

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – April 7, 2025

Board members present: John Connell, John Koier, Michael Lazorchak, Lisa Paone, Phyl Newbeck, and Livy Strong

Guest: Sara Lourie

Livy called the meeting to order at 7:00.

1. Stevensville Cabin

Sara Lourie said there was a well-attended workshop in Huntington with the carpenter who took the Stevensville Cabin down and is putting it back together. The foundation is half done and should be finished in late spring or early summer. She is wondering whether it makes sense to create a 501c3 or work with an organization which already has one. She recognizes that JULT deals with land, not buildings, but the cabin is on 17 acres of land. She would like the cabin to be a natural history/conservation education space. She is asking for our thoughts and/or advice.

Sara has spoken to the Underhill Historical Society, Vermont State Parks, the Green Mountain Club and Vermont Huts and only the last one seemed willing to help. The others said they'd be interested after it is completed. She isn't sure that the interests of those organizations mesh with her vision for the property. Michael thought it would be great for Sara to keep us apprised of the process of the construction. The building dates back to the 1880's but the style of construction is older. In 1980 it was on a listing of state buildings of historical significance. Livy suggested that Sara contact the Chittenden Historical Society.

2. Review of minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of March 2025 were approved.

3. Membership/fundraising

Our total assets are \$1,391,824 consisting of \$1,187,502 in fixed assets, \$93,996 at New England Federal Credit Union, \$11,209 in our money market account, \$47,321 in our checking account, \$29,990 in Schwab investments, \$11,739 at the Vermont Community Loan Fund and \$10,064 the Vermont Community Foundation.

We took in \$185 in memberships, and \$61 in investment income in March. We spent \$780 for advertising, \$9,937 for invasive species removal, \$1,196 for Kikas Valley Farm, \$45 for office expenses, and \$37 for subscriptions.

4. Land stewardship

The Kikas Valley Farm Timber Stand Improvement project was finished a few weeks ago. Dave Adams will inspect the job on April 15. John Koier said we might even get our \$10,000 grant

despite the fact that it was originally withdrawn. Sun Common volunteers will be planting riparian buffers along the farm fields on April 15.

John didn't have an update on the beavers, but John Connell noted that they have been very close to the road on Skunk Hollow Road. It is possible that beavers are using the culvert to get from the agricultural land to the wetland. If it does become clogged it would be good to consider a beaver exclusion fence. The culvert by the parking lot is probably too small and too exposed to be compromised. There is a chance the beavers will build a dam between the two culverts in the ditch, so we need to keep an eye on that. John Koier and Sabina will talk to the Wingate residents regarding their concerns about the beavers. The chance of the beavers affecting the homes is almost nil but there is still fear on the part of at least one homeowner so we will work on some publicity around that.

Livy is trying to find someone to hay the Riverside Meadow hay field. Carroll Stygles was the person who used to hay the area, but he passed away. Tammy and Gary Davis have to go through a certification process to make sure they can hay it and still be called organic. Roughly three years ago, there was a lime application and spreading of composted cow manure but if they can hay it, they'd really like to. If it can't be certified, Norma Blades has provided Livy with some names.

The beaver exclusion fence at Wolfrun Natural Area seems to be doing its job. It's unclear if the beavers are still there and there is a lot of debris. We wouldn't be able to get an excavator to clean it out. We may need to hire people who can do it manually.

Livy wanted to know if we wanted to have animals on Skunk Hollow pasture. Anyone who wants to use it for pasture would need to install fencing. Phyl said she would be willing to contribute funds for that, if needed. Our part of the land is 10 acres, and a neighbor owns another 10 acres. We did some plantings to protect the waterway. Livy will ask Sabina if she has any ideas for where to find people with livestock. Michael said a man named Dan Smith in East Montpelier has funding for collars for livestock which are like an invisible fence. He did a pilot project with Stowe Electric, and the sheep stayed in place. That would negate the need for fencing.

5. Events

We have a wildflower walk on May 3 and a bird walk on May 10. We will collaborate with the Jericho Conservation Commission on a movie about beavers. The Conservation Commission will take the lead on this. We had 50 people for the winter tree identification walk but no new memberships came of it. Livy said a large number of the participants came from South Burlington. She doesn't ask people to sign up for events, but she does hand out newsletters with membership panels to participants. Lisa suggested that it would be helpful to ask people to sign up at the event with their addresses and to let us know how they learned about the event. She offered to do that at our May 3 wildflower walk.

6. Publicity

The spring newsletter went out. Two UVM students are working on infographics for us. They made one for the winter tree identification walk and one for the spring wildflower walk. They are doing one for the bird walk and they want to make a video about our land trust. They will also help us with our Instagram accounts. They made a poster for Mills Riverside Park with the land trust and park district logos.

7. Community News

Ann Gnagney and Tom Baribault will be giving a workshop this Saturday.

8. Any other business.

Phyl, Livy, and Michael will form a subcommittee to work on our strategic plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45

Respectfully submitted,
Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary