

Nashua River Wild & Scenic Study Committee
Notes from the Study Committee Meeting
 NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
 May 19, 2016

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Robert Pontbriand & Beth Suedmeyer (Ayer); Judy Larter (Dunstable); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); Ryan McNutt (Lancaster); Paula Terrasi (Pepperell); Bill Wilkinson (Townsend)

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

Ex Officio Members: Jamie Fosburgh (NPS); Libby Herland (USFWS)

Guests: Drew Kellner (Brookline Conservation Commission/Beaver Brook Association); Jordan Bailey (Brookline Conservation Commission); Cindy Knox (Ayer IT staff); Mike Fleming (NRWA Board members)

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

Administrative

The April 21, 2016 meeting notes were accepted as presented. Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell gave Ryan McNutt a Conflict of Interest Disclosure form to be completed and returned to her.

ORRV Explanation – Jamie Fosburgh

As there has been some confusion over determination of ORRV's to be included in the designation study, Jamie was asked to give a brief presentation. He reiterated the levels into which ORRVs need to be categorized, starting with the most important:

- National/international: Will draw people from all over to experience or see the resource(s).
- Regional: Generally refers to resource(s) of statewide importance; "one of the ten best examples of/locations of" particular resource(s).
- Significant in the Aggregate: Multiple resources, taken together, are of great value. Jamie likened these to the anchor store in a mall. One example would be the resources delineated in the ACEC nomination reports in that together they are more remarkable than individually. Another example is the multiple recreational uses of the river for boating, fishing, birding, walking on riverside trails, etc.
- River-Related: Those resources or attributes that provide important and significant benefit to the river, such as headwaters.

Jamie said he tends to be a "lumper", combining resources that will be protected by designation from possible negative impacts. This also may result in broader support of the designation. Jamie emphasized that being too specific regarding ORRVs can backfire in the future (e.g., "sedgewort in this location is worthy of protection" would eliminate areas outside of the sedgewort location). Build a case around major themes.

Bill Wilkinson asked about historical values and what would make them significant. Jamie suggested archeological sites (particularly Native American) are noteworthy and could be considered an "anchor" value to additional historic resources (subsequent settlements along the river). He also recommended combining cultural, historical and archeological values, as they are often intertwined. Examples raised by attendees included the historic structures and districts along the river in Townsend; the purity of water in Potanipo Pond; the headwaters of the Nissitissit, which once supported the largest ice pond operation in the world, providing ice to Boston via a rail line built specifically for this purpose; and the Camp Stevens, a Civil War-era encampment, along the Squannacook River.

The purpose of the study is to protect the values which justify designation. Water quality is an important, underlying theme to our designation: the story of going from one of the 10 most polluted rivers in the country to a Class B river; Marion's involvement; passage of clean water acts. Designation will protect the river's quality for future generations.

The Oxbow is another 'anchor store', or value connecting many values. It is in the heart of the Nashua, and is part of the nationally significant historic Fruitlands landscape. Furthermore, the Nashua River valley is part of the Atlantic Flyway.

In sum, our challenge is to consider the values listed in the 2013 Reconnaissance Survey and tie our diverse resources into a coherent justification for designation, taking into account the rankings of importance that Congress will expect (national to river-related).

ORRV Subcommittee

Notes from the last meeting (May 9th) of the subcommittee were distributed, along with a draft outline of ORRVs, dated May 16th and prepared by Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Al Futterman and Lucy Wallace. A discussion of this preliminary cut followed.

The Oxbow NWR could be considered an anchor as it is important for several reasons, such as recreation, biodiversity, and being the core of a larger ecosystem that includes Bolton Flats extends northward through Devens. In fact, it was the existence of Fort Devens and its closure in 1994 that added significant acreage and river miles to the Oxbow Refuge, followed a few years later with the addition of the abutting Watt Farm in Still River.

Marion's story is another anchor resource, being of national/international importance.

Jamie was not sure geology would qualify as a standalone significant resource or anchor: is it the best example in Massachusetts of the impact of glaciers on land and river formation? Martha Morgan suggested that, in fact, it is. The receding glaciers caused the river course to change several times, leading to its current northeasterly direction. The glaciers also created the land forms that support the significant ecological diversity of the Petapawag and Squannassit ACECs. Paula Terrasi mentioned the Wekepeke fault that runs from Worcester to NH.

Martha presented an update on Warren Kimball's work since Warren was unable to attend this meeting, particularly his report card showing the improving water quality in the Nashua from 1970 through 2010 (70's, 80's, 90's and 2000's). While the Nissitissit and Squannacook Rivers had always been Class B rivers, given the Nashua's pollution in the

1960's it was never expected to be a Class B river. Warren can give a more in depth report at some point in the future when he is able to attend in person. Jamie noted the report card would be a good visual to include in the study.

Outreach Subcommittee

Robert Pontbriand distributed notes from the subcommittee's last meeting (May 12th) and a draft of the flyer they have prepared for the upcoming FWS Oxbow NWR visitor station dedication. It was suggested that a map be added showing the parts of the rivers included in the study area and the parts under consideration for possible future inclusion. Robert promised to have a revised flyer available to the committee for review by Monday, May 23rd, and requested that edits be sent to him by the end of the day on Tuesday, May 24th. He will provide 200 copies for the dedication Friday.

New Business

Funding: Jamie reported that an additional \$12,000 in FY 16 had been appropriated for the study. This is in addition to the \$44,000 already appropriated.

Field Trips: Libby Herland wondered if committee members would be interested in field trips to become more familiar with the river. Perhaps walks on trails? Trips on the river?

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM. Next meeting: June 16th at 7 PM.