

Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee
Notes from the Study Committee Meeting
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
March 17, 2016

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Robert Pontbriand & Beth Suedmeyer (Ayer); Leah Basbanes (Dunstable); Nadia Madden (Groton); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); Bill Flynn (Lancaster); Paula Terassi (Pepperell); Bill Wilkinson (Townsend)

NPS: Jamie Fosburgh

NRWA Staff: Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Al Futterman, Martha Morgan

Ex Officio Members: Jeff Barbaro (USGS); Libby Herland (USFWS); Anne Gagnon (MA F&W); Tim Purinton (MA DER)

Guests: Jordan Bailey (Brookline Conservation Commission); Drew Kellner (Brookline Conservation Commission & Beaver Brook Association); Peter Smith (Beaver Brook Association & Nissitissit River Land Trust); Cindy Knox (Ayer IT staff); Warren Kimball (NRWA Board member)

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

Administrative

The February 18, 2016 meeting minutes were accepted as presented. There was a brief discussion regarding the level of detail to be included in the meeting minutes to be posted on the website and suggestion that they be as brief as possible. Jordan Bailey pointed out that discussions of the NH towns should reflect that they are not formally part of the study area at this point, though representatives have been cordially invited to participate in the Study Committee. The Conflict of Interest Disclosure form was distributed and members asked to complete and turn them in by the end of the meeting.

ORRV Subcommittee

Martha Morgan provided an update on the ORRV subcommittee's work and said the activities that are underway are mainly identifying sources of information on potential ORRVs. Examples include the nomination reports for the 3 ACECs within the study area and the Sanctuary Act (c. late 1960's) which covered the Squannocook and Nissitissit Rivers, studies conducted by state agencies on fishery resources (i.e. cold water and mussels), studies or mapping by state agencies on endangered species, historic data on water quality and flow. Mapping points of access for recreation will be important, as well as protected lands along the rivers. Other areas to investigate are the geology of the rivers' basins (Lake Nashua), and the history of the rivers' impact on economic development (early settlements, mills and dams) and the history of its clean up and impact on the river protection movement (Marion Stoddart). All of this information will be ranked from national to regional, state and local significance as part of the study submitted to Congress.

As we will be reaching out to the towns for information on potential ORRVs, it is important that we have a consistent message regarding the purpose of the request and study. This will need to be coordinated with the Outreach Subcommittee.

Jamie Fosburgh will make a brief (15 minutes) presentation on determining ORRVs at our April Study Committee meeting.

Outreach Subcommittee

Robert Pontbriand introduced Cindy Knox, Ayer's IT staff person, and presented a report on activities to-date, which have focused primarily on development of a website. Cindy walked through a mock-up she had prepared to give us a sense of the site's organization and look. She recommended retaining the services of a site designer, as she feels an attractive site is necessary for engaging the public. She is willing to manage and monitor it, along with any other social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) we might use. Robert recommended our getting our own domain name that will last beyond the Study Committee's work and, if designation is achieved, continue with the stewardship council. The cost for a domain name is approximately \$20/year; for hosting a website approximately \$25/year.

It is important that we meet with each town's leadership to make sure they are following the work of the Study Committee, and, for the Study Committee to be allowed to have a link from the towns' websites to ours. The issues of unified messaging was again raised. Jamie suggested developing a brief mission statement. The Outreach Subcommittee will develop a draft outreach plan to take to the towns and present it at the April Study Committee meeting. The goal would be to meet with the towns' leadership after annual town meetings but before the end of June.

Old Business

NH Update: The representatives of Beaver Brook Association (BBA) and the Nissitissit River Land Trust (NRLT) expressed interest in having the NH portion the Nissitissit included in the study area and in continuing to send representatives to our meetings; they believe the Hollis Conservation Commission is as well. The towns will need to better understand the value of the designation and, just as importantly, what it is not. Jamie emphasized that towns do not lose local control over lands within their jurisdiction because of designation. Libby suggested having representatives of the SuAsCo towns' boards of selectmen attend meetings when we attend meetings with selectmen in the included (and potential additional) towns.

Jamie noted towns can be included in the Management Plan without their sections of the river being included in the Wild and Scenic designation. He suggested reviewing the NPS "20 Years of Success" report on the Wild and Scenic Rivers program. He also suggested reading the annual reports submitted to the NPS by the designated rivers' councils which would provide information on funding received through this program and how it had been used to benefit the communities.

Time Line: Nadia Madden presented a proposed Gantt chart to be used in tracking progress over the next 18 months. Committee agreed the Gantt chart could be helpful; Nadia offered to update it as needed. Target for filing legislation for designation should be the start of the next 2-year session of Congress which will begin in January 2019.

Tim Newman, Beth Sudemeyer and Nadia had met to discuss best way to share documents, but did not have a firm recommendation to present at this time.

New Business

FERC Request: FERC has submitted a request to the NPS regarding the impact of the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline, and specifically the impact of the Wild and Scenic designation on the FERC license. This is not a direct request for the Study Committee to comment; rather Jamie is looking for information to include in the NPS comments. Jordan Bailey felt the current proposed route through NH would have little impact on the Nissitissit River. Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell noted the Fitchburg lateral could impact a section of the study area.

Budget: The NRWA has received start-up funding of \$10,000 for FY15 and will receive \$44,000 for FY16. Jamie noted we might get some additional funds in August/September if the NPS had any FY16 funds available. Our funding runs with the anniversary of the signing of the NPS-NRWA Cooperative Agreement (July 1-June30).

Elizabeth presented a rough budget for the Committee's approval:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Salary, benefits & overhead | \$38,000 |
| Travel | \$ 500 |
| Supplies | \$ 1,500 |
| Consultants/studies/website | <u>\$ 4,000</u> |
| | \$44,000 |

The budget was approved and Elizabeth authorized to submit it to NPS. It was acknowledged that expenditures between the line items could shift based on need.

Future NPS Presentations: Jamie offered to make the following presentations at our next few meetings:

- April: Justifying ORRVs
- May: Section 7 – the regulatory aspect of Wild & Scenic designation
- June: Partnership models in New England

Other: Tim Purinton suggested changing the name from Nashua River Wild & Scenic River to one that would include the 3 rivers in the title (i.e. SuAsCo), bearing in mind the name will exist beyond the study. Suggestions should be sent to Al Futterman over the next couple of weeks, which he will compile and bring to our April meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM. Next meeting: April 21st at 7 PM.