

**Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee**  
**Notes from the Study Committee Meeting**  
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA  
September 20, 2018

**INFORMAL NOTES**

*Members Present:* Beth Suedmeyer (Ayer); Drew Kellner (Brookline); Leah Basbanes (Dunstable); Nadia Madden (Groton); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); LeeAnn Wolff (Hollis); Paula Terrasi (Pepperell);  
*NRWA Staff:* Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Al Futterman, Martha Morgan  
*Ex Officio:* Jeff Barbaro (USGS); Anne Gagnon (MA DFW)  
*Guests:* Mike Fleming (NRWA Board member)

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

Administrative

The notes of the June 21, 2018 meeting were accepted as presented.

Update on Eagle Creek

Drew Kellner asked if the extent of the excluded area around the Pepperell Dam had been resolved. Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell provided a brief update, reporting that Eagle Creek was in the process of being acquired by a Canadian firm, Ontario Power Generation, which could explain the lack of response to NRWA's last letter regarding a proposed exclusion area. On a conference call between Rep. Tsongas' staff, Jamie Fosburgh, Martha Morgan, Al Futterman, Lucy and Elizabeth, it was agreed to use the most recently proposed excluded area in the legislation, which also matches what will be in the NPS Study Report. Elizabeth noted that Becky Cairns (Rep Tsongas' DC office) had reached out to Eagle Creek by phone and email, but has not heard back from them.

Paula Terrasi reported that Eagle Creek is working on meeting the FERC requirements for fish and eel passages, as well as addressing recreational access to the river.

Update on Legislation

Elizabeth reported that the bill, HR 6825, the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Act, designating segments of the Nashua, Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers as components of the national Wild & Scenic River System, has been filed in the House. It was introduced by Representatives Tsongas (MA) and Kuster (NH); a similar bill is being filed in the Senate by Senator Markey (MA), and is being co-sponsored by Senators Warren (MA), Shaheen and Hassan (NH). Rep. Tsongas will shortly be requesting a hearing before the House Committee on Natural Resources (HCNR); she will provide a package of information for Chairman Bishop. Elizabeth noted the NRWA would be preparing a similar package, including letters of support, but hopes to receive a letter from MA Governor Baker before the package must be sent to the Chairman. She added that MA State Senator Eldridge is interfacing with the Governor's office for us. According to the Tsongas' office, the earliest an HCNR hearing could be held would be November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Update on NPS Study Report

Elizabeth had been in touch with Liz Lacy earlier in the day to get an update on the Study Report. Per Liz, Jamie and Liz are close to completing it, but could not give a firm date on when the narrative portion

of the Report would be sent to the NRWA to coordinate submittal to the Graphic Designer. In the meantime, the NRWA has forwarded to the Graphic Designer sections that are complete, such as Appendix 2 with the letters of support to work on. Elizabeth reminded the Committee of earlier discussions of printing options: either by the federal printing office, perhaps using other NPS year-end funds, or by a printer used by the NRWA using funds from the Cooperative Agreement. While the former might be less costly to us, it could take significantly longer. The Committee concurred with its earlier preference to have NRWA print the Report. Elizabeth said quotes on both color and black and white printings had been obtained:

black & white	100 copies	\$2,400	50 copies	\$1,750
color	100 copies	\$3,000	50 copies	\$2,000

The Committee endorsed printing 50 color copies, unless we are advised by our federal partners that closer to 100 copies will be needed. The NPS will make the final decision on the number of copies to print.

Elizabeth passed around a notebook containing over 80 letters of support. In addition, Elizabeth had a sample of the bound Appendices to the Stewardship Plan, explaining that it had been copied in house and then taken to Staples to be bound. Mike Fleming asked about the number of bound Appendices Elizabeth was planning to produce. Elizabeth said the final number is uncertain, but there would be a limited number of “packages” of the Plan and Appendices for House and Senate staff as requested by Rep. Tsongas’ office. Given the Appendices can be generated in-house, additional copies could be available to those who request them. It is felt, however, that most people will read both the Plan and its Appendices on line.

The Plan, the Appendices and the letters of support are now all posted on our website.

### Finances

Elizabeth reported that the final modification to the Cooperative Agreement, in the amount of \$50,000, had been received and, as previously indicated, expenses incurred back to April 1, 2018 can be covered by these funds. Elizabeth has charged approximately \$8,000 for work to-date (April 1, 2018 to present) to this modification, noting that the NRWA has contributed a significant amount of *pro bono* services during this same period. Elizabeth suggested that the remaining \$42,000 be allocated as follows: \$31,000 for expenses now through June 30, 2019 and \$11,000 for expenses July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

In addition to the NPS funds, the NRWA has received two grants to cover staff costs associated with the initial start-up/implementation of the Plan. They are from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation (\$8,000) and Community Foundation of North Central MA (\$10,000). These funds are available now through June 30, 2019. The unexpended NPS and grant funds will give us a total of \$60,000 going forward for the next 2 years, which will be extremely helpful as we work to “keep the momentum going” during the interim between completion of the Plan, filing legislation, and, once passed, being eligible for NPS funds (approximately one year after passage of the legislation).

Nadia Madden asked if additional grants or other public funds would be available in subsequent years, noting there are MA state funds that are available for recreational use, such as trails.

### The Warren Matrix

Lucy explained that the Next Phase working group had met a few times over the summer to develop and then test a matrix for evaluating potential projects that we could undertake at this time (over the next 6-12

months). Warren Kimball had modified a matrix encompassing our criteria similar to one he had used for evaluating projects when working at MA DEP. Lucy walked the Committee through the two major categories, Intrinsic Merit and Strategic Merit, explaining the criteria and scoring system.

[Leann Wolff left the meeting at this time]

Drew asked if this was the matrix to use going forward, even once we receive designation. If that was the case, he felt that there should be a category for annually setting aside funds over several years to build the capacity to purchase specific conservation parcels which are often very costly. Elizabeth re-iterated that this matrix was for the near-term only. In the future, we would be awarding grants to entities for specific proposals, which, for example, could cover a request for limited funds over a few consecutive years to a conservation organization to purchase land. This would be particularly useful for matching grants. Lucy noted that NPS federal funds most likely could not be used to match other federal funds.

Nadia liked the matrix but felt there were too many categories under Strategic Merit and wondered if some could be combined. Beth Suedmeyer suggested adding a category for cost/benefit, such as ability to leverage other funds to match ours or that ours would provide seed money. There were some questions about the higher scoring for Intrinsic Merit; Mike felt it was important, however, to give Intrinsic Merit categories more weight than the Strategic Merit categories. Leah Basbanes felt it would be difficult to ascertain level of public support. There were also questions about how we would solicit potential projects.

Jeff Barbaro asked how we should score the “money” criteria. Elizabeth responded that if scoring would be based on the availability of funds. She went on to remind the Committee that the projects we would be considering at this time are ones we already know about; projects that will not cost too much to implement, that will give us exposure in the partner towns, and will encourage the towns to work together.

The Committee was then directed to score the three hypothetical projects. After members had completed the exercise, Lucy asked how the three projects ranked against one another. All had arrived at the same order of priority. She then asked for comments on the ease of using the matrix, what other criteria might be needed or if further explanation was needed for the existing categories. Comments ranged from needing further explanation of the criteria under Strategic Merit (to make scoring less arbitrary) to the difficulty of assessing the sample projects as they lacked the detail to assess using the matrix’s criteria.

The general consensus, as summed up by Anne Gagnon, was that it was useful to have us all using the same “rules” to evaluate projects. This also would be particularly important when we move to the next phase of granting funds to towns for specific projects. Our partners need to know we are being objective and fair in our award of funds. Nadia concurred, noting the importance of having all representatives participate in project scoring.

Elizabeth then asked what our next steps should be. Should the entire Wild & Scenic Study Committee pick a project or projects? Or should the Next Phase working group meet and suggest one or two projects for the entire W&S Study Committee to consider? Drew felt it was important for our first project to be one that is applicable to all towns and doable, such as mapping invasives. Lucy suggested that Committee members send ideas of projects to AI which the working group can review with the hope of bringing 2-3 to the W&S Study Committee at its October meeting.

#### Other Business

Elizabeth offered copies of the bound Stewardship Plan to the representatives present. In addition, two copies of the Plan will be sent to each town: one for the Town Hall and one for the public library.

Mike reported that Shirley's representatives to the Committee require an annual appointment. Re-appointment of Heidi Ricci and Betsy Colburn will be made at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting. Elizabeth reminded members to make sure their appointments were on-going or, if not, to request re-appointment by their Selectmen, if necessary.

Next Meeting: October 18<sup>th</sup> 7 PM at the River Resource Center