

Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee
Notes from the Study Committee Meeting
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
June 15, 2017

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Robert Pontbriand (Ayer); Leah Basbanes (Dunstable); Nadia Madden (Groton); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); Bill Flynn (Lancaster); Heidi Ricci (Shirley)
NRWA Staff: Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell
NPS: Jamie Fosburgh
Ex Officio: Libby Herland (USFW)
Guests: Mike Fleming (NRWA Board member); Jean Haight (Dunstable)

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by the chair, Lucy Wallace.

Administrative

The May 18, 2017 meeting notes were accepted as amended.

NPS Update

Jamie Fosburgh reported on the upcoming Visual Resources Program being hosted by the NPS in July at Westfield State College July 11th and 12th. Before the Visual Resources Program the NPS has organized a meeting of the New England Partnership Rivers, which will give the various committees a time to make a presentation on their activities, share approaches and network. Each partnership river committee has been provided by the NPS with accommodations for two representatives; additional participants will have to provide for themselves. Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell noted that either she or Al Futterman plan to attend the Visual Resources Program, depending on interest from other committee members.

Jamie reported on NPS budgetary issues. Funding for the current fiscal year is all set, so we are fine with our funds through September 30, 2017. However, the Administration now requires that all contracts for \$100,000 or more must be reviewed by a panel set up for this purpose. Jamie isn't sure what impact that will have on our funding in the future or how much would be available in the next fiscal year

Elizabeth asked for an update on the Study being prepared by Liz Lacy. She felt she had heard two different timelines for its completion. Is the current timeline for the W&S Study Committee to complete its Management Plan first, and afterwards the Study will be finished? How would the delay in meeting the original schedule of having a draft Study by the end of March impact our work, if at all? Jamie explained that the March deadline was set with the intention of getting Chapter 3, Eligibility and Classification, to the NPS-DC reviewers for comment before the entire Study is submitted in the fall of 2018 and, thereby, avoid delays in its approval. Liz is still on track for completing this chapter in sufficient time for an early review. The balance of the Study will be "boilerplate" and, therefore, less critical to be given pre-submittal review.

Dunstable Guest

Elizabeth reported that Judy Larter, a Dunstable representative, is moving to upstate New York and, therefore, has resigned from this Committee. Leah Basbanes had brought Jean Haight to this meeting with the hope she would be interested in taking Judy's place. Elizabeth thanked Leah for being so responsible about Dunstable's seats and everyone welcomed Jean.

Outreach Subcommittee

Robert Pontbriand reported that he and Al met with the Townsend Board of Selectmen on May 23rd and that they are now in the process of setting up a meeting with the Groton Selectmen. They also intend to meet with the Devens Enterprise Commission and MassDevelopment.

The Outreach Subcommittee (Robert, Bill, Cindy, Al and Elizabeth) met on June 13th to review and recommend possible logo designs. The only logo designs provided to Al by June 12th were from Leah's graphic designer who had provided several ideas. Robert showed them along with the Outreach Subcommittee's preferred design – a modification of the traditional Yin/Yang circle. The W&S Study Committee members offered several suggestions, including 1) using more intense, brighter shades of blue and green (it was noted there was a difference in intensity of color between the computer monitor and project images); 2) reversing the colors and adding another line to suggest the 2nd tributary to the Nashua (the configuration of our three rivers); 3) possibly using fewer words (dropping the repeated use of Nashua River?); and 4) dropping the words "sections of" and putting bullets between the names of the three rivers. Elizabeth circulated samples of logos found on line that were similar to the Yin/Yang version, and it was agreed that our logo needs to be different. Some suggested making the Yin/Yang motif appear more like a drop of water next to a leaf. Others wondered if a square would be better than a circle. There was some discussion of whether a logo using the Yin/Yang motif was good from the point of view that our message is not intended to conjure up a Yin/Yang connection. Other discussions involved use of another option developed by Leah's graphic designer which used the initial letters of the three rivers in a monogram style, with the suggestion that "N" be in the middle as opposed to "S" as the Nashua is the main river. Jamie said he would support whatever logo the Committee preferred. Leah will take the suggestions to her graphic designer. She believes the next round of changes to the logo could be made fairly readily, so the Outreach Subcommittee could review them and come to the next W&S Study Committee meeting on July 20th with a recommended logo. When Lucy expressed concern about imposing on the graphic designer's time, Leah explained that she is paying for these services. Elizabeth thanked her for her generosity, but noted that we could pay for these services from our NPS budget.

Robert reported that Cindy Knox has asked for specific examples of our outstanding resources to photograph for inclusion in the Study, Management Plan or on our website. If Committee members give her a list of species and places, she will try to photograph them over the summer. Committee members expressed gratitude for her continued generosity. Nadia Madden suggested having a competition for additional photographs as a way of spreading word of our work and engaging more of the public in it. Robert said he would bring this up at the next Outreach Subcommittee meeting.

Bill Flynn remarked that we need to reach out to stakeholders, such as the local conservation commissions. Robert noted these meetings had been discussed and would be held beginning next fall. While he imagines making presentations to conservation commissions similar to those
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made to the boards of selectmen, obviously they would be modified to address their interests in resources, their protection and management. Al will also be meeting with local conservation agents before meeting with conservation commissions to learn if there are any particular local concerns they should be aware of before going to the conservation commissions.

New Business

Elizabeth gave an update on outreach to Bolton and the NH towns. In the case of Bolton, Al had found a mutual contact who was willing to reach out to the private landowner in question to set up a meeting to explain the Wild & Scenic River designation. The mutual contact had tried to reach the landowner, but had not been successful, in spite of multiple and various attempts. Al had contacted the chairman of the Bolton Board of Selectmen to let him know that the landowner had not been reached. The chairman suggested we meet with the entire Board at its June 29th or July meetings. Al has made a formal request to be on a BOS agenda.

Elizabeth reported on an update from Jordan Bailey on outreach efforts in Hollis and Brookline, NH. There was a meeting with the Brookline Conservation Commission on June 13th that included Wild & Scenic as an agenda item, which went very well. Jordan hopes that Jamie could come to a future Conservation Commission meeting, possibly July 25th, to make a more formal presentation. Jordan would then ask Jamie to present to the Brookline Select Board, probably followed by a presentation to the Hollis Select Board on a separate date. After these meetings she would like to hold a joint Hollis-Brookline public meeting, perhaps in early September. Her hope is that the Select Boards would vote in late September to become part of the Study Committee.

The Partnership Rivers gathering ahead of the Visual Resources Conference in Westfield was again raised. Jamie noted that in addition to providing a forum for groups to network and share ideas, there also would be an opportunity for participants to brainstorm ideas for celebrating the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. While previously unaware of the July 10th gathering, Elizabeth thought she, Al or another member of the Wild & Scenic River Study Committee (W&S Study Committee) might attend. Nadia said she might be able to attend the morning of July 11th. She will contact Al to see if this makes sense.

ORRV Subcommittee

Lucy led a review of Al's 6/14/17 draft Management Plan – Recreation and Scenic Category. The draft had been sent to everyone electronically prior to the meeting and Lucy urged those present to send their comments directly to Al as tracked changes. Elizabeth noted that Paula Terrasi had already sent her comments to Al.

ORRV #1 – Protected Greenway Lands: With respect to the second strategy, Libby Herland noted the proper citation would be the 1996 Defense Authorization Bill (she has a hard copy of the appropriate section of the bill). She added that going forward we (and our successors) need to make sure the intent of the Bill, including that 100 acres on Rt 70 are to be transferred to Lancaster, is “kept alive.” Lucy suggested the FWS report that justified the expansion of the Oxbow NWR on Ft. Devens lands (the Zinny report) and the Bill be included in the Plan's appendix. Libby also reported on a meeting with then FWS Director, Dan Ashe, in which the idea of an overlay refuge on South Post which could be established with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Army and FWS. This is a method FWS has used successfully on other military installations.

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Nadia encouraged involvement of local town boards as we develop strategies, particularly with respect to regulations that could be promulgated to protect resources. Elizabeth noted that Mark Archambault's review of the towns' bylaws and regulations would offer a starting point for engaging local boards.

ORRV #2 – Fishing Use: Warm and Cold Water Fisheries: We need to explain in the Plan the importance of cool water temperatures. A question arose as to whether we should identify the specific cold water fisheries that are tributaries to our three rivers. Additional strategies to consider included: supporting implementation of FERC license requirements regarding fish passages, taking into account feedback from the dam owners after Martha Morgan has had an opportunity to meet with them; broaden the focus to include groundwater withdrawals and other actions that can impact water quality; integrate reference to Massachusetts' Sustainable Water Management Initiative; and to educate anglers about disposal of lures, weights and other fishing equipment, in addition to the monofilament already noted in the Plan. It was also suggested that other fish should be included in addition to Brook Trout. Finally, the question arose regarding the mentioning of the activities of the Squann-A-Tissit chapter of Trout Unlimited was too specific compared to the other strategies.

ORRV #3 – Boating Use: Libby referred to the SuAsCo's "family friendly" map of land and water/boaters' trails prepared and distributed to the general public and suggested we might want to include developing a similar map as one of our strategies. Elizabeth noted that the NRWA was close to releasing a new *NRWA Canoe and Kayak Guide*. Nadia asked if the *Guide* would be available digitally and downloadable as an app. While it will be available digitally, Elizabeth did not believe it could be downloaded as an app. Nadia felt a strategy to optimize such information for smart phones would be good to include. Jamie suggested it was best to develop and promote public access sites to the river, which would help avoid the perceived need to develop private access sites. Libby wondered about public access being made available adjacent to bridges, especially on state roads such as Rts 2A, 119, river crossings. In particular, work done on the Rt 2A crossing had made access adjacent to it unusable. An additional strategy would be to require provision for public access when bridges or culverts are upgraded. Lucy suggested adding a strategy to educate boaters to make sure boat hulls are clean before putting in as a way to limit the spread of invasives.

ORRV #4 – Swimming Use: Elizabeth wondered if this is a feasible goal, as water quality monitoring and notifying the public of safe swimming areas could be difficult, at best. Jamie commented that having the river safe for swimming was a good goal and one that other wild & Scenic committees have adopted.

ORRV #5 – Regional Trail System: A strategy should be added to coordinate with local trail committees, such as those in Groton and Shirley.

RRV #6 – Other Recreational Activities: Several strategies were added, including: to add pet waste disposal containers in areas dedicated for dog use; to broaden hunting activities beyond deer to waterfowl and upland game birds; to encourage ADA accessible wildlife viewing areas, if feasible; and to install boardwalks along wet shorelines or wetlands (Libby noted a viewing platform is planned for the Bill Ashe Visitor Center). Libby distributed a brochure for SuAsCo's upcoming RiverFest and suggested that a similar, signature event be developed which would continually educate the public on the value of the rivers, their outstanding resources, and the value of their designation as Wild & Scenic Rivers. An important point was made that we

cannot foresee future new types of recreational activities and equipment and so a general strategy should be added about tracking them and making sure they are compatible with managing and protecting our ORRVs.

Elizabeth asked Jamie if he felt we were on track with the direction of this section of the draft Plan, to which he replied thought so.

Announcements

Elizabeth mentioned the Doodle Poll AI had sent around a few weeks ago regarding a canoe/kayak paddle on the river. While not all members of the Committee had responded, the best date was Wednesday, July 19th, from 4 – 6:15 PM. Lucy suggested we hold that date and let AI finalize and send out the details.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

The next regular W&S Committee meeting will be on July 20th at 7 PM at the River Resource Center.