

Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee

Minutes

Thursday March 19, 2026

1. Call to Order – Time: 5:34
 - Committee Members Present: Chris Russo, Janette Shaffer, Jim Deshler, Greg Rouleau, Emily Hoffman (arrived ~6:00).
 - Others: Amanda Gustin. Ryan Horvath, prospective new member.
2. Adjustments to Agenda
 - Chris: Add the creation of a contact list to end of agenda
 - Motion by Chris: Add the creation of a contact/distribution list for users/friends of the Cow Pasture to the meeting agenda. Seconded by Jim. Vote: All in favor.
3. Agenda Items:

Approval of Minutes: January 15, 2026

- Motion by Greg: to approve January minutes as written. Seconded by Janette. Vote: All in favor.

Welcome Ryan Horvath: Seeking council approval to become a member

- Barre resident. Background in database design. Regular user of the Cow Pasture with his kids.

Central Vermont Career Center: Exploratory Class-field days

- How do we get the video onto the City' youtube page?
 - Amanda suggests reaching out to Chris Kirby, Janette will do this.
- On 4/10 the CVCC class will be hiking in the CP to find and discuss the invasives. In the past ~20 students participated with Stephanie. May have even more students this year, with a second class from another school joining them.
 - Chris will contact Jim re tools.
- Chris will get in touch with Emily re: social media around 2026 CVCC project and will try to promote the work through local media outlets.
- Chris will confirm with Stephanie that posting the video of students to the City webpage is permissible.

ERSA Grant Subcommittee Updates: 2026 Trail Project.

- RK Miles is providing a \$750 donation.
 - They will provide a gift card for Zac to use.
- CP has a City acct at RK Miles, should be able to get a discount on purchases.
- Chris plans to reach out to Fontaine Sawmill to ask if they can support us with a donation also.
- The ERSA sub-committee should plan to meet soon:
 - Need to discuss time-frame of project, cost limitations, need for updated contract with Zac.

Upcoming Training and Events: Emily and Jim

- Jim: Trail day - possible dates.
 - 5/9, 5/10, 5/23 or 5/24?
 - Jim will connect with Susan and Emily to coordinate with them re: invasive education date.
 - Pull in MTA & BRC. Emily could promote both events on social media, FPF, etc.

Updates and Discussions:

Conservation & Access Advisory Group

- Chris: This group has not met recently. Will look into reestablishing it. Ryan could be a good match for this type of work.
- Chris: contacted Nicolas about installing 4x4 posts and signage at Johnson Street Crow Trail access point to demarcate the City property.

Invasive Plant Control

- An invasive workshop event coming in the near future (spring '26).
- Emily and Susan are working on a print piece to go along with the invasive workshop.
 - Possible formats:
 - 8.5"x11" 8-12 page doc, folder/stapled
 - 11"x17" trifold field guide style
 - Double sided 8.5"x11" handout.
 - Content will be consistent across formats, covering the same six invasive species.

- Printed materials may be condensed and include a QR code linking to additional information on a City-hosted webpage containing the full booklet.
- A downloadable, mobile-friendly PDF was suggested for easy access to the doc.
- Any online content must meet accessibility guidelines.
- Motion by Chris: Use Semper Bond funds to support any materials and printing needed for the invasive document. Seconded by Janette. Vote: All in favor.
- Susan's preferred days: May 9th or April 18th. April may have snow? Maybe May will be better.
- Motion by Janette: Susan & Jim coordinate on dates and propose them to the group. Seconded by Chris. Vote: All in favor.

Social Media

- Emily update about recent posts:
 - Post about barred owls by Ken Benton at NBNC.
 - CVCC invasive species and student work - posted more images.
 - Trailfinder app and mapping of trails at CP.
 - Please share any ideas or cool photos from the CP with Emily. She will use them for social media.
- Greg Question: why wouldn't we want to promote walking the snowmobile trail in the winter? Janette suggested Greg take a pic or two when he's on the trail, write a short blurb and send it to Emily for promoting walking the groomed trail in the winter. Greg committed to doing this next winter...

Snopees

- Greg Update: The Sno Bees season is over. VAST trails are closed across the state. Not enough base to groom. It was a good season. Many people were out enjoying the CP trails with their dogs.
- Greg: There was a confrontation between Greg and a trail user (mid-February). A xc skier did not like the presence of snowmobiles in the CP. She aggressively accused the snowmobiles of taking over the CP. Greg explained that VAST works cooperatively with the CP committee and has been using the trails since the 60s. Greg stated, "She was just like the Minneapolis women you see on TV, just outta control". Shared for our awareness in case this person approaches the Committee.
 - In future, Greg (or other trail users) could suggest upset users email the committee.
 - Amanda: suggestion to use the future email list and FPF to raise awareness of multiuse and snowmobile use of CP.
- Next year the Sno Bees will need to do some brushing. (No discussion of where this is needed)
- Issues at brook/snow bridge location: difficulty getting snow down to the brook. Stones in waterbars are a problem to the groomer. Greg suggested there's a need to do something different there to make them less obtrusive. Not as much snow reaches the ground, so it's hard to cover the rocks.
 - Chris: Could potentially harvest snow from the area with the buckthorn and push it down to the crossing.
 - Stream crossing has been problematic and improved in the past. Debris has filled in that area in the past. VYCC did great work to relieve the mucky situation in that area. It's a fragile area, seep/wetland and plants.
 - A bridge has been discussed previously but is not feasible in that location.
 - How much snow is needed to groom? Greg: At least a foot, but no written guideline. It's common sense.
 - Chris measured the depth when they groomed and there was only 6"-10.5" of snow cover. It's possible that they groomed when there wasn't enough snow.
 - Motion by Janette: Add a field trip to this location to the agenda for the next meeting. Seconded by Greg. Vote: All in favor.
 - Greg will be sure the VAST signage is removed this spring. Will also ensure the "Sensitive Zone" signs will be posted next winter.

City Support: Draft letter review

- Chris asked for feedback. Only Janette responded. Does anyone else have a response?
 - Motion by Janette: Deadline for Feedback by Friday 3/27 and Chris can then send it to Nicolas. Seconded by Jim. Vote: All in Favor.
 - No substantive changes expected. Chris will reach out if so. The letter will be sent directly to Nicolas.
- There are some action items:

- 4x4" posts installed at Johnson St signifying that entrance.
- The gate by Cemetery needs a lock box so City staff can access the CP when necessary.
- Request for Semperbon Funds to support future work.
- See letter for draft list of all requests by CP Committee.

CP Users Distribution List:

- Chris: Susan wanted to know if we have a distribution list. Chris has one, but hasn't had the time to update it.
 - Chris has an Excel ss printout. Hasn't been updated in years.
 - Janette: add a column for "audience"
 - For example: General public, Partners, etc.
 - Jim: collect emails at events in the future to build the list.
 - Address this in the future. Ryan may be able to work on this. Create a subcommittee?

4. Adjourn

- Motion by Greg to adjourn at 6:58. Seconded by Janette.

Meeting Minutes Submitted by: Jim Deshler

2026 Meeting Dates:

May 21, 2026

July 16, 2026

November 19, 2026

Dates of Interest:

Green-Up Day: May 2, 2026

National Trails Day: June 6, 2026