

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

### MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2026 MEETING

By Zoom Video Conference

#### Voting Member Entities Present:

*Towns:* Brookline: Drew Kellner; Groton: Diane Carson; Harvard: Lucy Wallace; Hollis: Ben Thyng; Lancaster: Justin Smith; Pepperell: Paula Terrasi; Shirley: Heidi Ricci; Townsend: Eva Vaughan

*NRWA*: Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold and Marisa Browning-Kamins

*NPS*: Emma Lord

*MA F& W*: Pat Huckery

*Guests*: Sherry Anders, Shirley Greenway

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 March 19, 2026 and April 1, 2026 meetings were approved as presented.

#### NPS

Emma reported that the FY27 Work Plan and Budget is moving ahead with the Finance Team in Washington, DC. She expects we should receive approval and funding by July 1<sup>st</sup>, the start of our fiscal year.

Emma announced an upcoming PWSRs lunch gathering on May 13<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 1 PM. She will send the Zoom invitation to Council members when she receives it.

#### Finances

Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold gave a brief summary of the Council's March finances.

*Contractual*: As of the end of March, \$109,841 has been expended for outreach, projects, and community grants, and \$35,666 has been committed to on-going projects. As the PWSR Program would be funding the Dragonfly Mercury Project, the \$6,000 originally set aside by the Council had been returned to remaining Contractual Funds. Therefore, there remains \$77,879 available in Contractual funds to spend by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

*NRWA Staff Program Support*: Of the \$150,133 allocated to NRWA staff support and indirect costs, \$96,246 has been expended with \$50,575 committed to on-going projects. This leaves \$3,312 to cover staff support through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Much of the staff time in March was spent preparing for the summer Water Quality Monitoring and Data Loggers projects.

#### Invoices

Lucy presented the invoice in the amount of \$385 submitted by North County Land Trust for services provided in March for FLP Coordination. By motion made and seconded, payment of the invoice was unanimously approved.

## Review of Community Grant Applications

Lucy opened the discussion summarizing the outcome of last month's meeting. Of the thirteen applications we received five were approved, one was tentatively approved subject to confirmation of consultant cost, three were denied and four were postponed a month for additional information. Grant Agreements for the approved applications have since been generated and sent to the grantees, most of which have returned their fully executed Agreements. Accordingly, Lucy has requested the disbursement of 50% of those grants' awarded funds.

The four remaining grant applications were reviewed and the following decisions made:

*Harvard Conservation Trust:* Lucy had shared with the applicant the Council's concerns about paying a consultant, instead of volunteers, to plant native plants following removal of the invasives along the stream corridor. The applicant decided to cover the cost of planting by the consultant and revised the request to cover consultant services for invasive plant removal only. On motion made and seconded, the Council approved the revised request for \$5,610.

*Indigenous Landscape Initiative:* Lucy had contacted the applicant, Shlomiya Lightfoot, to get clarification on the personnel costs and to suggest that the partners, Squannacook Greenways and the Townsend Historical Society, cover more of the event-related supplies. She explained to the Council that Shlomiya is trying to build a coalition of representatives from the different tribes that historically were in this area, drawing on their expertise on indigenous landscape practices and stewardship. The requested funds would be used to pay them a small stipend, in hopes of encouraging future engagement and collaboration. There was some concern about the \$800 expense for poison ivy removal near the boat launch. After some discussion, the item was kept in the budget. On a motion made and seconded, the Council approved the revised \$5,120 request.

*Townsend Conservation Commission:* Lucy reported that Townsend's Conservation Agent, Colby Streeter, had been trying to get proposals from consultants to prepare a plan for addressing invasive plants along the Squannacook River between the Canal Street Bridge and Adams Dam. Given the uncertainty in procuring cost estimates and the general concern with the proposed additional phases in this multi-year project, the Council felt it was best to postpone. Lucy will contact Colby to suggest he resubmit a more comprehensive application next year and to offer the Council's advice in the development a plan for multi-year project, particularly with respect to tree and log removal from the river.

*World Farmers:* Lucy had requested additional information from the applicant to justify the expenditures for this project. She reported that the applicant was seeking funds to cover staff time involved with implementing or overseeing this project, as well as wear and tear on its equipment. On motion made and seconded, the Council approved the original request of \$4,980.

## West Groton Dam

There had been a lengthy discussion at the special meeting held on April 1<sup>st</sup> regarding removal or repair of the dam. The consensus was for removal, especially as it would support accomplishment of many of the goals in our *Stewardship Plan*. Diane Carson noted that there is considerable support in Groton for repair. Heidi Ricci reiterated her concern over the lack of outreach to officials and residents in Shirley and the need for a more open public process in making this decision. The funding for repair, which initially was to be by a borrowing to be approved by 2/3 voters at the Groton Annual Town Meeting and majority vote at Town Elections, had recently been changed by the Select Board to use CPA funds and

some additional town funds, thereby avoiding the vote for a borrowing. In response to a question, it was confirmed that funding for a study to remove the dam had been approved by a previous Town Meeting.

As a next step Pat Huckery and Anne Gagnon had offered to draft a letter to the Groton Select Board to circulate for edits and/or comments. A final draft was now before the Council for approval. Upon motion made and seconded, submittal of the letter was approved and Lucy will send it to the Groton Select Board by Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Diane Carson has confirmed with the Town Moderator that she can distribute copies of the letter outside the entry to the Town Meeting and speak on the floor when the article is being considered. Comments must be limited to three minutes; Lucy suggested that she and Wynne could help Diane with her remarks.

### Land Protection Grants

*Land Protection Grant Program:* The RFP and Application for 2026 had been updated and sent to the Council prior to the meeting. The following was decided:

- Funding cap: \$20,000
- Due date for applications: June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Date for notification: June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Post the RFP next week on the Council and NRWA websites with link from the latter to ours, and to send a press release to local papers.

*Lancaster Land Trust:* A request had been submitted to amend the 2025 Land Protection Grant for engineering and improvement of the Cook Conservation Land parking area. On motion made and seconded, the grant period was extended for one year.

### Announcements

Ayer, Devens, and the Oxbow NWR will be holding an Earth Day Celebration on April 22<sup>nd</sup> on McPhearson Road along the Nashua River in the Refuge. Weather permitting, Emma will attend on behalf of the Council.

There being no announcements or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.