**Vermont Monitoring Cooperative Lye Brook Wilderness Area Subcommittee Meeting**

**Meeting Notes**

**February 2, 2016, 9am-12pm**

**705 Spear St., South Burlington**

In attendance: Angie Quintana, Jim Duncan, Judy Rosovsky, Jim Kellogg, Carl Waite, Ethan Swift, Dave Hardy

Meeting Objectives:

* + Yearly Project Review and Update
	+ Review action items from previous meetings
	+ Identify future meetings and needs
* UVM Parks Studies Lab, GMC, USFS GMNF will draft a better way to ask people about their wilderness experience. Determine whether there will be funding for a caretaker in 2016 to continue camper/hiker use. Bob Manning and Bill Valliere at UVM conducted surveys, and have the documentation. Jen Wright put in a grant application to cover GMC site monitoring.

Jen Wright will update the group on this at the field trip.

* Dave Hardy (GMC) will send a request for support letters from ANR & VMC to include with a grant application to address shoreline management and waste management, for the upcoming June deadline.
* VMC Data synthesis and sharing:
* AQV stream data from VTDEC: Angie and Jim K. gave Jim D. the link he can use to access the data. Angie sent Jim Duncan maps of the AQV sites after the meeting.

Jen Wright will give Jim Duncan the report

* National visitor monitoring survey, USFS—VMC reviewed the data and determined that it’s not appropriate for our needs
* DEC stream sampling—Jim Duncan made the data available at the VMC website
* Campsite monitoring/spatial data; to be made available by request only.

Jen Wright will give Jim Duncan the report

* Lichens—

Judy will contact Ralph Perron for this data

* Sentinel stream monitoring, DEC product—Jim Duncan put onto VMC website
* Geomorphic assessment data—on ANR Atlas and on DEC site.

Jim Duncan will add a link on the VMC website to the DEC website with this information.

* Website update: Jim Duncan previewed the new LB Subcommittee page, with a list of known studies and available datasets in the area.

Jim will organize group long-term/ongoing studies and those that covered a short time period and are done.

* Dave Hardy would like to create a firmer schedule of when caretakers and other GMC cooperators are at the different sites, to position them to be at higher priority sites during high-use (holiday weekends) times.

Dave will follow up on this with Jen Wright

* Sandy: State Wildlife Action Plan in progress; identifies species of concern. Speak to John Austin about what is included for LBW area—a “high priority” area? (no update on 2/2/16)
* Sandy will make a connection with Stratton re: Forest Health Monitoring, and define the objectives for reaching out to them. Installing interpretive signs at Stratton near the fire tower or in the gondola were discussed. (no update on 2/2/16)
* Heather (lead), will draft a monitoring plan with Kelly M. and Angie. Heather sent Bourn and Branch Phosphorus data to Angie and Carol. They will review. (no update on 2/2/16)
* Jim Kellogg presented some data he’s collected on possible Stratton Pond enrichment. The DEC is not currently monitoring water quality in the LB WA. Data is 20 years old. It would take 1-3 years at multiple stream sites: Little Mud at least, with three monitoring periods, and cost approx. $3-6,000.

Jim will email the graphs to the group.

* Jim Kellogg discussed monitoring Stratton more often than every 5 years for nutrient data. Dave Hardy added that there are currently 7,400 ft of footpath on the shoreline, and GMC is working to reduce it to 1,400 ft through relocating portions. There used to be 5 pit toilets.

Ethan will contact Shelly Stiles at the Bennington Co. Sustainable Forestry Consortium to try to get citizen science/lay monitoring started again to collect this and other high-priority data.

* Angie and Jen will discuss water quality at Branch and Bourn Ponds at the GMNF recreation/water quality meeting on Feb 4, 2016.
* There was strong interest from the group at the Feb 2015 meeting for a site management plan for recreation use impact on Lye Brook Wilderness Area ponds, including a public outreach strategy for Branch and Bourn Ponds, and follow-up monitoring. Management ideas included:
	+ Post a sign at one point at Branch Pond where most traffic crosses.
	+ Designate trails and campsites designated, and provide sanitary facilities.
	+ Close the site temporarily for rehabilitation.
	+ Hire a caretaker.
	+ Survey campers to learn about use and start a dialogue.
	+ Form a group of parties interested in restoring the ponds

Jen Wright and Carol Knight will initiate work on a site management plan, collaborating with interested parties, the public, Green Mountain Club, and UVM LANDS program, keeping potential WSP funding in mind.

* Forest birds and reptiles/amphibians have been surveyed in the Lye Brook WA in the past by Jim Andrews and Chris Rimmer. Jim Andrews has expressed interest in continuing his work, but needs funding.

Angie is working with Jim Andrews to try to resume monitoring in 2016.

* Ethan updated the group on the Battenkill-Wallomsic-Hoosic Basin Plan: They’re moving forward with berm-removal projects where there are no houses or other incompatible uses, to restore river connection to the alluvial fan. They’re working with the Town of Manchester.

Ethan will share the 2007 Geomorphic Assessment with Dan McKinley and Angie Quintana

Angie will coordinate a trip to assess the LB Wilderness area this Spring for opportunities to remove berms and add large woody material. The group may hike to the falls and visit the DEC’s 4.1 fishless site. An invitation will be extended to the subcommittee.

* Sandy will contact the Stratton Ski Area to discuss forest health monitoring.
* Angie will coordinate a meeting in 2017 to discuss 2018 Long-term Ecosystem Monitoring data collection.
* Angie will add a list of synthesis priorities and of potential projects to the end of future agendas and notes.
* Judy will send out the powerpoint summarizing the field trip to LB Wilderness Area on August 19, 2015.
* **Field trip to Lye Brook Wilderness in August 2016**—date to be determined. We will drive up the 4WD access road to Prospect Rock to observe air quality for that day, and then continue further to the second gate and proceed on foot, hiking along Branch Pond Trail and portions of the historic railroad bed, observing the old foundations and implements along the way. We will stop at Bourn Brook, which is being considered for reclassification to CLASS A1 where it is not already in wilderness. We’ll proceed to GMC’s Douglas Shelter. We might be able to visit a forest health plot and look at lichens. Lastly, we will visit Little Mud Pond, which lies within the wilderness area. If time permits, DEC will sample the pond with a small inflatable raft.

Special invitation for Ralph and Sandy: Would you like to speak about air quality/lichens and forest health while there? Is anyone else interested in presenting on a related topic during the visit?

* **VMC Long-Term Soil Monitoring:** Angie is working on the soil Hg analysis for the 2012 samples that still have to be done. The project was designed to detect trends in soils due to acid deposition and climate change.

November 2016 agenda item: Long-Term Soil Monitoring Project Updates for 2017 data collection

* November 2016 agenda item: Jen will update the group on the Wilderness program and selected performance elements.
* The next Subcommittee Meeting will be on Thursday, November 17, 2015, in Middlebury or Rochester

Ethan Swift will reserve a space in Middlebury for the November. Backup space is in Rochester.

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| **Upcoming meetings** |
| * Spring Field Trip to the Lye Brook WA to assess stream geomorphic rehabilitation opportunities
* August Field Trip to Branch and/or Bourn ponds and Prospect Rock, Little Mud Pond
* Thursday, November 17, 2015: Lye Brook Subcommittee Meeting in Middlebury or Rochester
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/s/Angie Quintana, 2/4/2016