

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, February 10, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 476 924 523#

### Objectives

- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Review new VOREC informational materials and discuss opportunities to talk about VOREC in the legislature.
- Provide an update on Grant Program Working Group conversations and gather steering committee feedback.

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, Program Manager
9:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chair remarks</li><li>• Approve December minutes (tentative)</li><li>• Program Manager Updates</li><li>• Sector updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn)</li><li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li><li>○ VTGC (Danny Hale)</li><li>○ VOBA (Mike Schmidt <i>on behalf of Kelly Ault</i>)</li></ul></li></ul>	Becca Washburn, Chair Jackie
9:50 a.m.	<b>Steering Committee Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Term renewal – June 2023</li><li>• Website update</li><li>• VOREC action planning update</li></ul>	Jackie
10:00 a.m.	<b>Legislative Session Brainstorm</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upcoming opportunities</li><li>• VOREC informational materials</li><li>• Discussion</li></ul>	Jackie ALL
10:30 a.m.	<b>VOREC Community Grant Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working group report out</li><li>• Discussion</li></ul>	Jackie ALL
10:45 a.m.	<b>Public comment</b>	ALL
10:55 a.m.	<b>Other business</b>	ALL
11:00 a.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	ALL

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

February 10, 2023 | 9:00am – 11:00am

via Microsoft Teams

### In attendance

#### *Steering committee:*

- Mike Debonis, Green Mountain Club
- Hal Ellms, Pinnacle Outdoor Group
- Jeanne Gervais, Island Pond Chamber of Commerce
- Abby Long, Kingdom Trails, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Kim Rupe, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Josh Ryan, Timber and Stone
- Shelby Semmes, Trust For Public Land
- Drew Simmons, Pale Morning Media
- Frank Stanley, VT Traditions Coalition / Traditional Hunting and Fishing interests
- Karrie Thomas, Northern Forest Canoe Trail
- Becca Washburn, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Chair

#### *Steering committee – absent:*

- Commissioner Josh Hanford, VT Department of Housing and Community Development, Vice-Chair
- Marc Sherman, Outdoor Gear Exchange
- Frazier Blair, Orvis
- Danny Hale, VASA, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council

#### *Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) / Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) staff:*

- Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager
- Claire Polfus, FPR Recreation Program Manager
- Amy Tomasso, ACCD Housing and Community Development Planning Coordinator

#### *Members of the public:*

- Mike Schmidt, Velocity Sales and Marketing

Jackie started the meeting.

### Business Meeting

#### *Updates*

- Jackie noted that the December minutes will be shared and voted on during the April meeting.
- Jackie shared that Caroline Zeilenga, Secretary for the Commission of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) and administrative support to the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) program, is leaving FPR to pursue her teaching roots as a high school English teacher.

- Jackie turned the floor over to Becca who shared remarks as the new Chair for the VOREC Steering Committee.
- Becca shared that it is an honor and a privilege to succeed former Commissioner Mike Snyder in this role and that some of her goals as Chair include a commitment to building on the success and durability of the VOREC Program, authenticity in showing up as a spokesperson for the steering committee, and active listening to create opportunities for feedback on what it looks like to move VOREC forward.

#### Program Manager

- Jackie shared an update on national level work with the Confluence of States and partners like Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) and Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), including that Brad Garmon, Senior Strategic Advisor and Executive Director for the Michigan Office of Outdoor Industry, became the Chair for the Confluence of States and Carolann Ouellette, Director for the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, became the Vice Chair for 2023.
- Jackie noted that the Confluence of States will be holding two meetings in 2023.
  - o Outdoor Industry Association Capitol Summit (Washington, DC): April 16 – 20
  - o Outdoor Economy Conference (Cherokee, NC): September 18 – 21
- Jackie noted that the Confluence of States is releasing the Offices of Outdoor Recreation Guidebook during a virtual panel on March 9, 2023.
- Jackie noted that Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) and Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) are part of a coalition of partners who are looking at the Farm Bill and identifying a core list of outdoor recreation priorities that advocates can work to advance this fall.
- Jackie noted that the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR) [announced a Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the USDA Rural Development program, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the U.S. Forest Service to partner on developing an annual plan to expand economic opportunities related to recreation in communities near America’s national forests.
- Jackie shared an update on regional level work with the Northern Boarders Regional Commission (NBRC) and the Northern Forest Center on planning for the next Northern Forest Outdoor Recreation Symposium.
  - o Save the date! May 14 – 15, 2024 at the Mount Washington Hotel.
  - o Jackie and Kelly Ault, Executive Director for the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) are participating in the planning committee and will reach out to others for input and participation as planning moves forward.

#### Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)

- Becca shared that Claire Polfus, FPR Recreation Program Manager, is convening a working group to develop the next Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). FPR has submitted a 12-month extension request to the National Park Service (NPS).
- She also noted that Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Secretary, Julie Moore, has announced that FPR is going through rulemaking to codify the framework that currently exists. There will be an opportunity for public engagement in this conversation.
- Becca shared that VHCB and other partners have been working on a conservation strategy initiative that is exploring opportunities to advance components of H.606, a conservation bill that was vetoed by Governor Scott during the last legislative session.

- Becca shared that the FPR is talking internally about how to leverage Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars to effectively administer recreation grants.
- Becca touched on legislative updates from FPR, including noting that FPR has proposed a budget with a 3% increase which maintains \$100,000 for the VOREC Community Grant Program. While the Governor continues to support the grant program it did not make sense to allocate more funding in the FY24 budget since FPR needs to focus on expending the remaining FY23 dollars.
- She added that FPR is tracking progress on bill H.126. Testimony from ANR is focused on increasing understanding of the limits of permanent conservation and where that bumps up against having a landscape where people live and need their basic needs met as well as the need for willing landowners.
- H.131 is another bill FPR is tracking, called the Green Mountain Fund. Its completely focused on what it means to advance the VOREC pillars related to stewardship.

#### Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) Updates

- Abby gave updates from VTGC including continued work with FPR on developing a collaborative workplan, participation in SCORP planning, and participation as part of the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) ranking committee.
- She shared that herself and Nick Bennette, VTGC Chair and Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) Executive Director, are participating as part of VOBA's policy committee.
- The 2023 Vermont Parks and Recreation Association (VRPA) Conference will be held at Killington Mountain Resort in September. This year they are including a Trail Symposium.
- VTGC is moving forward with hiring a Program Manager to assist the council.

#### Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) Updates

- Mike Schmidt provided updates on VOBA's work in the absence of Kelly Ault, VOBA Executive Director, including VOBA's work to take a step back and better define their goals and priorities which have been identified as workforce and business development.
- Mike shared that VOBA is interested in collecting feedback from VOREC Steering Committee members and will be organizing an opportunity for discussion during the month of February.
- VOBA's next steps will be to develop a strategic plan followed closely by an implementation plan which will be used to help launch the work VOBA is doing using funding from the VOREC grant program.

#### Steering Committee Updates

- Jackie shared that term renewals for most Steering Committee members are coming up at the end of June 2023. Steering Committee members are invited to reach out to Jackie before the April Steering Committee meeting if considering moving on.
- The [VOREC website](#) has been updated. Steering Committee members are invited to review and share feedback and suggestions.
- The application to the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program will be submitted by March 1, 2023.

#### Legislative Session Brainstorm

*See appendix for input from Steering Committee members on key messages to share with legislators.*

### **VOREC Community Grant Program**

- FPR has started executing Fiscal Year 2022 grant agreements. They are 33% complete and the goal is to have all grants executed by the end of March 2023.
- The Fiscal Year 2023 Grant Program Working Group has been meeting since January to discuss and flesh out the grant program structure Jackie presented in December. The working group has determined the following:
  - o The tracks identified in the proposal (shared during the December 2022 meeting) are the right ones to move forward with.
  - o The highest percentage of funding should be allocated to the “Implementation” grant track, followed by the track for “Outdoor Equity” grant track.
  - o There is interest in funding projects that are smaller in size (e.g. less than \$50,000).
- The next step is for FPR to take the feedback from the working group and determine the mechanisms that will stand up each track (partnership with ACCD, block grant, etc.).

### **Public Comment**

*No public comments shared*

### **Other Business**

*No other business shared*

## APPENDIX

### Legislative Session Brainstorm

Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager, led a brainstorm discussion to identify important messages and approaches to talking with legislators about the VOREC Program. Suggestions from Steering Committee members are listed below.

- Focus conversations with legislators on the big goals of the VOREC program.
- Include place-based witnesses in testimony to the legislature about the program.
- Include trail construction project stories.
- Make sure to add rural lens to participation in legislative engagement.
- Key messages:
  - All recreation is local: Access, volunteerism, funding.
  - Outdoor recreation is one sector within the nature-based economy.
  - Outdoor recreation's importance has been uplifted through the pandemic.
  - The Outdoor Recreation Economy is critical to Vermont's economy. It's not just bike mechanics and trail builders but also the local plow person, firewood supplier, etc.
  - Outdoor recreation is an opportunity to introduce other important Vermont industries to new Vermonters and visitors.
  - Outdoor recreation is interdisciplinary and a connector to many other areas of the economy.
  - The private landowners in Vermont play an important role in the outdoor recreation economy.
  - Volunteers are a critical part of the story and there is a reliance on free labor that is not sustainable to the long-term stewardship of recreational resources.
  - Stewardship is an important part of strengthening Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.
  - The VOREC program is all about listening and disseminating information.
  - Vermont's role in the origin of Offices of Outdoor Recreation across the country.
  - The need to develop better data that grows Vermont's understanding of outdoor recreation economy.

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, April 14, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### In Person

Craftsbury Public Library (12 Church Ln, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827)

*There is plenty of parking at the Library but please carpool with others if possible.*

### Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 837 689 431#

*This meeting will be primarily in-person with the option to join virtually during the Business Meeting only.*

### Objectives

- Spend time together in person! Network and catch-up.
- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Learn about work in progress in the Town of Craftsbury to boost the Town’s outdoor recreation economy including what’s been accomplished with VOREC funding.
- Further assess VOREC Action Plan priorities including VOREC’s role and partners and challenges for moving actions forward.

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
10:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager
10:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and introductions</li> <li>• Approve December and February minutes</li> <li>• Program Manager updates</li> <li>• Sector updates                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn)</li> <li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li> <li>○ VTGC (Danny Hale)</li> <li>○ VOBA (Kelly Ault)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Other business</li> <li>• Adjourn</li> </ul>	Becca Washburn, Chair Jackie
10:30 a.m.	<b>VOREC term endings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize steering committee members ending their terms</li> <li>• Discuss desired skillsets for potential new members</li> </ul>	Hal Ellms, Pinnacle Outdoor Group, Outdoor Recreation Industry Representative  Kim Rupe, Vermont Council on Rural Development, Economic Development member at-large

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead</b>
10:40 a.m.	<b>Town of Craftsbury: VOREC Grant &amp; Outdoor Recreation Economy Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation</li> <li>• Community Tour</li> </ul>	Gina Campoli, Craftsbury VOREC Community Grant Volunteer Coordinator  Ollie Burruss, Craftsbury Outdoor Center, Trails Director  Gina Campoli, Craftsbury Trails Coordinator  Christina Goodwin, Vice President for Advancement, Sterling College  Susan Houston, Craftsbury Select Board Member  Matthew Krebs, Craftsbury Trails Coordinator
12:15 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b>	
1:00 p.m.	<b>VOREC 2.0 Planning Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation</li> <li>• Action Plan Assessment - Small group breakouts</li> <li>• Debrief discussion</li> </ul>	Jackie
3:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	

**Questions for VOREC funded communities**

- What has worked well and/or what hasn't worked well for you in the delivery of the VOREC Community Grant Program?
- How have the financial expectations laid out in your grant agreement met up with the reality of completing the work? What challenges have you faced?
- What have been the benefits of strengthening the outdoor recreation assets in your community with VOREC Community Grant dollars? Have you observed increased participation / use? Higher sales for local businesses? Etc.
- What, if any, challenges are you facing with overuse? How are you planning for those challenges?
- What priorities do you have that are not currently met by the VOREC grant program?
- Have you been faced with any permitting, regulatory or opposition in implementing your VOREC funded project?



## **VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Notes**

April 14, 2023 | 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Craftsbury Public Library (12 Church Ln, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827)

### **In attendance**

#### *Steering committee:*

- Frazier Blair, Orvis
- Mike Debonis, Green Mountain Club
- Hal Ellms, Pinnacle Outdoor Group
- Commissioner Josh Hanford, VT Department of Housing and Community Development, Vice-Chair
- Abby Long, Kingdom Trails / Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Kim Rupe, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Josh Ryan, Timber and Stone
- Drew Simmons, Pale Morning Media
- Karrie Thomas, Northern Forest Canoe Trail
- Becca Washburn, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Chair

#### *Steering committee – absent:*

- Marc Sherman, Outdoor Gear Exchange
- Danny Hale, VASA / Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Jeanne Gervais, Island Pond Chamber of Commerce
- Frank Stanley, VT Traditions Coalition / Traditional Hunting and Fishing interests
- 

#### *Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) / Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) staff:*

- Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager
- Claire Polfus, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

#### *Members of the public:*

- Nick Bennette (Virtual), Vermont Mountain Bike Association, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Lisa Lafont, Vermont Horse Council

Jackie started the meeting and welcomed the group to the Craftsbury Public Library.

### **Business Meeting**

#### *December meeting minutes*

- Becca asked for motion to approve the December minutes.
- Mike moved to approve.
- Frazier seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously; Josh H abstained.

## Updates

### Program Manager:

- Jackie provided legislative updates and specifically noted the success of collaborating with VTGC and VOBA to create talking points which have been used in multiple testimonies.
- She also commended the high attendance for outdoor recreation at Vermont Tourism Day at the State House.
  - o Drew seconded the significant presence of outdoor recreation.
  - o Abby added that outdoor recreation was a theme, even outside of outdoor recreation community.
- Jackie noted that the VOREC testimony on H.467 went well and was focused on awareness building.
- Jackie is attending the Confluence of States in Washington DC next week. It is aligned with the OIA Capital Summit. She will also be meeting with the National Park Service (NPS) about the Federal Interagency Commission on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR).
- Jackie is also participating on behalf of Vermont in planning with the Northern Forest Center, and Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) States Maine, New Hampshire, and New York in planning for a 2024 Northern Forest Outdoor Recreation Symposium. The event will be at the Mount Washington Hotel on May 14-15 2024 and is in the first stages of planning.
  - o Karrie asked about the New Hampshire Office of Outdoor Recreation. They hired new director recently, Janelle Lawton. Jackie noted that she meets with New Hampshire and Maine directors quarterly, but New York doesn't have an office and Massachusetts just created one in December 2022.

### Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR):

- Becca announced that Danny Hale is no longer working for the Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association (VASA). FPR and Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) are working to figure out the next motorized recreation representative to replace Danny on the VOREC Steering Committee.
- She also noted that Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) representatives testified on April 14 to the Senate committee on Natural Resources about the bill H.126. The testimony emphasized the importance of the quality of conservation and protecting ecological functionality and connectivity in a landscape where people live. ANR is looking for multiple conservation opportunities, not just permanent conservation. ANR and FPR leadership have been meeting regularly with conservation groups and legislative committees.
- Becca also described H.467, a recreation bill that seeks to improve accessibility, support the VOREC Program, and establish the Green Mountain Trail Fund. FPR is focused on awareness raising and is looking to use the summer and fall to collaborate with partners to map out a path forward for the next legislative session.

### Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD):

- Josh H. described S.100, the housing bill that is focused on increasing affordable housing in downtown centers, which currently are only 0.3% of Vermont's land base.
- He also noted that H.126 doesn't carve out space for housing and therefore the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will be opposed. DHCD believes there needs to be room for housing as the housing situation is acute, even compared to neighboring states.
  - o Jackie commented that the outdoor recreation economy needs both housing and conservation. H.126 and S.100 highlight friction points that Vermont needs to address to support outdoor recreation here. The VOREC program is well-positioned to play a role in this space because it brings together multiple stakeholders.

- Hal asked for context on numbers on housing needs. Josh H. recommended looking at [housingdata.org](https://housingdata.org). Vermont needs approximately:
  - o 8000 units to get to a healthy vacancy rate (5-6% vacancy) for existing population.
  - o 6-8000 units to address incoming population.
  - o 30,000 units - if growth slows.
  - o 40,000 if pandemic growth continues.
- One solution is to look to increase areas of dense growth. Josh H. pointed to the example of Burlington, which has more conserved area than area zoned for dense growth.
- Karrie asked about status of density conservation, which is currently being debated in S.100. Part of the bill has "by right zoning", but the League of Cities and Towns says that state zoning should also be looked at rather than focusing only on towns.

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC):

- Abby gave updates from VTGC including a description of the Council's engagement with the legislature this session.
- She also invited all steering committee members to the VTGC Annual meeting on May 11 at Ascutney Outdoor Center.
- VTGC will soon hire a program manager, their first employee.
- Abby also sits on the Forest Futures Panel and has been advocating for tax benefits for recreation and for adding recreation to current use.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA):

- Drew shared that with the changing recreation priorities, VOBA is updating its strategic plan.
- VOBA is actively supporting the business pillar of the VOREC program.
- He also shared that outdoor workforce development is important for VOBA and they recently attended an event in Bend, OR with Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) on the topic.
- There is a PFAS bill in the legislature. VOBA and Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) support phasing out PFAS and aligning the timeline with other states, especially California.
- Drew also shared that VOBA testified in support of H.126 and that VOBA supports science, the need for a strategic conversation on land use in VT and encourages multiple forms of conservation.

*Public comment*

Lisa Lafont asked about whether planning for open space within residential development was included in housing conversation. Josh H. answered that that is happening in communities across VT but that VT needs a variety of opportunities that are affordable.

Susie Houston from Craftsbury Trails announced that a land trust she works with is looking for a presenter on conservation.

Jackie ended the business meeting 10:55.

**Town of Craftsbury: VOREC Grant & Outdoor Recreation Economy Update**

*See Appendix for Craftsbury presentation slides*

Members of the Town of Craftsbury, the Craftsbury Outdoor Center, Craftsbury Trails and Sterling College shared how they are using a VOREC grant to share information on outdoor recreation in their

community, including a new website, kiosk and trail sign plan. They shared that this collaborative group started because of the VOREC grant opportunity.

They also shared that there are three pegs to the stool that makes up outdoor recreation in Craftsbury. Those includes Agriculture, Education and the Craftsbury Outdoors Center. The goal of their project has been to draw visitors heading to and from the Craftsbury Outdoors Center into the Town of Craftsbury. Some of the biggest challenges they are facing following the completion of their project include maintenance of their investments, promoting the new website after it was created because it's mostly volunteer run, and PFAS in the water meaning the Village has no real accessible water source for visitors.

They also shared the following input for the VOREC Steering committee on what could improve the grant process and what could help small communities better develop an outdoor recreation economy including:

- Offering training for how to use social media, and develop marketing strategies, especially in small towns without staff support.
- Offering flexibility in reimbursement timing because it is challenging for small towns to keep cash flow with large reimbursement grants. Also better defining from the outset what the program means by "reimbursement." Craftsbury thought reimbursement meant sharing the invoice for repayment, not paying the invoice up front and then receiving funds.
- They support incorporating recreation into current use to encourage landowners to allow trails.
- They also need support for grant writing and administration, handholding for small towns, but also acknowledge the need for local knowledge in writing the grants.

Members from Craftsbury wrapped up their presentation by taking Steering Committee members on a tour of Town to point out where future signage will be installed, the location of future parking, the building that will be renovated with Fiscal Year 2022 VOREC funding, and the location of the main road and Sterling College relative to these investments.

### **Working Session**

The Steering Committee began a working session after a lovely lunch at Sterling College.

Jackie began the session by recognizing Hal and Kim's contributions to the VOREC Program as they step off the steering committee and asked them to share their thoughts.

- Kim shared that she is transitioning off the committee because she recently moved to the Northeast Kingdom and no longer fills the role of a southern VT economic development representative. She expressed gratitude for her time on the committee. She also recommends getting the word out more on VOREC with a one-pager and other messaging avenues.
- Hal shared that he is pursuing other interests, more family time, and more time attending to his business. He is particularly interested in engaging on local issues, and the intersection of conservation and recreation. He also has found his time with VOREC very rewarding.

Jackie shared that she is hoping to have new Steering Committee members by June.

The group then split into two subgroups to complete an assessment started in October 2022 of the actions in the 2018 VOREC Action Plan.

At the end of the meeting, the groups came back together to share the big picture lessons they learned from reviewing the previous plan. This conversation focused on how to better tell the story of the VOREC Program and the need for more data on the impact of the grant program on community economic development, especially capturing stories. The group discussed the best way to collect stories and information without overburdening communities. Jackie and Frazier agreed to work on developing a questionnaire that steering committee members can bring to a conversation with grant recipients.

The group also discussed the need for more staff capacity to support the VOREC Program and expressed the desire to invite agency leadership to the next VOREC Steering Committee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

## APPENDIX



# Craftsbury Trails

**VOREC Monthly Meeting  
Craftsbury, VT**

**Gina Campoli, Matt Krebs, Ollie Burruss, Christina Goodwin, Susan Houston - April 14, 2023,**



# Craftsbury Trails

## Town Map



# Craftsbury Trails

## Who we are and some history



- Town supported *collaboration* driven by volunteers
- Exec committee and working groups focusing on projects
- Keeping the community informed is critical and hard!
- Outdoor recreation is an articulated community priority.
- Growth pressure concerns - manageable now. Aware they must be addressed in the future



# Craftsbury Trails

## Projects

- VOREC Project
  - Logo
  - Wayfinding and other signs - both design and some sign creation
  - Kiosk design
  - Website
- Sterling Trail improvement project
- Common-Village connector trail

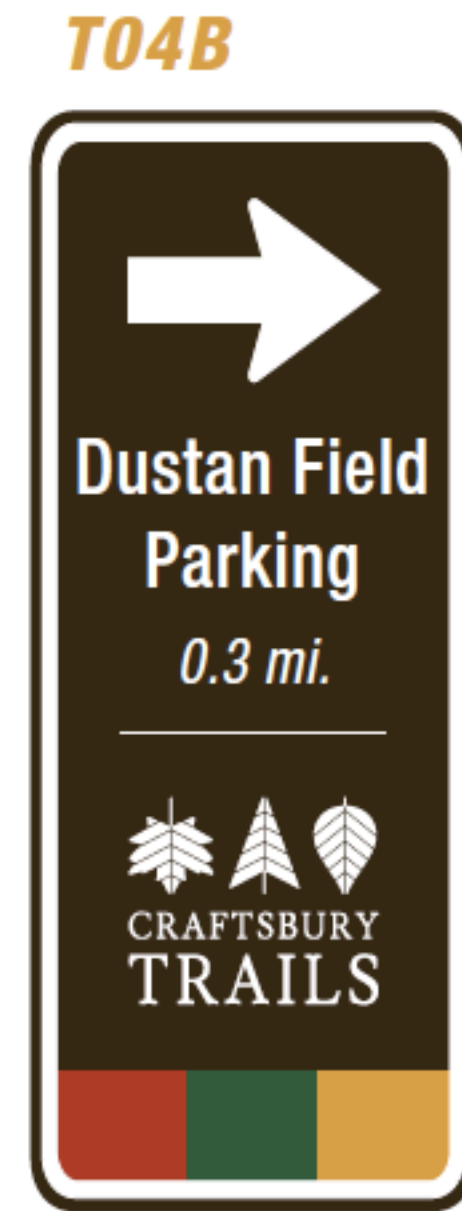
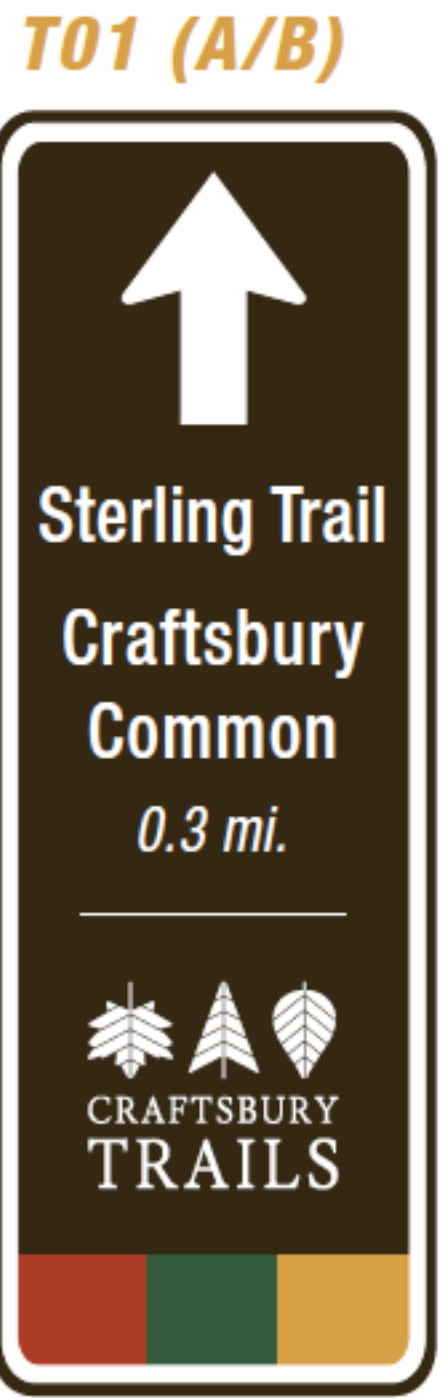


# Craftsbury Trails

## Logo Development



# Craftsbury Trails - Sign Designs



# Craftsbury Trails - Sign Designs





# Craftsbury Trails - Wayfinding Sign Locations

☰ **Craftsbury Wayfinding Sig...** 🔍 ⋮

25 views  
Published 6 days ago

★

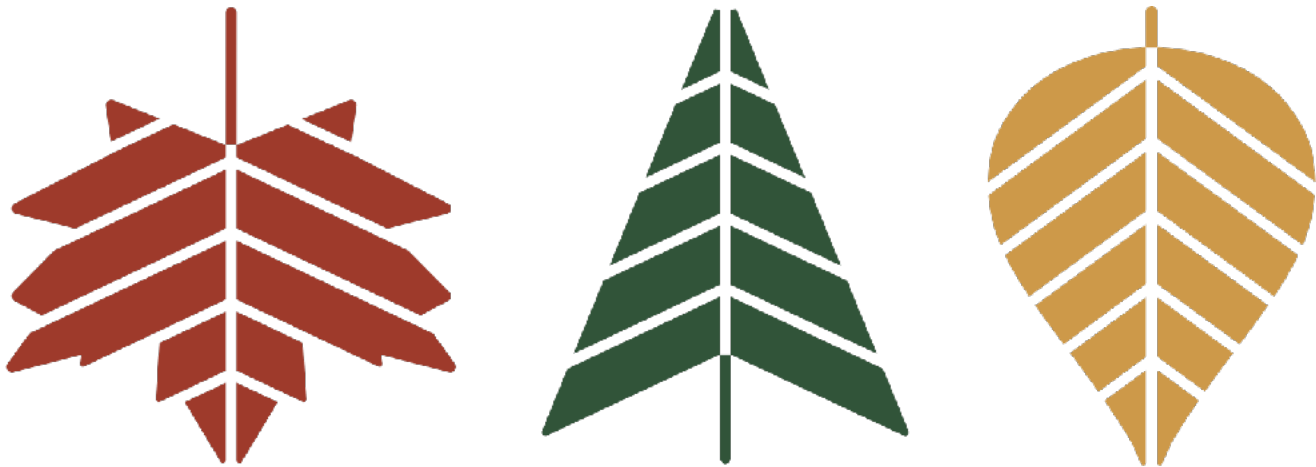
SHARE

☑ **Signage Planning Locations**

- 🅑 Dustan Field Parking
- 📍 R01: Parking Turn-In with Arrows (2)
- 📍 R02: Trailhead Parking - RIGHT ARROW (1)
- 📍 R03: Trail Parking Ahead (1)
- 📍 R04: Trail Head Parking - LEFT ARROW (1)
- 📍 R05: Trailhead Parking Ahead (1)
- 📍 R06: Trailhead Parking Ahead (1)
- 📍 T01-A: Sterling Trail (1)
- 📍 T01-B: Sterling Trail (1)
- 📍 T02: Sterling Trail (1)
- 📍 T03: Sterling Trail (1)
- 📍 T04: Multi-sign Post (4)
- 📍 KIOSK

This map was created by a user. [Learn how to create your own.](#) ✕

# Craftsbury Trails - Info Signs For Businesses



CRAFTSBURY  
TRAILS

Trails for All

LEARN MORE  
[craftsburytrails.info](http://craftsburytrails.info)



**Metal, 12" X 18" - post provided or can be placed on a wall - provided to businesses, organizations. QR code links to website**





# Craftsbury Trails Website



[Our Trails](#) [Our Community](#) [Our Work](#)

[Contact Us](#)



## Craftsbury Trails

Whether the snow is falling or the summer sun is shining, Craftsbury's trails take you through the landscape we call home. Craftsbury Trails is an initiative driven by local residents. We welcome neighbors and visitors to enjoy, respect and help steward the many miles of trails, and scenic roads in our beautiful town.

<https://www.craftsburytrails.info>



# Craftsbury Trails

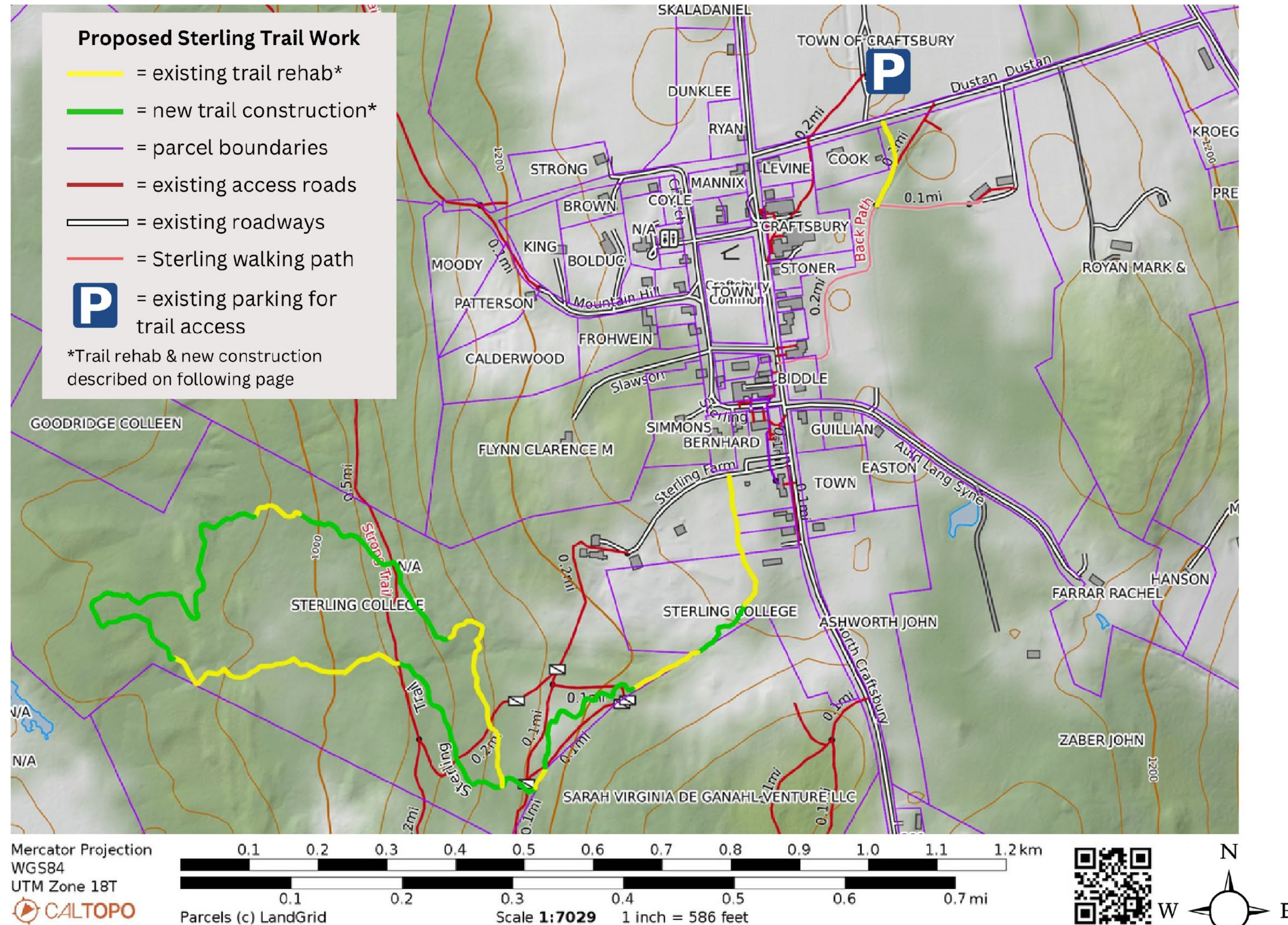
## VOREC Project Wrap-up



- COVID delays
- More work to do making and installing signs and kiosk design and installation
- Getting the word out!
- Pivoted from a mapping project to using online resources - Ride with GPS and Strava
- Budgeting future website and other costs
- Cash flow issues due to long state reimbursement timing - 3 - 4 months
- Eager to pair this work with trail construction projects in the coming months



# Craftsbury Trails - Sterling Trail Improvements





# Craftsbury Trails - Sterling Trail Improvements

- Submitted 2023 State Recreation Trails Program Grant
- Town grant in cooperation with Sterling College
- Town applied for the same project through a different program in 2021 and was not successful
- Dollars will go towards greatly improve logging roads and an existing trail network for walking, running, mountain biking, and snow shoeing
- 20% match will be achieved through volunteer time and equipment and donations



# Craftsbury Trails

## Common - Village Connector



- Long articulated desire for an off road route connecting the villages
- Steep and challenging terrain
- Minimalist approach to construction - volunteer labor
- Connecting places has value - loops with one or 2 landowners are easier to pull off but dont have the same community purpose.
- Sensitive negotiations with private land owners required - COC's long history of this and the challenges

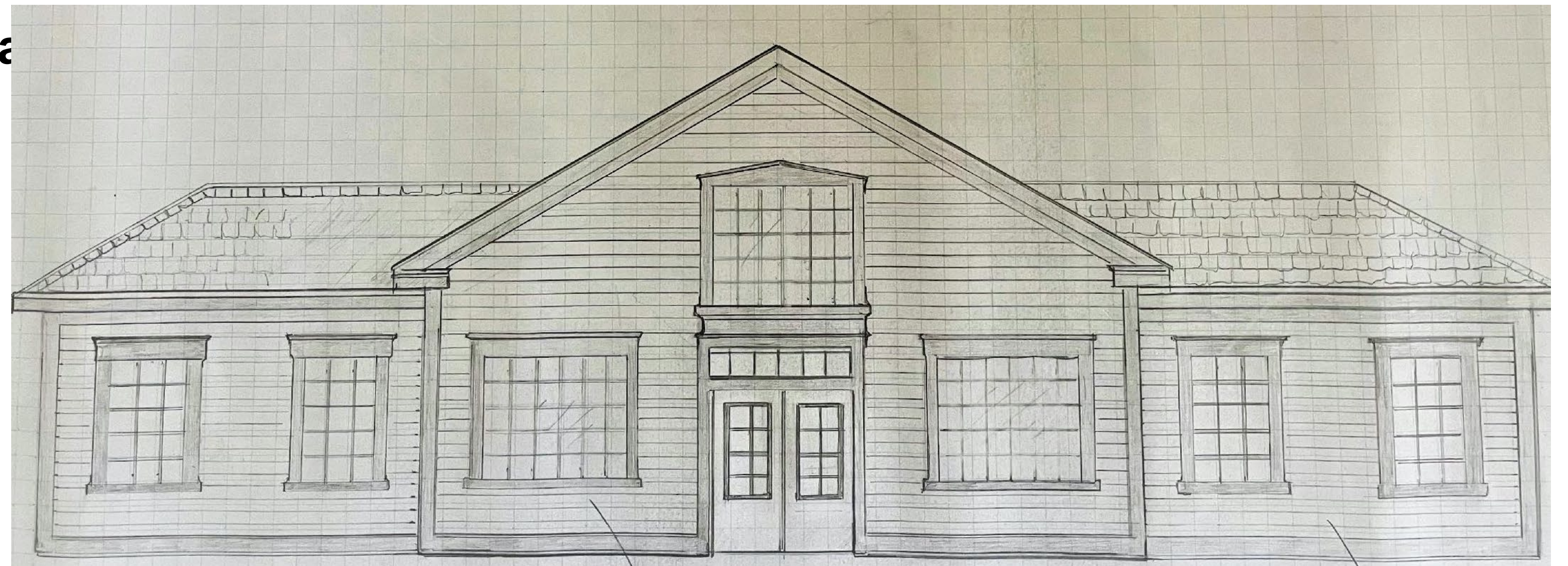


# Craftsbury Trails

## Peter Alfond Wellness Center & Outdoor Recreation Hub



- In addition to the \$200,000 from the VOREC grant program, \$681,000 in private funding
- Secured an additional \$10,000 from the Town of Craftsbury
- Will likely need to raise another \$250,000
- Craftsbury Common's designation as a
- Preliminary project concept sketch
- Selecting an architect
- Act 250 permitting



• New Experiential Endeavors





**The Town of Craftsbury Thanks You!**

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, June 9, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 694 763 697#

### Objectives

- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Review and discuss findings from Action Plan Assessment activity completed in April.
- Learn about and discuss upcoming action planning and grant program work.
- Brainstorm skill sets and expertise VOREC is looking for in new Steering Committee members.

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, Program Manager
9:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve February and April minutes</li><li>• Program Manager Updates</li><li>• Sector updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn)</li><li>○ ACCD (Heather Pelham <i>on behalf of Josh Hanford</i>)</li><li>○ VTGC (Abby Long)</li><li>○ VOBA (Marc Sherman <i>on behalf of Kelly Ault</i>)</li></ul></li></ul>	Becca Washburn, Chair Jackie
9:40 a.m.	<b>VOREC Action Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• April Action Plan Assessment findings</li><li>• Action planning process next steps</li></ul>	Jackie Jennifer Waite, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program Claire Polfus, Recreation Program Manager
10:20 a.m.	<b>VOREC Community Grant Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on FY23 funding / timeline</li><li>• Community data collection</li></ul>	Jackie Becca
10:35 a.m.	<b>Open Steering Committee Positions Brainstorm</b>	Jackie ALL
10:45 a.m.	<b>Public comment</b>	ALL
10:55 a.m.	<b>Other business</b>	ALL
11:00 a.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	ALL

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

June 9, 2023 | 9:00am – 11:00am

via Microsoft Teams

*This meeting was recorded and you can listen to committee discussion and decisions on the [Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's YouTube channel](#).*

### In attendance

#### *Steering committee:*

- Mike Debonis, Green Mountain Club
- Abby Long, Kingdom Trails, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Shelby Semmes, Trust For Public Land
- Becca Washburn, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Chair
- Marc Sherman, Outdoor Gear Exchange
- Frazier Blair, Orvis

#### *Steering committee – absent:*

- Hal Ellms, Pinnacle Outdoor Group
- Jeanne Gervais, Island Pond Chamber of Commerce
- Commissioner Josh Hanford, VT Department of Housing and Community Development, Vice-Chair
- Kim Rupe, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Josh Ryan, Timber and Stone
- Drew Simmons, Pale Morning Media
- Frank Stanley, VT Traditions Coalition / Traditional Hunting and Fishing interests
- Karrie Thomas, Northern Forest Canoe Trail

#### *Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) / Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) staff:*

- Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager
- Dexter Mayo, FPR Recreation Outreach Intern
- Claire Polfus, FPR Recreation Program Manager
- Commissioner Heather Pelham, VT Department of Tourism and Marketing

#### *Members of the public:*

- Nick Bennette, Vermont Mountain Bike Alliance (VMBA), Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC)
- Sharon Plumb, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Jennifer Waite, National Parks Service (NPS) Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)
- Jill Quakenbush, Town of Middlebury
- Kurt Hansbury, Franklin County Mountain Bike Club

Jackie started the meeting.

## Business Meeting

### *February and April meeting minutes*

- Becca asked for motion to approve the February and April minutes.
- Frazier moved to approve.
- Abby seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously.

### *Updates*

#### Program Manager

- Jackie reported on program manager activities since April meeting including participation in the following events:
  - o Confluence of States Convening with Outdoor Industry Association: April 17-20
  - o Preservation Trust of Vermont Outdoor Recreation Retreat: May 9-10
  - o Planning meeting for the 2024 Northern Forest Outdoor Recreation Symposium: May 17
  - o Vermont Community Development Association (VCDA) Recreation for Economic Vitality: May 18
  - o Confluence of States Education Series - How to Build a Thriving Outdoor Recreation Business Ecosystem: June 6
  - o Northern Forest Center Outdoor Recreation Webinar: June 14
- Frazier added her perspective from participation in the Outdoor Industry Association's Capital Summit meeting in Washington, DC.
- Jackie shared that FPR has executed all FY22 grant agreements except for four and that grant recipients are submitting for re-imbursments.

#### Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)

- Marc provided the update from VOBA, particularly noting their strategic planning process with focus on inclusivity, small businesses technical assistance, and workforce career pathways.
  - o Marc asked that VOREC and Steering Committee members recognize DEI events and holidays like Juneteenth on their social media and other communication channels.
  - o Jackie took an action item to think about and determine how VOREC as a program recognizes and shows up in support of these important DEI events.

#### Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)

- Becca provided the update from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR), particularly noting that Danny Fitzko is the new commissioner of the Department and will attend the VOREC meeting in August.
- She also noted updates on the upcoming close of the legislative session, including the budget, and H.126, work with the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC), addressing the intersection between homelessness and recreation and building the outdoor recreation grants team at FPR.
- Claire shared the link to the open Outdoor Recreation Grants Manager position <https://careers.vermont.gov/job/Outdoor-Recreation-Grant-Manager/1037139900/>



## Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD)

- Heather provided updates from ACCD including \$1M base funding for retention for the Department of Tourism and Marketing.
- S.100 signature housing bill was signed this week on Tuesday, June 6. The bill isn't perfect, but it is a step in the right direction.
- The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) celebration is scheduled for July 15th. The Governor is riding the full 93-mile length of the trail starting in Swanton. Events are also expected to include members of the congressional delegation. There will be a lunch celebration in Morrisville around 12 / 12:30 p.m. and an end of ride celebration in St. Johnsbury.
  - o A save the date announcement will be posted shortly on [the new LVRT website](#).
  - o Heather took an action item to add all VOREC Steering Committee members to the Save the Date email list.
- Heather provided an overview of different investments being made with EDA funding.
- Heather flagged planning for the solar eclipse and suggested that tourism and marketing is looking for tips on who is planning viewing events with the goal of effectively distributing visitors throughout the state.

## Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC)

- Abby provided VTGC update sharing overview of the recent annual meeting, announced date for Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA) conference and trails symposium on September 29-30, 2023, highlighted value of work with FPR and engagement with legislature through government relations consultant, Jill Sudhoff Guerin, outlined goals to increase member engagement, and introduced new hire, Sharon Plumb, VTGC Program Manager.
- Sharon took a moment to introduce herself and talk about her role and goals for her work with VTGC.

## VOREC Action Planning

- Jackie introduced recent work to align the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and VOREC Action Planning processes.
- Jennifer Waite introduced herself and shared an overview of how the RTCA program will be supporting VOREC action planning and alignment with SCORP.
- Claire provided committee with a status update on SCORP planning and described focus on inclusivity for this plan. Dexter introduced her internship focused on making the planning process more inclusive.
  - o Jackie took an action item to coordinate connection between Marc and Sharon with Claire and Dexter.
- Jackie presented the results from the 2018 Action Plan Assessment conducted by the VOREC Steering Committee. See presentation slides in the Appendix.
- Jackie presented an overview of the goals and work plan for updating the VOREC Action Plan, highlighting the larger context of related planning happening concurrently in the state and looking more specifically at how the Action Plan process will align with the SCORP plan update.
  - o Jackie took an action item to think about ways with Jennifer to re-brand this process and come up with a name, talking points that reflect it's breadth and impact.

### **VOREC Community Grant Program**

- Jackie shared a brief update on the progress FPR is making on restructuring the grant program to effectively meet goals and help potential applicants who are in the process of planning and designing projects.
- Jackie shared that FPR is standing up three tracks: Implementation grants, Outdoor Equity grants, and project development technical assistance.
- Jackie shared that FPR is working to release a press release at the end of June 2023 announcing the restructure of the grant program and providing some information on the launch of the Implementation grants track, hopefully in mid-August.
  - o Jackie took an action item to share a more robust set of updates with Steering Committee members over email to make sure they are informed before the press release goes out.

### **New Steering Committee Member Brainstorm**

*Agenda item was not discussed due to time constraints. Steering Committee members to share their feedback using Microsoft Form Survey.*

### **Public Comment**

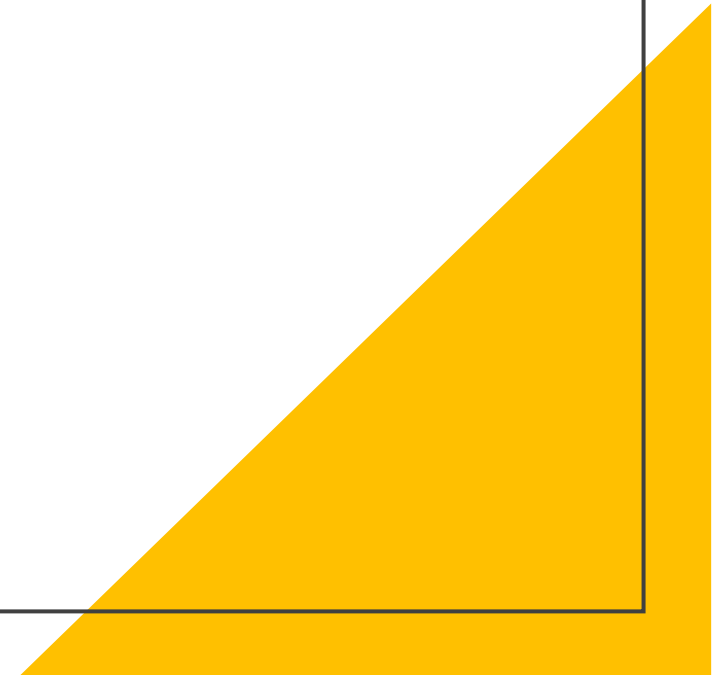
*No public comments shared*

### **Other Business**

*No other business shared*

# APPENDIX

# Action Plan Assessment Results





# Overview

- **39** actions were assessed by VOREC Steering Committee members – did not include actions under Health & Wellness pillar
  - **22** actions were identified as High priority for strengthening Vermont's outdoor recreation economy
  - **7** actions were identified for VOREC to lead
  - **4** new actions were identified
  - **1** topic was recommended for future discussion
-



# Actions recommended to lead

- Create a Vermont Outdoor Ethic that captures stewardship principles.
  - Convene conversations about and support development of accurate and clear public information materials for outdoor rec. users.
  - Kick-start conversations about outdoor recreation programming in K-12 and post-secondary schools.
  - Encourage regional networks of recreation assets and infrastructure projects that connect communities.
-



# Actions recommended to lead

- Improve access to public lands and waterways.
  - Identify and support equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities.
  - Designate outdoor recreation business as a key industry within Vermont's economic development strategy.
-



## New actions suggested to add

- Providing education about landowner liability protections.
  - Establishing a reliable funding source for the VOREC grant program and other outdoor recreation focused projects.
  - Data collection to show the success from communities who have received VOREC funding.
  - Establishing continued support for VOREC funded communities.
-



# VOREC's role in supporting partners

- Being a resource for funding.
  - Identifying and supporting partnerships.
  - Making sure the right stakeholders are part of conservations.
  - Facilitating research on key questions.
-





# Proposed discussion topic

Incorporating equity and inclusion throughout VOREC's work

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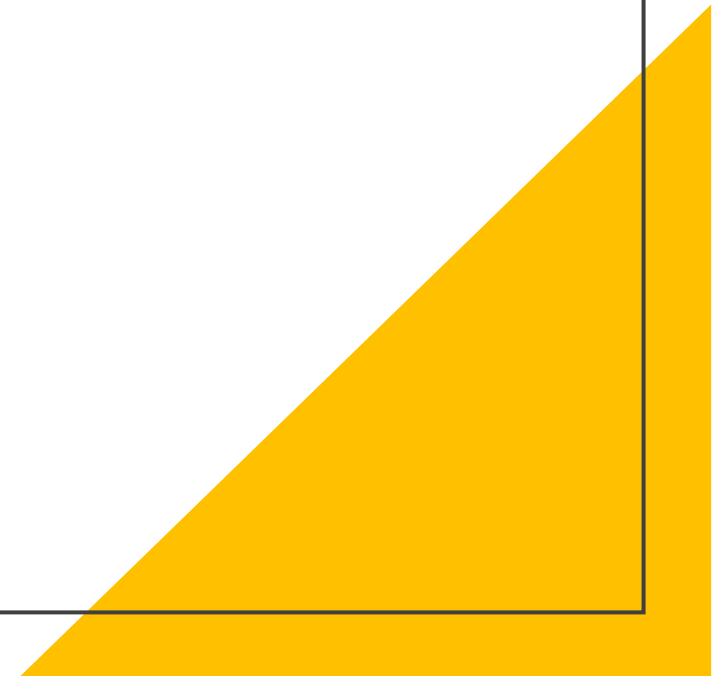


# Next Steps

- Jackie integrates recommended changes to actions unless she hears otherwise
  - Steering Committee members outline actions underneath the Health & Wellness pillar
  - Steering Committee members brainstorm partners to work with on identified actions
-

Action Plan

Workplan





# Action Plan Update Goal

To update the 2018 VOREC Action Plan to provide guidance that helps VOREC better embody its purpose and support Vermont's outdoor recreation economy through public and private partnerships.

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# Desired outcomes

- An achievable 10-year vision for Vermont's outdoor rec. economy.
  - Improved understanding of working relationships and opportunities for collaboration with partners.
  - A stronger framework for making funding investments and tracking effectiveness.
  - An engaging and useful plan that can be used as a communication and outreach tool for growing the VOREC network and communicating to the Governor and legislature.
-



# Concurrent Planning Processes

- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
  - Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) Work Planning
  - Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) Strategic Planning
  - Visitation study conducted by Department of Tourism and Marketing
  - Forest Futures Roadmap
  - Vermont State Parks Modernization Study
  - VHCB H.126 Steering Committee
  - And more....
-



# Alignment with SCORP

## SCORP

- Holds the 5-year vision for Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.
- Captures and tracks data on outdoor recreation infrastructure, participation, and desired projects.
- Identifies priority areas for funding investments.

## VOREC Action Plan

- Captures prioritized actions to achieve 10-year vision described by the SCORP.
  - Defines how partners in the VOREC network will activate to move forward on prioritized actions.
  - Describes the role of the VOREC program, including state partners and the VOREC Steering Committee, in working with partners.
-



# Spring / Summer 2023

Develop process, identify partners, define partnerships, complete action plan assessment

## **VOREC program activities**

- Complete assessment of 2018 action plan
- Develop workplan to define overall goals, process and outcomes
- Identify outdoor recreation economy partners
- Prepare and issue RFP for Outdoor Recreation Community Data Collection

## **SCORP activities**

- Research best practices for engaging historically underrepresented groups in planning process
- Develop and issue RFP for SCORP data analysis and compilation, user survey, final report

## **Steering Committee role - Inform**

Participate in discussions during bi-monthly meetings, review and provide input on workplan, brainstorm outdoor recreation economy partners, inform RFP language

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# Fall 2023

## Information gathering

### **VOREC program activities**

- VOREC partner outreach / roles & responsibility conversations
- Data collection on outdoor recreation economy investments from VOREC communities
- Explore role of VOREC Steering Committee

### **SCORP activities**

- Develop and launch SCORP public input survey
- GIS data collection for trails and recreation infrastructure
- Focus groups to capture data needs

### **Steering Committee role – Active engagement**

Participate in bi-monthly meeting discussions, help schedule and participate in partnership meetings, share feedback on SCORP input survey, participate in SCORP focus group work

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# Winter 2023

Refine data, prioritize actions, develop vision

## **VOREC program & SCORP activities**

- Analyze data collected through SCORP and partnership meetings
- Integrate data and prioritize actions
- Draft a vision for outdoor recreation economy in 10 years

## **Steering Committee role – Inform & Engage**

Participate in bi-monthly meeting discussions, provide feedback on prioritized actions, provide feedback on a draft outdoor recreation economy vision, participate in broad public outreach activities.

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# Winter / Spring 2024

Finalize prioritization and vision

## **VOREC program & SCORP activities**

- Capture partner feedback on prioritization and vision
- Conduct multiple engagement activities to collect public input on draft priorities
- Develop updated Action Plan and SCORP Report
- Develop partnership map of the VOREC program network

## **Steering Committee role – Inform & Engage**

Participate in bi-monthly meeting discussions, review and provide feedback on updated Action Plan, review and provide feedback on partnership map, review and provide feedback on the SCORP report

---

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, August 11, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

### Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 805 864 188#

### Objectives

- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Explore outdoor recreation resilience in Vermont.
- Learn about recommendations for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategies for public engagement in planning processes.
- Collect feedback on options for naming the SCORP / VOREC action planning process.

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
10:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, Program Manager
10:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve June minutes</li><li>• Program Manager Updates</li><li>• Sector updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn)</li><li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li><li>○ VTGC (Abby Long)</li><li>○ VOBA (Wendy Knight <i>on behalf of Kelly Ault</i>)</li></ul></li></ul>	Becca Washburn, Chair Jackie
11:00 a.m.	Resilience in Outdoor Recreation Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does a resilient recreation economy involve?</li><li>• What does it look like in Vermont?</li><li>• What does the outdoor recreation community need to take it on I?</li></ul>	Jackie / Becca ALL
11:20 a.m.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategies for the SCORP and VOREC Action Plan	Dexter Mayo, University of Vermont / FPR Summer Intern
11:40 a.m.	SCORP / VOREC Action Plan Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Process name</li></ul>	Jackie
11:50 a.m.	<b>Public comment</b>	ALL
11:55 a.m.	<b>Other business</b>	ALL
12:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	ALL

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

August 11, 2023 | 10:00am – 12:00pm

via Microsoft Teams

*This meeting was recorded and you can listen to committee discussion and decisions on the [Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's YouTube channel](#).*

### In attendance

#### *Steering committee:*

- Frazier Blair, Orvis
- Mike Debonis, Green Mountain Club
- Jeanne Gervais, Island Pond Chamber
- Commissioner Josh Hanford, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, Vice Chair
- Abby Long, Kingdom Trails, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Josh Ryan, Timber & Stone LLC
- Shelby Semmes, Trust For Public Land
- Drew Simmons, Pale Morning Media
- Frank Stanley, VT Traditions Coalition
- Karrie Thomas, Northern Forest Canoe Trail
- Becca Washburn, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Chair

#### *Steering committee – absent:*

- Marc Sherman, Outdoor Gear Exchange

#### *Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) / Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) staff:*

- Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager
- Claire Polfus, FPR Recreation Program Manager
- Dexter Mayo, FPR Intern

#### *Members of the public:*

- Nick Bennette, Vermont Mountain Bike Alliance (VMBA), Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC)
- Janet Callison, Lake Champlain Sailing Center
- Ann Creaven, Glover Equity, Trails and Planning Commission
- Erin Fernandez, Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports
- Commissioner Wendy Knight, Department of Liquor & Lottery and VOBA Board Member
- Molly Mahar, Vermont Ski Areas Association
- Ethan Murphy, Middlebury Skatepark Project
- Tommy O'Connor, Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association (VASA)
- Sharon Plumb, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Angela Shambaugh, Federation of Vermont's Lakes and Ponds
- Jennifer Waite, National Parks Service (NPS) Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)

Jackie started the meeting.

## Business Meeting

### *June meeting minutes*

- Becca asked for motion to approve the minutes.
- Josh moved to approve.
- Frazier seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously.

### *Updates*

#### Program Manager

- Jackie reported on outdoor recreation flood recovery work following the July flooding.
  - o Brought together a Recreation Flood Recovery group made up of Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC), Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA), Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), FPR State Lands staff, Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) and the Vermont Department of Marketing and Tourism (VDTM).
  - o Developed emergency messages about flood safety and response and are now working on assessing and understanding flood damage.
- Jackie reported on what we know about current recreation damage assessment.
  - o Trails that upgraded or re-located after Hurricane Irene did much better than trails that didn't.
  - o Vermont State Parks recovered quickly. Camp Plymouth is the only park that remains fully closed with other parks having select closures. Updates are being posted on the [Vermont State Parks website](#).
  - o The hardest hit places on State lands were Okemo State Forest, Groton State Forest, and Proctor Piper State Forest.
  - o The Long Trail was minimally damaged according to the Green Mountain Club.
  - o The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) experienced significant damage along with parts of the Cross-Vermont Trail.
  - o Select municipalities like Montpelier and Ludlow were hit hard by flooding and it has been hard to get an accurate assessment because of ongoing summer projects. It is likely that they will need assistance to recover.
  - o Outdoor businesses have experienced significant loss both physical and because of economic injury due to closed recreational resources, canceled reservations and services, and forced closures to retail and rentals.
- Jackie shared an update about the VOREC Community Grant Program.
  - o The program needs to have all funds allocated by June 2024.
  - o The next round is launching in October with applications due before the Thanksgiving holiday.
  - o There will be no Letter of Interest round.
  - o A funding track for flood recovery and resilience is being added.

#### Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)

- Becca provided the update.

- Shared an update on H.126 (otherwise known as 30x30) and work on the database and planning for conservation.
- FPR is developing a working agreement with VTGC to build a shared understanding of how and when they work together.
- Shared a staff update, including Steve Gomez joining FPR as the Policy and Special Projects Manager and Grant Specialist Lauren Honican's departure.
- She also shared information about FPR's recruitment to hire a new Grant Program Manager that is planned to head up a future Recreation Grants Team of three people.

#### Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC)

- Abby provided the update.
  - Shared VTGC's work with FPR on the working agreement.
  - Shared about VTGC's work to collect data on flood impacts following extreme flooding events in early July. She noted appreciation for the State of Vermont reaching out to VTGC to help with collecting that data and that the flooding event has spurred conversations at VTGC about best practices for rebuilding impacted recreation assets.
  - Provided an update on Sharon's admin work including a new E-newsletter, selection of a contractor for a new website including a new logo, and development of a member survey.
  - Noted that the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation + Trails Symposium will be happening at the Killington Grant Resort Hotel in late September with Mirna Valerio as the key note speaker.

#### Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD)

- Josh provided the update.
  - Shared that ACCD has been doing a lot of work on flood recovery including the development and launch of the Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program (BEGAP) which has \$20M to award to businesses that suffered physical impacts from the July flooding. Josh noted that this includes landlords as eligible applicants.
  - Noted that there are 3,000 residential properties that have been verified by FEMA as having damage due to the flood but for most the damage was minor. The most heavily impacted homes were part of mobile parks.
- Karrie shared that she observed a noticeable difference in the way communities hit by flooding in the Adirondacks messaged visitation following the flood versus Vermont. She shared that she has heard from people with plans to visit Vermont who think the entirety of the state was destroyed, which simply isn't true, and shared that communities who weren't hit hard by the flood still need to receive those visitors. She asked if there is messaging going out from the state to encourage people to come.
  - Josh responded that there will be messaging going out through the Department of Marketing and Tourism and Think Vermont.
- Josh shared about the challenges communities are facing making decisions about whether to open or close trails. He noted the Town of Randolph as an example. They have had their trails closed for most of the season to protect them because it has been so wet. Meanwhile there was an ongoing push to hold a major annual fundraiser and trail event. They ended up canceling the event because after protecting the trails and restricting access for locals all season, it didn't make sense to open them up for one event that would destroy them.

## Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)

- Wendy provided the update.
  - o Shared that VOBA has also pivoted significantly to flood recovery support for businesses, including frequent communications sharing information and resources, acting as a liaison to the State, providing 1:1 support, and co-hosting a webinar with Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR), Small Business Administration (SBA), and Vermont Professionals of Color Network.
  - o Noted that a survey was circulated to assess flood impacts to businesses. That survey showed that the largest impacts to outdoor businesses were lost revenue.
  - o Noted that an overwhelming number of businesses noted in the survey that to recover they need access to grants not loans, because they are small businesses and can't take on the debt.
  - o Asked Steering Committee members to mark their calendars for the Fifth Annual VOBA Member Meeting and Outdoor Economy Summit on Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 12-5p.m. at Hula in Burlington.
- Drew added to Wendy's updates.
  - o VOBA participated in a meeting with three major rating agencies where outdoor recreation was included in a group with energy and climate resilience. He noted that it was an interesting and powerful group that included Slate Valley Trails.
  - o He also added that H.126, which Becca noted earlier in the meeting, is Vermont's 30x30 initiative and that Vermont is one of ten States who are further down the road on planning.
- Shelby proposed bringing together a working group of VOREC Steering Committee members or having a re-occurring agenda item to focus in on 30x30 and participate in the effort that is being lead by FPR and VHCB.
  - o Becca supported this idea and suggested that VOREC has a role to play in helping the 30x30 effort think about how to achieve the goal of having a conservation plan that's grounded in science and Vermont Conservation Design but also thinks about and acknowledges that people live in these places and are an important part of an ecologically functional and connected landscape.

## Resilience in Outdoor Recreation Discussion

- Jackie introduced the conversation.
  - o She shared that the goal of this conversation is to learn where VOREC Steering Committee members are already talking with their outdoor recreation communities about resilience and adaptability of the outdoor recreation economy and where there are overlapping interests.
  - o The goal is also to identify opportunities to do further work on this topic.
  - o She also shared the need to identify who's missing and who needs to be involved in future conversations about building and adaptive and resilient outdoor recreation landscape.
- During the conversation members of the Steering Committee discussed the following ideas.
  - o Colorado is having conversations about what happens in a State that's so reliant on snow when it doesn't snow. Should Vermont be starting to have the same conversation? We are well suited to make the best of all weather types.



- Resiliency in Vermont requires a multi-activity approach, and many businesses right now are tied to one single aspect of recreation. How do we help businesses diversify their customer base?
- There has been an increase in wildfires which is causing worsening air quality conditions across the state. There need to be policies that address when it's safe to work outside. Air quality conditions tie in to trail crews and their ability to complete trail work during the summer months.
- 100-year storms are now decade storms and more sustainable trail design (including culvert sizing) need to be adjusted to those expectations. Now is a great opportunity to see what survived and what was damaged in the storms and share with one another about approaches that worked.
- There are two tiers of wet-weather 'resilient' trails, 1) those that can survive these sorts of events, if they are avoided when wet and 2) those that can be used even during active precipitation. Modern trail building standards accomplish the first but the second requires more intense techniques like rock armoring, elevating trail tread and more active drainage.
- Further work can be done on state lands stewardship policies and protocols to ensure more resilient recreation assets. Trails that are machine built are more sustainable for the long term.
- VTGC can be a resource for messaging best management practices for trails and capturing lessons learned.
- Develop a process for communicating to people to stay of trails and why that's important. We can also promote alternative activities when trails are wet like going paddling or gravel riding.
- Vermont should be looking to other states that are doing this work well and asking what we can learn from them. Example: the transition work happening in the Appalachian region called the Just Transition Fund.
- Sustainable development of waterway infrastructure is important and we need to think about how to do that well and get the resources for that work.
- Climate refugees are expected to come to Vermont. As a state we need to think about what accepting increased residents and recreationists looks like.
- There is a need to educate policy makers about the vulnerability of outdoor recreation in Vermont, especially in extreme weather events.
- Inventory how businesses responded to closures during the pandemic and identify entrepreneurship opportunities. What public resources were most effective in supporting businesses during closures?
- Some of the partners identified as missing from these conversation
  - Department of Fish & Wildlife
  - Land managers
  - Land Use planners
  - Public health professionals
  - Climate energy professionals
  - Local Motion
  - Watershed United Vermont
  - Vermont River Conservancy
  - Northern Forest Center
  - Federation of VT Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP)
  - The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

- Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and other conservation partners that engage with recreation
- Vermont Adaptive

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategies for the SCORP and VOREC Action Plan**

- Jackie introduced Dexter to present the outcomes from her internship with FPR.
- Dexter presented on her findings (see appendix for slides) which included:
  - Vermont is making strides in the right direction, but DEI work is never finished.
  - Networking across the state has proven to be the best way to reach new communities and spread resources.
  - Prior Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) has been unbiased towards lower income and more diverse communities but biased towards higher population centers or areas for tourism and recreation.
  - Accountability, transparency, and trust are the foundation of uplifting marginalized communities.
- Jackie asked Dexter if there was anyone she talked to who was doing interesting DEI work and what their specific strategies were.
  - Dexter mentioned connecting with the North Branch Nature Center. They are doing work to ensure that they are well known as a safe space for all people. They are accomplishing this by allowing Abenaki people to forage on the land, have community gardens and programs where they don't split people up by gender. They also have an accessible walking trail which isn't just ADA accessible but engages people with learning disabilities, including tactile elements and elements to smell and touch.
- Claire shared that FPR will be using Dexter's finding to inform work related to the VOREC Community Grant Program, Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and launching the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) / VOREC Action Planning process.

### **SCORP / VOREC Action Plan Next Steps**

- Jackie shared that ahead of the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation + Trails Symposium FPR and VOREC are working on branding for this planning process and developing a public facing website.
  - The idea is for the website to be a central place for members of the public and partners to learn about this process and opportunities where they can get engaged.
  - The name will demonstrate publicly the aligned approach FPR and VOREC are taking to developing the next SCORP / VOREC Action plan.
- Jackie shared that following the meeting, FPR and VOREC will be proposing some name options to the Steering Committee.

### **Public Comment**

- Ann thanked the VOREC Steering Committee for opening up these conversations to public stakeholders. She mentioned Glover's work with their trail committee to focus on finding various trails throughout the Town and talking with landowners about opening access. She mentioned an opportunity with a property owner in the Black Hills who has been putting trails in on their property. That property owner's intention is to open that trail system for public use at

some point and the Glover trail committee is working on developing those trails with the property owner.

- Angela also thanked the VOREC Steering Committee for opening up the conversation. She's looking forward to learning more.
- Ethan shared that although there was lots of flooding damage in Ludlow, the project funded by a VOREC Community Grant survived and it was encouraging to see that the concrete used in that project held up and is being repaired. The location close to the river is unfortunate but the fact that it was resilient is encouraging.

#### **Other Business**

- Jackie shared that there are a couple additional national and regional events to be aware of.
  - o The North Carolina Outdoor Economy Summit is happening September 19 – 21 and the Confluence of States and the State Outdoor Business Alliance Network (SOBAN) will be participating and holding their own meetings.
  - o The Northern Forest 2024 Outdoor Recreation Symposium will be happening May 14 – 15, 2024.

# APPENDIX

## **VOREC MEETING: DEI FINDINGS**

Dexter Mayo  
2023 FPR Summer Intern

# SCORP INTERNSHIP

- Research diversity, equity, and inclusion work being done in outdoor recreation in VT
- Assess past SCORP processes and provide input to increase the voices of marginalized communities in 2024
- Compare recent LWCF grants to demographics to identify patterns in outdoor recreation funding across VT

# INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS

## WHAT WORKS IN VT

- Partnerships and collaboration
- Providing variety
- Creating a connection with the outdoors through stewardship
- Using outdoor education to expose youth
- Centering marginalized voices

## WHERE VT CAN IMPROVE

- Increasing representation in marketing, etc.
- Widened scope of outreach
- Accountability for DEI commitments
- Providing resources and instruction for people to start from the ground up



## TOP 10 FUNDED TOWNS

1. Burlington
2. Rutland
3. Winooski
4. Essex
5. Montpelier
6. South Burlington
7. Barre
8. Colchester
9. St. Albans
10. Shelburne

# LWCF FUNDING

- Land and Water Conservation Fund grants from 1996-2012
- Assessing each towns' total LWCF funding compared to population, median income, and % non-white residents
- Looking for state-wide and county-wide patterns

# COUNTY AND STATE TRENDS

- Towns with the most funding in each county usually had high population, low income, or high % POC residents
- Most towns had 1-3 grants, towns with more than 5 grants either had high population, % non-white residents, or low income
- Towns that had low population and lots of grants were usually well-known visitation hotspots
- Top-funded towns in the state were well known or had large populations

# SUMMARY

- VT is making strides in the right direction, but DEI work is never finished
- Networking across the state has proven to be the best way to reach new communities and spread resources
- Prior LWCF funding has been unbiased towards lower income and more diverse communities, but biased towards higher population centers or areas for tourism, recreation
- Accountability, transparency, and trust are the foundation of uplifting marginalized communities