

Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee
Notes from the Study Committee Meeting
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
December 21, 2017

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Rona Balco (Bolton); Leah Basbanes (Dunstable); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); Bill Flynn (Lancaster); Paula Terrasi (Pepperell);
NRWA Staff: Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Al Futterman, Martha Morgan
NPS: Jamie Fosburgh
Ex Officio: Anne Gagnon (MA DFW)
Guests: Mike Fleming (NRWA Board member)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by the chair, Lucy Wallace.

Administrative & Sharing

The meeting opened with its usual round of introductions by Committee members.

The minutes of November 16, 2017 were approved as presented.

NPS Update

Jamie Fosburgh gave an update on the draft Wild & Scenic River Designation Study that is being reviewed by NPS Washington, DC staff. He indicated there had been some concern about including the NH segment, but after further explanation found it to be appropriate. Jamie advised the Committee that we will not see the Study until the full report has been completed and submitted to Congress, which will be after the town meetings' votes.

Jamie discussed the status of our cooperative agreement funds. With the current fiscal year's budget still not approved, but rather the federal government operating under Continuing Resolution, there could be some delay in our receiving the next scheduled payment. In fact, funds may not be available before the town meetings. That said, the funds are available (once appropriated) for the full five years of the cooperative agreement, so we will not lose them. Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell asked about printing the Stewardship Plan and other possible costs, beyond staff, to be incurred ahead of the town meetings. Jamie replied that costs can be incurred up to 90 days prior to receipt of funds. The challenge, obviously, is in knowing when the funds will be received. If it seems unlikely funds will be released within the 90-day window of incurred printing costs, Jamie indicated the Park Service would find a way for the cost of printing to be covered.

ORRV Subcommittee

Dams: Martha Morgan gave a brief update on the status of determining the excluded areas associated with the Hollingsworth & Vose, Ice House, and Pepperell Hydro dams. Once she gets language to suggest from Jamie, she will set up another meeting with the owners of the H&V and Ice House dams to resolve their excluded areas. It has been difficult to get a meeting with Eagle Creek, the owners of Pepperell Hydro, the only communication being a letter from the firm's attorneys. Martha believes there could be agreement that the excluded area below the dam end at

the bottom of the tail race, just upstream of the canoe put it. It could be the upstream excluded area will remain the same as the FERC project area. Jamie noted that the extent of the excluded area was not that critical, as the Stewardship Plan can include it. It was suggested that in public outreach and meetings it would be appropriate to use the map of the river segments covered in the Stewardship Plan: the entire main stem of the Nashua River from Lancaster/Bolton to the NH state line, the Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers to their respective headwaters.

Town Boards and Annual Town Meeting Dates: Al had compiled a schedule of dates of appointments for representatives and/or Al to make presentations to the town conservation commissions and planning boards, as well as the towns' annual town meetings. The only town boards needing an appointment are the planning boards in Bolton and Harvard. Al has reached out to their representatives to advise him of the dates of those appointments.

Stakeholder Outreach: Lucy gave a brief summary of the two stakeholder meetings (on Biological Diversity and Historic/Cultural Resources) held the week following Thanksgiving. She noted the meeting on Biological Diversity was well attended, but given the amount of material Al covered, little engagement by the attendees. She did feel, however, they left with a clear sense of the magnitude of biological richness associated with the rivers. The Historic/Cultural meeting, having less material to be covered by Al, led to greater attendee participation with comments and questions.

Beyond these outreach opportunities, there are other agencies and groups of stakeholders we should try to reach prior to the spring vote so that we can ask for letters of support. Al mentioned he has contacted the Departments of Transportation in MA and NH and is reaching out to the towns' DPW directors. He also has reached out to the regional planning commissions. Paula Terrasi suggested reaching out to our local state senators and representatives. Elizabeth asked if there were other groups not on Al's list of stakeholders that we should contact and, if so, to let Al know. Lucy noted that many of the entities on Al's list had been sent notice of the three stakeholder meetings so may already be aware of our work.

Finalizing the Stewardship Plan: Elizabeth reported that in order to have the *content* of the Plan finalized in time for distribution prior to the March annual town meetings in NH, we need to have all stakeholders comments by the end of January. The goal would be to incorporate those comments and have the final draft of the Plan completed by the middle of February. Obviously, this would not be the final printed version with maps and photographs, but rather the final content. Elizabeth announced that Joan Wotkowicz, a long-time friend of the NRWA and new director, has agreed to help with the Plan's editing. As a technical writer, Joan has extensive experience in document editing and will be a very useful resource at this point in our work. Finally, Elizabeth noted that there are several local graphics firms and/or individuals to approach about preparing the Plan for printing.

Outreach Subcommittee

Warrant Articles: Elizabeth reported on the most recent meeting of the Outreach Subcommittee which she attended along with Al, Bill Flynn, Robert Pontbriand, and Cindy Knox. She noted that Robert is focused on the annual town meetings and when the language for the article needs to be finalized for inclusion in each town's warrant.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion on the language for the warrant. Elizabeth distributed a copy of the article to be used for the two NH town meetings which had been edited by Drew

Kellner. She also distributed a copy of the language used for the Taunton River article. Jamie confirmed that the language in the articles does not have to be identical. The language for the MA towns' warrant was agreed as follows:

"To see if the town of _____ will accept the Nashua, Nissitissit and Squannacook Rivers Stewardship Plan developed by the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee, together with its recommendation to seek Wild and Scenic River designation."

Outreach Strategy: There are several components to our public outreach, which we need to implement prior to the annual town meetings.

- There should be one public meeting in each town to explain designation and the stewardship plan. We need to set a calendar of these meetings so that staff could be available to lead or assist the town representatives in running these meetings. Lucy suggested that each representative look at their town's respective town board and committee regular meeting schedule and identify one or two nights that would be feasible for a public meeting and let Al know so that he can put together a calendar. These dates need to be set as soon as possible.
- Elizabeth reported the Outreach Subcommittee is working on FAQs and "town" information sheets to distribute at the public meeting. Lucy suggested these documents could also be made available at town libraries and town halls.
- Elizabeth distributed two versions of elevator speeches: one very brief and one longer. Suggested edits should be sent to Al and Elizabeth, as they intend to refine both speeches over the next week or so.
- Max McCormick, a videographer and friend of the NRWA, has offered to do two short information videos. He already has some footage and would be willing to do them on a partial pro bono basis, charging about \$2,000 for his work. Another option would be to spend the money on town-wide mailings of a postcard. Elizabeth has asked Wynne Traenor-Kvenvold to research the cost of postage: \$2,000. Preparation and printing would be in addition, bringing the estimated cost to as much as \$6,000. The Committee viewed portions of two videos - for the Missisquoi and Pawcatuck/Wood Rivers - and agreed a video would be more impactful than a town-wide mailing. That said, we preferred a single video and that it was important that it be engaging, informative and no longer than 2-3 minutes. Mike Fleming felt it was important to have a local spokesperson on the video. It also needs to be done in the next two months so it would be available for the public meetings in the MA towns. At that length it would also be easily viewed from our website. Elizabeth will get back to Max with these parameters and suggestions and see if he would be able to meet them. There was some concern that it might be too late to produce a compelling video, in which case we could direct people to those produced for other rivers. Jamie noted the NPS has produced a longer video celebrating 50 years of the Wild & Scenic program which we might be able to use prior to its debut in June.

Stewardship Plan: Organization Structure

Elizabeth distributed and walked through a draft of the Stewardship Plan chapter on the organizational structure of the Nashua, Nissitissit and Squannacook Rivers' Stewardship Committee. She also read an email from Heidi Ricci who suggested adding a section explaining how decisions would be made on the use of NPS funds.

Several aspects of the organizational structure were discussed. Bill asked for clarification on who could be considered for appointment as an additional voting member. He was concerned that corporate interests could be appointed which could be a conflict of interest. It was agreed to strike that section ("Additional voting members" top of page 4). Bill also suggested that definition of membership and how selected be placed early in this section. Mike advocated for having representatives of state agencies be voting members as he felt that would garner greater participation by those agencies. Lucy advocated leaving the core membership to being the town representatives, NPS and NRWA, noting the Plan is being described as locally driven. Bill concurred, noting local control at the outset would be important. With time, the stewardship committee may find it wants to expand its voting membership. Anne Gagnon noted she felt more comfortable as a non-voting member. Jamie said he has seen both types of membership: only the towns are voting members of the Lamprey River management committee whereas the Taunton River has towns, state and federal agencies as voting members. The problem with the latter, he noted, is difficulty in having a quorum for meetings. He suggested limiting the core voting members, but listing the state and federal agencies that would be invited to participate in meetings.

Elizabeth asked Jamie for his thoughts on this section. He replied that overall he thought it was quite good. He did recommend deleting the citing of Sections 10 (e) and 11 (b) (1) from this section.

Elizabeth and Al will continue revising this section and bring it to the next meeting for approval, at which time it can be included in the draft Stewardship Plan as posted on our website.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Next meeting: January 18th 7 – 9 PM at the NRWA's River Resource Center.