

N-S-N Wild & Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council Meeting
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
November 21, 2019

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Rona Balco and Rebecca Longvall (Bolton); Jordan Bailey (Brookline); Stacey Chilcoat (Groton); Michele Girard and Lucy Wallace (Harvard); LeeAnn Wolf (Hollis) Ken Hartlage and Paula Terrasi (Pepperell); Heidi Ricci (Shirley); Joan Wotkowicz (Townsend)
NRWA Staff: Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Al Futterman (arrived late), Martha Morgan
NPS: Jamie Fosburgh
Guests: Anne Gagnon (MA Division of Fish & Wildlife); Mike Fleming and Warren Kimball (NRWA Board members)

This meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by the Interim Chair, Lucy Wallace

Administrative

The minutes of the September 19, 2019 meeting were approved as amended.

NPS Update

Jamie Fosburgh provided an update on NPS funding status and other matters.

- The House and Senate have passed budgets which included funding for newly designated Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers. The bills now go to Conference Committee to be reconciled. Jamie is hopeful that it will be resolved in the next few weeks. Otherwise Congress will need to pass a Continuing Resolution on December 20th to keep the federal government funded. Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell asked how soon the NPS funds will be available, once the budget is approved. Jamie noted that if the budget is passed in December, funds should be available in February. In order to access them, we will need a new Cooperative Agreement as well, which can be a long NPS process.
- NPS Report will be printed by the Government Printing Office soon. Elizabeth confirmed that the Council had suggested 50 color copies of the Report, based, in part, on NPS's distribution needs.
- Emma Lord may be returning to the New England NPS office and, if so, Jamie will probably assign her as our NPS liaison. Liz Lacy is covering projects in western Massachusetts and Connecticut. Jamie would also continue to be available to us.
- Heidi Ricci asked what role the Farmington River's Wild & Scenic Council was playing with respect to the recent PFAs contamination. Jamie responded that the CT Department of Environmental Protection was taking the lead in this matter, with advice from NPS being provided by Liz.

Financial Update

At our September meeting Ken Hartlage had asked for a simple written accounting of our funds. Elizabeth distributed two spreadsheets and reviewed the sources and expenditure of funds. The first spreadsheet covered NRWA's current fiscal year (FY20). For FY20, in addition to the \$10,000 remaining NPS funds (under the current Cooperative Agreement), NRWA had received \$8,000 and \$10,000 in grants from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation and Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, respectively, for total revenue of \$28,000 to fund transition work with the Study

Committee/Council through June 30, 2020. Expenses through September 30, 2019, which have been covered by the NPS funds and above-referenced grants, totaled \$11,610 and included NRWA personnel and attendance at the Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers conference on our behalf by Anne Gagnon. This leaves \$16,390 available through June 30, 2020. The NRWA has expended an additional \$2,417 on personnel costs from its general operating funds as an in-kind contribution,

The second spreadsheet was a summary of expenses for FY16 – FY19, which came to \$290,798. In addition to NPS funds, expenses were covered by grants received by NRWA for work with the Study Committee (as reported at previous meetings) and NRWA's general revenues to cover staff time.

In response to a question by Elizabeth, Jamie noted that the average amount provided under NPS Cooperative Agreements to Stewardship Councils was \$170,000, approximately \$65,000 of which covers NPS staff time and associated NPS expenses. That amount, however, would vary depending on the level of staff support provided by the NPS. In some instances the Councils retain their own staff to assist in administrative matters; in others the NPS provides all the staff support. The balance of funds, approximately \$105,000, is for use by the Council for projects and other costs. Heidi noted that the Taunton W & S Council distributed its funds through a small grants program. Elizabeth reminded members that Warren Kimball had developed a ranking system, similar to one he had developed for assessing projects when he worked at the MA Department of Environmental Protection, to use as a tool to use in selecting the Council's current priority projects. At the time Warren had suggested that this ranking system could be used in the future should the Council adopt a small grants program. In addition to the two projects presently underway, Elizabeth noted that several small projects had been suggested, such as developing a logo, doing signage, creating a self-guided historical/cultural tour of the River towns, doing a river festival, and assessing potential land acquisitions. It will be up to the Council to develop a process for selecting projects in the future, perhaps drawing on the ranking system developed by Warren. Ken asked if the NPS provided any additional guidelines. Jamie said the only criteria are that the projects fit within the scope of the *Stewardship Plan*. Martha Morgan reminded the Committee that federal funds could be used as match for other grants (so long as the grant monies were not federal).

Heidi asked if and when we should start drafting the next Cooperative Agreement so that once the NPS funds are available we can access them. Jamie felt it would be a good idea to have the Agreement ready to go upon release of the funds and suggested the activities being articulated be relatively broad brush and general at this point.

[Al Futterman arrived]

Bylaws Update

Lucy reported that a small working group, comprised of Anne Gagnon, Neil Angus, Elizabeth, and herself, had met a couple of times since the September meeting to prepare the set of draft Bylaws to be reviewed at this meeting. She added that some of the provisions were based on criteria set forth in the *Stewardship Plan* with respect to the Council's organization and functioning. Lucy noted that three existing Council Bylaws (SuAsCo, Wood-Pawcatuck and Missisquoi) were the samples primarily drawn upon in developing additional language and provisions in the current draft. Elizabeth noted that other Council Bylaws had been made available to the working group and that they would take another look at them for any provisions we may have overlooked. Lucy added that in addition to the Bylaws the Council should adopt Policies and Procedures which could go into greater detail on procedural elements relative to the Council's functioning. In other words, the Bylaws establish the general framework for the Council and, therefore, should be general so as to cover future, unknown situations. She then led the Committee through a review of each article.

- Article 1 – Authority.
- Article 2 – Mission and Purpose. Mike Fleming asked about a statement regarding the Council's advisory role. Jamie agreed and suggested it be a separate bullet. LeeAnn Wolf asked how the Council would know of projects on which it should comment. Jamie responded that through the NEPA and MEPA processes, the Council would be notified.
- Article 3 – Membership. Michel Girard asked if the process for selecting the two additional core voting members should be articulated. Lucy responded that this would be covered in the Policies and Procedures. Rebecca Longvall asked for clarification on the Conflict of Interest statement and asked that the one distributed at the last meeting be resent electronically for signature.
- Article 4 – Officers. LeeAnn asked for clarification that minutes could be taken by a staff person. Lucy responded that various Secretarial responsibilities could be delegated to staff.
- Article 5 – Meetings. LeeAnn asked for clarification on how meetings would be noticed. In addition to notices to individual Council members, meetings are posted on our website (www.WildandScenicNashuaRivers.org) for the benefit of the general public.
- Article 6 – Subcommittees.
- Article 7 – Management.
- Article 8 – Amendment

There was a question on the addition of an article covering severability. Lucy said the working group would look at other Council Bylaws to see if they had such a provision.

Lucy asked that members send her any additional comments or questions by December 6th so the working group could prepare an updated draft for the December 19th meeting.

Interim Projects

Al Futterman provided a brief update on the two projects.

Canoe Access Assessments: Al acknowledged he had the benefit of a knowledgeable group, including, but not limited to, Warren Kimball, Paula Terrasi, Stacey Chilcoat, Joan Wotkowicz, and Diane Carson, which had assisted him in creating a very comprehensive spreadsheet on the 30 sites he had identified. Aspects of the sites considered included steepness of slope to the water, parking, paddling limitations, if any (such as seasonal, excessive large woody material), signage, site ownership (public or private), etc. It is definitely a work in progress, but he felt considerable progress had been made. He displayed a Google Earth map of the rivers with the access sites noted on it and the ability to hot link the sites to the information on the spreadsheet. All were very impressed by the work to date.

Conservation Networking Breakfasts: Al reported that the last meeting in September had featured a presentation of culverts by Martha Morgan. While the breakfasts are small and generally limited to conservation agents and, for New Hampshire, conservation commissioners, Al asked about expanding the invitation list. It was agreed that if there was a particularly notable speaker or topic that others would benefit from hearing, it would be good to open it up. Al thanked Michele Girard and Paula Terrasi for suggesting and obtaining speakers, as well as providing food. Rebecca noted that she has found the breakfasts a useful way to network and exchange ideas on coping with similar problems.

New Project: A few meetings ago Jordan Bailey had asked for input on a poster for a kiosk at the new Nissitissit River Park in Brookline. This site will get considerable public use, as it not only provides access to the River, but also is where several trails come together and has the added benefit of parking. Hence, it would be a good place to explain the Wild & Scenic Rivers designation which includes the Nissitissit, Squannacook and Nashua. The kiosk is being built as an Eagle Scout project and should be

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completed and installed by the end of the year. Al had prepared a mock-up of a poster and will try to have a revised version for the December meeting.

Next Meeting: December 19, 2019 at 7 PM at the River Resource Center

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.