could have three pilot projects of different scales: Bellows Falls, Island Pond, LVRT.

Sara: Our Fast Tracks to Success program takes high school students to Windham County businesses to show them career options. Bring outdoor rec businesses into this program to show kids rec careers available.

Drew: Attract outdoor businesses using the governor's strategic reserve fund.

Wendy: Create a funding mechanism for tourism and marketing. Use rooms and meals tax to fund outdoor rec marketing. In many cases, people move here because they've visited here first.

Mike S: Work with Department of Fish & Wildlife so that no license is required to fish from shore in VT State Parks.

Hal: Bolster Think Vermont with more funding to create more interest in moving businesses to VT.

Marc: Use tax proceeds from regulated marijuana to fund outdoor rec.

Marc: Turn the LVRT into a national scenic trail.

Amy: Make it easier to access rec trails program grants through process improvements and increased cap.

Mike D: Make a Vermont EZ-Pass for park and access trails.

Tom: Loaner/transportation programs: subsidize bike repair, gear replacement, etc. for low-income participants.

Cindy: Expand the Trails and Greenways Council work with FPR and F&W. Strengthen this council as part of VOREC's work.

Frank: Make it easier for guides and outdoor educators to do business here.

Sara: Outdoor Business Alliance could offer a mentorship program for start-up businesses.

Drew: Encourage entrepreneurship by VT youth by giving free health insurance to Vermonters under 25 who start an outdoor business.

Wendy: Streamline permit process for marinas and other outdoor rec facilities.

Mike: Alter the ANR statute so the Secretary can designate ATV connector trails on ANR land.

Marc: Gear garage loaner idea has already been funded for a few state parks as a trial. Test for a year in five parks, then go to legislature for funding in every park. Maybe create a grant for park admission fees.

Trey: Fully fund VT Housing and Conservation Board statutory funding and explore how to better protect that appropriation.

Jeanne: Put a section for outdoor rec on state income tax fund.

Josh: Have off-road gasoline like there's off-road diesel. Obtain a recreation tax on fuel.

Mike D: Collect data on the value of a piece of infrastructure (bridge, lean-to, etc.). This should be in assets value.

Cindy: Establish a volunteer trail day/trail weekend to encourage and grow volunteerism. Pick one day in spring and one in fall. Incorporate youth to teach them about trail building.

Mike: Create and fund recreational assets protection.

Frank: Modest general fund increase to F&W and FPR to implement VOREC initiatives.

Drew: Support phase one Lake Champlain cleanup efforts. And create an outdoor stamp sold to retailers with revenue going to lake cleanup.

Marc: For any outdoor gear sold over \$500, businesses need to kick in \$5 to this cleanup fund.

Drew: Create a VT logo that could go on any VT-based company's goods to generate cleanup funds.

Mike S: Direct appropriate agencies of government to conduct and fund as necessary a comprehensive economic analysis of outdoor recreation.

Wendy: Part of our recommendations should focus specifically on rural areas of need.

Hal: Two categories for projects: 1) areas of need, 2) momentum already building

Trey: Have a funding source to create a grant for regions to make regional rec plans.

Frank: Connect with a large employer to start a rec program for their employees.

Drew: Create governor's inspiration awards: Best in class and outdoor rec. Have a cash prize and media attention. Business winner would receive funding for a project.

Mike S: Do we cover transportation to get underserved communities to our parks, etc.?

Trey: Yes, let's tie in with existing transportation.

Cindy: Tax incentives for businesses that give employees matching trail associations.

Frank: Incorporate outdoor skills into school systems.

Drew: Invite New England governors to a summit on outdoor rec.

Wendy: Work with health department for prescriptions to get outside and do trail work.

Mike S: A doctor can already write an Rx for a free day pass to a state park.

Drew: Make sure trail work can count towards volunteer hours for high school graduation requirements.

Mike S: Look into expanding VEDA's purview to include outdoor rec businesses.

### **Combine Public Comments and Steering Committee & Filter According to EO**

Process:

Mike: Let's filter these items according to the EO. Given volume of ideas and favorability, it's ok to move on without voting individually on each.

Wendy: Filter into categories and then prioritize.

Marc: Which ideas are working from existing resources, which need funding, which are huge ideas.

Mike S: I agree and amend. We'll present the total list, and an added piece proposing implementing these ideas in three specific pilot projects.

Jessica: We'll go through each category, read each item assigned to that category, and decide if it's existing or new. Then we'll vote to accept all ideas in a category.

Filtering/Voting:

Drew: I'm not in favor of the EZ-Pass idea.

Mike D: I withdraw the idea from consideration.

Frank: Can I offer another idea? What about using state income tax for a write-off/credit in insurance benefits for membership in certified trail organizations.

Cindy: State could offer an incentive to businesses that offer outdoor rec membership to their employees.

Jessica: Any other items to add?

Frank: Most of what we've discussed reflects trail-based recommendations. Let's make sure our comments reflect non-trail users too.

Cindy: What about a VT outdoor leadership day in schools? Students spend a day outside doing outdoor skills activities.

Wendy: I see categories emerging: Workforce development, economic development, etc.

Mike S: We've reached consensus. State team will move ahead and put together a document for committee to review. You can then give us insights into the draft.

Mike S: The action plan/measurable outcome item is being removed from the agenda and will be revisited at a later meeting. We'll now open the meeting up for public comment.

Kelly Ault (public): Today's discussion covered most themes I heard in the public process. I saw this as a three-legged stool: state, private sector, and land/town-scape. I like that the Outdoor Alliance focuses on business, but there are also non-profits, individuals, and municipalities who want to contribute. Create an asset map that isn't just resources but also projects—find the existing success stories first and have them share their knowledge as part of the pilot projects. And in terms of trail investment: Can we make a modern-day CCC and incubate businesses as a public-private project that addresses economic and rec infrastructure needs? Public health can also be addressed and brought in more in these recommendations.

Mike S: I agree. I'd ask you all to allow state team to include a public health component to our recommendations.

Cindy: I agree.

Randy Richardson (public): New chair of Vermont Greenways Council. Thanks for your work, excited to hear more about it.

Mike S: New business, next steps—we'll get recommendations back to committee and be in touch about next meeting. Meeting adjourned.