Overview

Hosting Organization:
The Conservation Fund

Facilitator:
This meeting was facilitated by Nancy Bell of The Conservation Fund. The responses were compiled by Leah Mital-Skiff.

Notice:
All Poultney residents were invited with a direct mail flyer and flyers were posted in public locations in town.

Venue:
Meeting was held Thursday May 16, 2013 from 6-9pm at St. Raphael’s Parrish Hall in Poultney. A light meal and beverages were served to midway through the evening. Approximately 65 people attended.

Meeting Structure:
Participants broke into working groups at tables. There were 7 tables of 8-10 each. Five tables were Poultney residents and two tables were for non-resident attendees marked as “Other Interests.” Each table answered 6 questions and marked areas or information of note on maps of the town. Scribes were directed to write what participants said, using their exact words. Every effort was made to copy details of what was said word for word from the meeting flip charts into this document. This document summarizes the textual responses to 6 questions. The geographical information from notes made on the maps will be supplied separately on a map.

Overview of process of summarizing results:
The compilation of responses has been grouped into general themes that concentrated or focused on certain topics. The numbers in parentheses by an item in the results, such as Open Public Access (4), represent the number of tables at which a specific item or topic was mentioned. Individual comments and additional details are noted to preserve the actual individual statements made.

The following pages are the compiled responses of Poultney residents to six questions as follows:
Question 1: What do you love about this land?

Recreation/Education (4)
- Hiking (3)
- Snowmobiling/snowmobiling trails (2) – great snowmobiling access to other parts of the state
- ATV trails
- Hunting (2)– deer, turkey
- Mountain biking
- XC skiing (3)
- Berry picking
- Snowshoeing
- Wildlife (4) tracking, viewing – eagles, deer, turkeys, fawns, bobcats near ledges, bears, moose
- Wandering the back roads and bushwacking
- Taking students to nearby preserved land
- Various uses for trails
- Public access (2)

Places – trails, roads, structures, spots
- “Tin shack” shelter – resting place for people using deer camp
- Ames Hollow Road (3) – views
- The road that leads to Hampshire Hollow and then on to Ames Hollow Rd
- Tree stands – “Wagner allowed deer stands”
- Deer camp
- The back roads – for photography
- Spruce Knoll/Knob (2) – intact, virgin forest, because it is so steep
- Endless Brook
- Scenery driving up Route 4
- Birdseye view to the north

Character of the land
- Solitude of the land (4) – “It feels remote. You don’t see signs of humans. It is vast” “You can see from the whole town”, no neighbors, quiet
- The view, scenic value, beauty (6)– views from ridges and ledges (Hog Back), the sunset illuminating the ridge, beauty unlike any other place, unique appearance of the mountains – different than others
• No windmills
• Undeveloped (6) – unspoiled, “When we lived in Phoenix, there was a section of desert gone each month.”, large tract of land, the fact that no one lives there, unfragmented north of Rt. 140, mostly unfragmented but accessible, Vast forested landscape, one of the largest
• Wildflowers and plants, wildflowers above Goodrich road
• “there are always surprises in nature”
• “This is a very special place to many people”, I love it because I live on it
• Both a working and wildlife landscape – mixed use

History of the land (6)
• Farming history (2) – Kennedy and others, Potato patch – can still see the furrows, Ames family
• Lumbering history
• Early settlers (2), My family has been here since before the Civil War
• 4 of the original valiant 13 women lived here and made a difference at Ft. Ticonderoga
• Old cellar holes
• Family cemeteries
• Preserves the history of land use and changes over time
• Herrick Mountain – was owned by Amos Herich
• Firetower
• Pond Armstrong Theodore King?

Ecological value, Topography, Conservation-oriented
• Water quality (2) - Our highest land - our source of clean water
• 2 watersheds
• Topography (2)- rugged, high elevation, the ridges
• Waterfalls, the way they ice up, great winter snow
• Wildlife, Ecological diversity (3) – species, natural community
• Great natural resource
• Wildlife corridor
• Native habitat (2)– large enough that it protects native habitats, contiguous habitat
• That our eastern landscape may be protected

Question #2: What is your vision for this land?

Recreation/Education
• Rules and Regulations for 4-wheelers
• Open Public Access (4) - Encourage people to visit and enjoy – hikers, kids, respectful use for recreation
• Less noise from snowmobiles
• No trail bikes, trail biking restricted to certain areas, not having fear of trail bikes
• Hiking (2), hiking trails
• Non-motorized recreation
• Keep selective trails open for snowmobiling and 4-wheeling
• Hunting, fishing to be continue to be allowed (3)
• Educational use (2) - for children, educational information at trailheads, kiosks
• Edible vegetation
• Mushroom picking

Places – trails, roads, structures, spots
• No roads or clearing
• No new major roads, minimal roads (2)
• Trails, roads
• Maintain VAST trail
• Parking – when clearing land, leave space to park, put gates behind he roads, not in front of parking spaces

Land Use (other than recreation), Land History
• No industries (2) – no industries of extraction (logging)
• No mining
• No development (2)
• Working landscape with many long-term uses (2)
• Sustainable timber management (4) - Keep forests healthy with continued logging, mixed age stands, reduce fire hazards, wildlife able to flourish
• Leave it dense
• No wind turbines (2)
• Vehicle control (2) – minimize illegal and unreasonable Jeep and 4WD traffic in general and in sensitive areas and at sensitive times of year
• Lease land to keep options open for what we don’t know today but might in the future
• Town to be able to collect taxes on the land via a lease
• Publish and make more available info on the history
• Preservation and marking of historical sites – i.e. 1850 schoolhouse up Kennedy Road, last Native American family up Ames Road

Conservation, Management
• Habitat protection (6)- for wildlife habitat, nesting birds (2), plants, the next generation (2), Return of snowshoe hares, bird sanctuary, as a trust for wildlife with no noise pollution, conserve many types of habitat for species diversity, for bobcats, bears, falcons, hawks, eagles
• “Less is more”
• Take possibility of private development off the table
• Leave people out of it to prevent imminent domain
• SGPS?
• Conserved, not preserved – working landscape, recreation – revenue goes to management
• No changes (4)- as it is right now, future generations to see it as I see it, stay wild forever (2)
• Leave enough of it wild for bears and other large-range animals
• Part of national trust
• Poultney town forest
• Protected by town charter (2) – to maintain town’s voice with new ownership of this land
• Develop good forest management plan (4) – include species in plan, Game and non-game management, for wildlife - deer and grouse habitat, managed on a large-scale, not fragmented
• Portions of forest to be set aside
• Riparian buffers with no logging
• Partnership with Green Mountain College – for research, study
• Not consumed by the government

Question #3: What do you see as threats to your vision?

Recreation/Education
• Lack of understanding from our youth regarding damage from their recreation (ruts, cutting fences, littering, illegally opening gates, damming up culverts, “muddin”)

Places – trails, roads, structures, spots
• Opening up road from Bird’s Eye to Ames Hollow (2) – becoming a pass through
• Giant water bars (after logging) restricting fire vehicle access
• Lack of road signs
• Additional road access, parking
• Four-wheeler trails destroying snowmobile trails
• Lack of restriction on vehicles being allowed to go anywhere
• Increased vehicles
• Gated roads (2) – being locked out at various times of year
• Loss of snowmobile access (2) - Loss of VAST trail, closing trail

Land Use (other than recreation), Land History
• Wind turbines(4) – industrial wind entrepreneurs,
• Development (3)– Industrial, Commercial development (houses, roads)
• Extraction (2) - Economic times leading to extractive industries, mining
• People digging up artifacts
• Increased trash with increased access
• Use and abuse of land by community – lack of pride in the land
• Logging close to rivers, lack of riparian buffer
• Lack of awareness, clarity by towns, state, residents on road classification and legal use

Conservation, Management, Funding
• Mismanagement (5)
  o Future managers who are not responsive to community needs, if the town has problems with the conveyance of this land
  o people’s views not listened to,
  o Short-term management/planning
  o Mismanagement of forest and habitat
  o Problems with enforcement of rules
• Longevity of current vision (2) - If conservation is not permanent, present vision not honored
• General uncertainty regarding who is going to manage the land, Oversight – who is going to watch the new owners/managers
• Funding issues (4)–
  o Underfunding (3) - to carry out management plan,
  o People with money pushing what they want
  o Financial burden (2) of supporting conservation, maintenance of class 4 roads
• Town losing tax revenue from this land (2)
• Government control (4) –
  o Don’t let politicians destroy it,
  o If it becomes state land, it opens land to statewide interests, not just local interests,
  o restrictions on tapping maples, logging, use,
  o “the state messing it up”
  o Rules and regulations of WMA
• Private ownership not amenable to public use
• Eminent domain by the state, respect Act 250
• Fragmentation
• Invasive species, especially with new roads
• Acid rain

Question #4: What do you see as solutions to threats?

Recreation/Education
• Keep people interested in the land by holding meeting
• Education (2)-
  o Programs to educate people about the land, visits to the schools (2), bring children to the area, educate on value of woodland
  o Educate young and old on responsible use, ecological sensitivity
• Publicize info about the place to encourage visitation – “this place is a gem”

Places – trails, roads, structures, spots
• Roads need to be classified and on map by 2014 for legal status and public recognition
• Disaster assistance maintaining mountain roads
• Infrastructure to generate interest and allow access – hiking trails, parking areas, interpretive signs
• Maintain existing VAST trails
• Barricade road - Birdseye to Amos Hollow
• Signage to encourage “carry in, carry out”
• Restriction of Roads, no road development (2)
• Parking spots with bear-proof trash cans
• Move gates back to allow for small parking spots
• Add gates to prevent vehicles (2) – physical barriers to prevent improper trail use
• Better policing of trail use
• Permanent forest ranger tower
• Maintain public info on trail uses and plans

Land Use (other than recreation), Land History
Find a middle ground for land use – between those who want to keep people out and those who want to tear it up with their trucks
Allow it to serve as a working landscape and revenue stream
Enforcement of proper trail use
Get Mike Bradley to relate surveying and other history

Conservation, Management, Funding, Vision

- Land to go to Green Mountain College - Would it fit well into their plan
- Ensure that state/state forester sticks to, implements, and respects the plan
- Long-term planning (4)
  - through deeds, funding, and support (2)
  - Zoning structure (2)
  - Conservation easement
  - A good forest management plan
  - Town bylaws, covenants
  - Unbreakable covenants
  - Lock in a mission statement through the charter that stipulates no commercial use in future
  - TCF to provide long-term forest management plan before turning it over
  - Support from regional planning commission
- Long-term funding (4)
  - Endowment for long-term management
  - Commitment to long-term funding
  - Some form of P.I.L.O.T. payment
  - MOU with Fish and Wildlife to cost-share road maintenance
  - State funding
  - Transfer ownership to an entity that has the resources to properly manage
- Citizen support for management, stewardship (4)
  - Local volunteers/club for stewardship
  - Public to have part in regulatory process
  - Encourage snowmobile clubs (and VASA) to be active in helping to manage the land (2)
  - Users to provide support
- Accommodate as many visions as possible – broad and inclusive
- Use resources such as Green Mountain College (2) – as an educational tool, Castleton State College, snowmobile club, Poultney Fish and Game Club
- Comprehensive management plan for sustainable logging(2) – draft horse only
- Effective forest management plan
- Invasive species management on logging roads
- Wildlife census
- Create brook trout habitat
- Conservation!

Question #5: Who do you need to be to fulfill your vision?
Personal

- Involved (3) – be part of decision making group
- Persistent (6) - stubborn – take a stand, able to kick ass, dedicated, but graceful, know what you want, set sights, go for it
- Squeaky wheel
- Passionate (2)
- Responsible
- Resourceful (2) – research what’s been done, know resources to go to
- Organizational skills (2)
- Politically savvy (3)
- Powerful
- Visionary (3), creative thinker, dynamic, long-range thinker, 
- Have an intimate understanding of the land (3) – naturalist
- Conservationist
- Work smart
- Educated (2)
- Educator
- Love the land (3), Earth loving and environmental, love of the area
- Love wildlife
- Wealthy (3) - Deep pockets, well fed
- Not motivated by profit
- A good lawyer

Collaborative

- Connected
- Open-minded (6) – flexible, willing to hear people, non-extremist
- Able to compromise (3)
- Good listener (3)
- Patient (2)
- Good communicator (4)
- Respected and respectful, diplomatic (3)
- Leadership (3) – consensus builder, put people together
- Inclusive, willing to work as a team
- Work well with people in general, need to know people
- Long-range - Keep enthusiasm for future generations, carry vision of a long-term plan

- Al Gore
- Obama
• Not Obama
• George Soros
• Bill Gates
• John Muir
• Aldo Leopold

Question #6: What is one thing you can commit to doing to move your vision forward?

• Follow through, stay involved - Wendy Cadeux
• Land visitation, Education
  o Visit the land more; keep my eyes open
  o Show people the land as a guide
  o Encourage young people to hunt
  o Bring science and history classes to the land
  o Promote and support educational programs – i.e. biology, forestry – Mary Jo Teetor
  o Field trips with students to inventory the land – Jim Graves
  o Site visits – Brian and Pat Traverse
  o Hikes
• Be informed, keep others informed about the property – Phil Nietupski, Dick Balt
  o Share information I have with other people (2) – Andrea Mott farmvt@aol.com
  o Learn more about the property – Johanne Bartram 287-4381
  o Get the word out to others about their resource/land – Pam
  o Spread the good word, tell my neighbors – Jaime Lee
  o Contact political reps, voice support of this splendid idea
  o Offer my expertise
• Lay out and cut trails – Tom, Chuck, Rod, Richard
• Identify wildlife (tracking, game cameras, species/habitats) – Scott, Tom, Pam

• Photography
  o Encourage people to share their photographs
  o Make my photographs available – Kathryn Crockett 287-5753
  o Walk and photograph the land – Chuck
  o Organize other photographers - Chuck
• History
  o Get oral history of the area from Mike Bradley – Ira Johnson)
  o Capture the history of the land that respects stories, history, records – Laird
    ▪ Get oral history from Richard
    ▪ Scribe oral history – David, Chuck
• Land maintenance, surveillance
  o Take Green Mountain College students to maintain trails – Nate Furman 801-558-8209
  o Promote/coordinate Green Mountain College initiatives – Tom Pugh
  o Police the land
  o Speak up if I see threats
• Work with forest managers – Brian and Pat Traverse

• Clubs, associations, public efforts
  o Be active in the clubs (VAST, VASA)
  o Support the active involvement of the snowmobile club – Ernie DeMatties
  o Incorporate this property into Kehoe Conservation Camp and take campers there (John Towne, Gary Brayton)
  o Bring boy and girl scout and 4H groups to land – José Galvez
  o Audubon chapter in West Rutland
  o Link in to Poultney 20/20 – Larry Sullivan
  o Rotary Club and other church and service clubs
  o Write to Fish and Game
  o Promote town plan and zoning – Dick Turner

• “Stand by our land”, don’t sway away from these ideas – Mark Teetor