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July 5, 2018

Jamie Fosburgh, NPS, Manager, Northeast Region Rivers Program
Lucy Wallace, Chair, NRWSR Study Committee
Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee
c/o Nashua River Watershed Association
592 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Mr. Fosburgh and Ms. Wallace:

Mass Audubon is fully supportive of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Wild and Scenic River designation. Mass Audubon supported the study authorization in 2015, and since then we have been following the work of the Study Committee as it has compiled a detailed and thoughtful Stewardship Plan. This locally-driven, voluntary Plan – approved by all 11 participating towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire – provides a solid set of recommended actions to advance protection of the outstanding resources within these rivers.

We are pleased to see that the Plan also references the Nashua River Watershed Important Bird Area, which is located in the heart of the proposed Nashua River Wild and Scenic River¹. The area contains a diversity of intact, interconnected habitats – both wetlands and uplands. We also appreciate the attention paid to the seriousness of the exotic invasives problem and to the significance of the state's Priority Natural Communities, several of which are found along the mainstem Nashua. Extensive areas of land bordering the Nashua, Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers are protected by federal, state, or local conservation agencies. Additional Greenway land protection and stewardship are among the many recommendations we support.

Mass Audubon has a decades-long involvement with the nearby Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Wild and Scenic Rivers, during which we have participated in many public awareness events. We also supported the designation of the Taunton River as a National Wild and Scenic River in 2009. We continue involvement in implementation of the Stewardship Plan there, and we are involved in conservation and restoration partnership efforts along the Westfield Wild and Scenic River in western Massachusetts.

The Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers are truly outstanding and remarkable in their natural, cultural, and recreational values, particularly considering their location so close to the Metro Boston urban area. Mass Audubon wholeheartedly supports this designation, and looks forward to participating in implementation of the Plan with local and regional partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John J. Clarke".

John J. Clarke
Director

¹ <https://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/statewide-bird-monitoring/massachusetts-important-bird-areas-iba/important-bird-area-sites/nashua-river-watershed>