

N-S-N Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council

MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2026 MEETING

By Zoom Video Conference

Voting Member Entities Present:

Towns: Brookline: Greg Martin; Groton: Stacey Chilcoat and Diane Carson; Harvard: Lucy Wallace; Hollis: Bernadette McQuilkin; Pepperell: Paula Terrasi; Shirley: Heidi Ricci;
NRWA: Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold and Marisa Browning-Kamins
NPS: Emma Lord
MA F&W: Pat Huckery
Guests: Jessica Veysey-Powell, NRWA; Anne Gagnon, MA F&W; 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

This off-cycle meeting was called primarily to consider the impacts of repair or removal of the West Groton dam on the Squannacook River.

Forest Legacy Program

Lucy presented an invoice for services rendered by the North County Land Trust for coordination of the FLP project in the month of February. By motion made and seconded, payment of the \$850 invoice was unanimously approved.

West Groton Dam

Lucy opened by asking who the audience or recipient of our position statement should be. The consensus was:

- Groton and Shirley Select Boards, copying the state legislators and environmental agencies, Squannissit Trout Unlimited, and local land trusts
- Groton and Shirley Conservation Commissions
- Estate of Helmar Nielson, owner of Shirley portion of the dam
- Groton Herald and Shirley Local (as a letter to the editor)

It was agreed that Stacey Chilcoat or Diane Carson could read our position statement to the Groton Town Meeting. The warrant for the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) is for funding to repair the dam.

Sherry Anders reported that the Groton Select Board had submitted an out-of-cycle request to the Community Preservation Committee for partial funding of the repair of the dam. The Nielson Estate has also agreed to allow Groton to assume responsibility of the Shirley portion of the dam for purposes of the dam's repair.

The bulk of the remaining meeting was spent discussing the current situation surrounding the question or repair or removal of the dam. While no formal vote was taken, it became apparent that the consensus was removal of the dam. Key points included:

- Most residents in Shirley are not aware of this situation as they have not been included in any public meetings concerning the dam.
- This is a politically charged situation in Groton; therefore our position statement should be politically neutral.
- While our role is only advisory, our position statement should highlight the “Outstandingly Remarkable Resource Values” (ORRVs) of the Squannacook River that supported its designation as a Wild & Scenic River. A key factor in the designation is having a “free flowing river”; a key ORRV is its status as a cold water fishery.
- The dam has been ranked by the state as a “high hazard dam” capable of causing significant risk downstream in the event of failure.
- Our position statement should be brief, preferably bullet points.
- We may offer that should repair of the dam not pass at ATM that a more open and public process be initiated in both towns to inform residents and build consensus on a preferred outcome.

The meeting ended setting out our next steps:

- Pat Huckery and Anne Gagnon volunteered to draft a letter and get it to Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold by noon on Tuesday, 4/7.
- Wynne will forward the draft to those present at tonight’s meeting with comments/suggested edits due to Lucy by close of business on Thursday, 4/9.
- Lucy will revise the draft along with Pat and Anne and send the statement to the full Council by Tuesday morning, 4/14.
- A vote will be taken on the statement at the Council’s meeting on Thursday, 4/16.
- The statement will be sent as a letter to the editor to the 2 local papers by Monday, 4/20, for publication before Groton’s ATM on May 2nd.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.