

## N-S-N Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council

### MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2024 MEETING

By Zoom Video Conference

#### Voting Member Entities Present:

*Towns:* Ayer: Beth Suedmeyer; Brookline: Drew Kellner and Greg Martin; Groton: Diane Carson; Harvard: Lucy Wallace and Michele Girard; Hollis: Bernadette McQuilkin; Lancaster: Justin Smith; Pepperell: Paula Terrasi; Shirley: Heidi Ricci; Townsend: Joan Wotkowicz  
*NRWA:* Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold  
*NPS:* Emma Lord

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by the Chair, Lucy Wallace. The meeting was held virtually by Zoom.

#### Administrative

The minutes of the June 20, 2024 meeting were approved as amended.

#### NPS Update

Emma Lord reported that the next PWSR speakers series event would be held on August 18<sup>th</sup> from noon to 1:30. The speaker will be Olivia Bowers, a NPS summer intern who has been working on coastal resiliency. A zoom link will be forwarded ahead of the meeting.

#### Finances

Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold provided an update on the Council's finances as of June 30, 2024:

- Total Contractual: of the \$418,723 budgeted, \$260,962 has been expended and \$96,282 is committed to ongoing activities. This leaves a balance of \$61,479 to spend or obligate. The change in expenses reflects payments made to grantees and the signage project.
- NRWA Program Support: of the \$249,459 budgeted, \$220,316 has been expended and \$17,258 is committed for ongoing projects. This leaves a balance of \$11,886.

#### Update on Current Projects

*Interpretive Signage:* Wynne and Heidi Ricci will be meeting with Neil Angus for a final review of the representation of the Devens Enterprize Zone; otherwise the sign is ready to go. Townsend and Brookline have reconfirmed approval of the location of their signs. Diane Carson, Stacey Chilcoat, and Wynne will be attending the August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Groton Conservation Commission to get final approval of the location of a sign at Petapawag. The Groton Historical Commission is considering doing a similar sign explaining the history of Petapawag and may apply through the 2025 Community Grants Program.

*Dragonfly Mercury Project:* Lucy presented a proposal from the NRWA to provide staff support to Emma and the volunteers collecting dragonfly larvae as part of this national survey of mercury in rivers as evidenced by its levels in Dragonfly larvae. The cost of two staff for the day of sampling three sites would be \$775. On motion made and seconded, the proposal was approved.

## Forest Legacy Program Project

Lucy reported that Anna Wilkins is continuing to coordinate and track the progress on the due diligence required for enrolling the 19 tracts in the Forest Legacy Program. The title examiner retained to do the title work on the Fors and Christian properties is taking longer than originally anticipated. In the meantime, these two landowners are reviewing the draft conservation restrictions; the Christian property is also being surveyed to exclude a lot from the CR. Anne Gagnon continues to make good progress on her tracts and has submitted documents to Lindsay Nystrom, DCR-FLP coordinator, for review. After months of trying, the Nashoba Conservation Trust has a state vendor number and so will be able to proceed with contracting for title work on its properties. The next meeting of the FLP Steering Committee will be on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

Lucy presented an invoice for Anna's services in the amount of \$1,375 for the period April 1 – June 30, 2024. On motion made and seconded, the invoice was approved for payment.

## Land Protection Grants

*Harvard Conservation Trust 2023 Grant:* The Harvard Conservation Trust submitted its final report on the 2023 Land Protection Grant for review and approval. As this grant, similar to others awarded by the Council, supported removal of invasives on conservation lands, the suggestion that the Council hold a forum bringing together the various groups in the watershed working on invasives to share lessons learned and additional needs. Wynne reported that she and Michele Girard were looking into such a program and possible speakers. It was also suggested we create a link on our website to information pertaining to invasives management. Paula Terrasi noted that in past years Galerucella Beetles had been an effective, natural control of Purple Loosestrife, but that recently it has been nearly impossible to acquire larvae. Joan Wotkowicz shared a website for more information on this beetle:

[https://integratedweedcontrol/noxious\\_weed/purple-loosestrife/](https://integratedweedcontrol/noxious_weed/purple-loosestrife/)

On motion made and seconded, the final report and final payment of the grant funds were approved.

*Townsend 2024 Application:* Lucy reported that she had allowed the Townsend Conservation Commission to submit its application after the deadline until it received expected bids from contractors. The requested funding was for \$23,000, \$13,000 above the \$10,000 cap. While we have the funds to cover this request, Drew Kellner questioned the appropriateness of awarding this grantee a higher amount without offering the same amount to the other two grantees previously awarded grants, Brookline Conservation Commission and the Town of Westminster. After some discussion the following motions were made, seconded, and unanimously approved:

1. Award the Townsend Conservation Commission \$10,000
2. Authorize an additional \$39,000 for the 2024 Land Protection Grants program, with a maximum of up to \$13,000 being offered to each of the three grantees.

Applications including a budget showing application of an additional \$13,000, will be due by August 31, 2024, with decisions being made at the September Council meeting.

## Community Grants

*Groton 2022 Grant:* The Groton Invasives Species Committee had submitted the final report due under its 2022 Grant Agreement. Similar to the Harvard Conservation Trust's 2023 Land Protection Grant,

this grant focused on the removal of invasives, in this case Japanese Knotweed. The Council approved the final report, noting this would be another example of lessons learned to include in an invasives species forum.

### Other and Announcements

*MA Biodiversity Goals:* Heidi announced that the public comment period for the state's Biodiversity Goals has opened and will close on August 30, 2024. There will be a listening session by Zoom on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. For those interested in reviewing the goals, the link is: <https://mass.gov/info-details/biodiversity-goals-for-the-commonwealth/>

*Job Opening:* Pat Huckery announced the opening for an Assistant Director for Land & Habitat, a statewide position. Contact Pat for more information on this position.

*Next Meeting:* It was agreed that a meeting would not be held in August.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 7 PM by Zoom