

Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee
Notes from the Study Committee Meeting
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
April 20, 2017

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Beth Suedmeyer and Robert Pontbriand (Ayer); Leah Basbanes (Dunstable); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); Susan Munyon (Lancaster); Heidi Ricci (Shirley)

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

NPS: Jamie Fosburgh

Ex Officio: Tim Purinton (MA DER)

Guests: Mike Fleming and Warren Kimball (NRWA Board members); Jordan Bailey (Brookline ConCom)

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

Administrative

The March 16, 2017 meeting notes were accepted as amended.

April 27th Public Meeting

Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell presented a draft agenda for the April 27th Public Meeting for review.

Welcome: Lucy will welcome attendees and explain the purpose of the meeting: to assure that the work of the Wild & Scenic River Study Committee is transparent; to inform the public of our work to date; and to seek input and additional information from the public.

Overview: Jamie Fosburgh will present a brief explanation of the Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Program and role of the Wild and Scenic River Study Committee in this process. Using a modified version of the Power Point presentation made to the partner towns' boards of selectmen (updated with current town representatives and alternates), Elizabeth or Robert Pontbriand will explain the work of the Committee to date and going forward. There will then be an opportunity for questions from the attendees.

Quick Look at the Rivers: Al Futterman will do a Power Point highlighting different stretches of the three rivers to provide a visual orientation to the discussion. The intent is to encourage attendees to think about their personal experiences of the river(s) and what they consider special about them.

Discussion of the Outstandingly Remarkable Resource Values: Al will transition to a Power Point presentation on the Committee's determination of three broad classifications and their respective ORRVs which will justify designation as Wild & Scenic Rivers. This will be the major focus of the evening, with the intent of both informing the public and also getting responses from the attendees. As Tim Purinton noted, we want people to think about what data or information might be missing and which would strengthen our case. He also suggested there be a large map, perhaps mounted on an easel, to orient people to the river sections being considered. In addition to the rivers, Beth Suedmeyer suggested that the map should show the

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towns and major state roads to help orient the viewer. Heidi Ricci thought adding protected open space along the rivers would be useful. Martha Morgan and Leah Basbanes agreed the color of the rivers should be changed from red to blue. There was a general concern, however, that the map not get too crowded. Perhaps some of this additional information could be printed in a lighter shade or “faded out”. Robert Pontbriand offered to mount a map if AI would provide it, agreeing a map would be a good prop for the discussion. Beth asked about showing Bolton and Devens on the map. Bolton should be; Devens not, as it is not a town. Beth then asked about our reaching out to those two entities. Elizabeth reported that she, AI and Lucy were in the process of setting up a meeting with the chair of the Bolton Board of Selectmen. Robert is setting up an informational meeting with the Devens Enterprise Commission where he will present the Power Point recently presented to the towns’ boards of selectmen.

Elizabeth reported that the “Liz Chart,” which has been amended by the ORRV Subcommittee over recent months, would be used to frame the discussion on ORRVs, starting with the classification of Biological Diversity values and then considering Scenic and Recreational Values followed by Historical and Cultural Values. This chart would be projected for all to read, but also could be a handout for attendees to take with them. Jamie suggested interspersing photographs of the rivers in the different towns, including NH, in AI’s projected materials. Jordan offered to get AI some photographs of the Nissitissit in NH.

Tim suggested that AI’s Power Point presentation include a slide listing the names of other Wild & Scenic Rivers in New England – both designated and going through a designation study.

Elizabeth noted that attendees would be given a form to complete either at the meeting or afterwards and returned to NRWA seeking their inputs and additional information on the rivers. Robert said that Cindy would post the materials from the meeting and comment form on the website; hopefully the latter could be completed and submitted from the website as well.

There ensued a lengthy discussion on the need for a logo so that all of our materials could be readily identified as being part of this process. While it had been discussed early in the Study process, it had been put aside as we focused on identifying ORRVs. That said, we need some “branding” on materials being distributed at the meeting. It was agreed that using both the NPS Wild & Scenic Rivers and NRWA logos would be ok; it was noted that it would be great to recognize the participating towns. Alternatively, perhaps a consistent banner could be fashioned for the April 27th materials. Susan Munyon noted that Peter Stanton, a fellow Lancaster resident, has access to graphics designers at his business (*The Worcester Business Journal*) and that she would ask him if he would be willing to offer their assistance in designing a logo. Leah also has a friend who does graphic design that she could ask. Robert said he would bring the logo matter to the Outreach Subcommittee and work with Susan, Leah, and anyone else with suggestions to recruit the needed graphics support.

Next Steps: Robert will lead this portion of the meeting, providing an overview of the website and on-going outreach activities. Elizabeth noted that there would be a sheet of FAQs handed out at the meeting. She asked Jamie to review the current answers to make sure they are accurate; he affirmed that this sheet of FAQs has already been vetted. Robert offered to have additional questions and answers from the Public Meeting added to the website.

General Comments on Meeting Outreach: Tim asked about press coverage for the meeting. Elizabeth reported press releases have been sent by Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold, NRWA

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Communications Manager, to local newspapers, including those serving Brookline and Hollis, and an email news blast to NRWA's 3,000-member email list. Notice is also being posted on towns' individual local list serves, such as Nextdoor, and to the towns' town administrators for distribution to boards of selectmen and conservation commissions. Robert will see if Ayer's cable committee will tape the meeting for future broadcast in the towns. If Ayer cannot, Wynne will ask the Groton cable committee. Heidi suggested we all share information on the upcoming meeting with our friends and those we think would be interested in attending.

ORRV Subcommittee

Review of Draft 4/6/17 Meeting Notes: The 4/6/17 draft meeting notes were distributed to bring the Wild & Scenic River Study Committee up to speed on the ORRV Subcommittee's recent activities. Both Jordan and Leah know of someone with drones who may be able to film a fly over of the rivers, or sections of the rivers, for us should we decide to produce one.

Outreach Plan V 4/13/17: Lucy noted that Elizabeth had presented a draft outreach plan at the Subcommittee's last meeting (since that Subcommittee will be developing the draft Management Plan) and asked her to review it with those present. Elizabeth explained that her intent was to lay out a timeline of outreach activities to accomplish before taking the Study and Management Plan to the towns for approval. Lucy posed the possibility of targeting fall 2018 special town meetings instead of spring 2018 annual town meetings. She noted that annual town meetings often have very full agendas and that a special town meeting might provide a better venue for presenting and getting a positive vote on the Study and Management Plan. Leah noted that Dunstable does not always have a fall special town meeting and, actually would not want to hold one for a single topic.

Jamie felt the article to approve the Study and Plan would be fairly straight forward and not controversial for an annual town meeting to consider. Robert will reach out to the town administrators to ascertain their protocol for presentations at town meetings and identify any possible problem areas. Tim felt it would be important to work with the local sponsoring agency – probably the boards of selectmen.

It was noted that October 2018 will be the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

Elizabeth proceeded to walk through her Outreach Plan, noting the number and frequency of meetings with stakeholders that need to be held. Heidi suggested a monthly e-newsletter to local town boards to keep them apprised of and engaged in our progress. It need not be more than a couple of paragraphs and a photograph or two – to be quick to read and visually appealing. It could also direct the reader to our website for more information. All agreed that Elizabeth's proposed plan laid out an aggressive, but clear, schedule for getting to our target of spring 2018 annual town meetings.

Draft Management Plan: Al distributed and walked through a draft section of the Management Plan pertaining to the implementation section for one of the three categories, Biological Diversity. He noted that other sections of the Plan would provide greater detail on the resources, existing conditions, and gaps that would need addressing. He also acknowledged that there is probably too much detail for some of the strategies and that some areas would need to be shortened. Heidi encouraged brevity. Tim suggested focusing on the actions and strategies that would have the greatest impact on the resources. Jamie suggested developing a "master list" of actions and then prioritizing them. Elizabeth cautioned against being too specific in strategies

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which could have the unintended consequence of precluding a future need or strategy which was not anticipated at this time. Al offered to send the plan electronically to Committee members for their review and comment, which he welcomes. Elizabeth encouraged anyone interested in working with Al on a specific category or goal/strategies within a category to contact him. Jamie felt Al's draft was a good start, reminding the Committee that an administrative structure for implementing the Plan will be important to establish.

Outreach Subcommittee

Robert confirmed that the website is live and that all towns have been asked to link their websites to ours. He noted the Outreach Subcommittee has two tasks on its plate now: to begin working on a logo and to develop a strategy for the town meetings. He will help produce materials for the Public Meeting, if needed. Heidi asked if our website provided a way for people to sign up for regular news and, if so, to send out monthly, short e-blasts. Elizabeth responded that such an email "sign up" list has been established on the website. Elizabeth also noted the NRWA email list can be sorted by towns which could be used as one way to keep the public aware of our activities.

New Business

Jamie reported that the paperwork had been filed for another \$60,000 to cover the Study Committee's work.

Elizabeth reported that the NRWA has applied for grants from the Bruce Anderson Foundation and Community Foundation of North Central MA to support this work.

Jordan reported on the on-going work she and Drew Kellner have been doing to educate and build support at the local level for inclusion in the Wild & Scenic River designation. They met with a group of stakeholders which had a "mixed/neutral" response to the proposal. However, the Hollis Conservation Commission had then met with the Board of Selectmen in a purely informational session and that went well. Her understanding is that Brookline is now interested in learning more about the Wild & Scenic Rivers program. She suggested that Jamie meet with the Brookline Selectmen, particularly as there are now 2 new members to the Board.

Jordan also described the intensive, and successful, campaign she, Drew Kellner and others had organized to educate and build support among the general population for the recent, successful acquisition of approximately 70 acres along the Nissitissit River in Brookline.

Heidi reported that on April 26th at 8 AM there will be a tour of the Willow Brook restoration and low impact development improvements at Devens.

Susan announced the dedication on April 22nd at 11:30 in Lancaster of a bench in honor of Vic Koivumaki, a past NRWA board member and president, and active member of the Lancaster Friends of the Nashua River. Elizabeth will attend and is among those making remarks.

Martha Morgan reported the updated Natural Heritage mapping was out and available for review and comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

The next regular W&S Study Committee meeting will be on May 18th at 7 PM.