

**Nashua River Wild & Scenic Study Committee**  
**Notes from the Study Committee Meeting**  
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA  
February 16, 2017

**INFORMAL NOTES**

*Members Present:* Lucy Wallace (Harvard); Bill Flynn (Lancaster); Judy Larter (Dunstable); Nadia Madden (Groton); Paula Terrasi (Pepperell)

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

*NPS:* Jamie Fosburgh

*Ex Officio:* Jeff Barbaro (USGS)

*Guests:* Mike Fleming (NRWA Board member); Warren Kimball (NRWA Board Member)

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

Administrative

The December 15, 2016 meeting notes were accepted as presented.

NPS Presentation: River Classification Criteria

Jamie Fosburgh reviewed his "Classification Notes" regarding the three classifications under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, at least one of which a river must meet in order to qualify for designation. The classifications are Wild, Scenic, and Recreational and essentially are determined by level of human activity or impact on or adjacent to the river.

- *Wild* rivers (or segments thereof) must be free of impoundments, not be polluted, generally inaccessible except by trail, and bordered by primitive or largely undeveloped shorelines.
- *Scenic* rivers (or segments thereof) must be free of impoundments, have shorelines or watersheds that are largely primitive or undeveloped and have some accessibility by roads. In addition there are no parallel roads in close proximity to the river, development, if any, is not visible from the river and there are no significant urban town centers adjacent to the river. The river can have breached dams and run adjacent to agricultural lands. Some minimal amount of the shoreline can be channelized or rip-rapped, but most of the shoreline (95%) is in a natural state.
- *Recreational* rivers (or segments thereof) are readily accessible by road or railroad, have some development along the shoreline and may have some impoundments or past diversions. In addition, there may be parallel roads in close proximity to the river, there can be rip-rap or other alterations to the river, and even the need for restoration of some of the shoreline. The river can also run through urban or town centers.

All agreed that the rivers in the study area do not qualify as Wild; however, the segments of each river could be classified as Scenic or Recreational. Jamie cautioned against creating too many small segments of different classifications; rather, he suggested that we weigh the extent of one classification on the river in comparison to another. To evaluate whether a segment was Scenic or Recreational, Al Futterman projected photographs of certain areas on all three rivers that had some level of development or nearby roads along one shoreline. In all cases, Jamie felt the distance or run of river impacted by the development or parallel roads was fairly minor or

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insignificant relative to the rest of the river. There was some discussion about the two FERC-licensed dams on the Nashua: the Ice House Dam in Ayer and the Pepperell-Hydro Dam in East Pepperell. Both have significant impoundments behind them, but otherwise the river segments are relatively inaccessible by road. There are other small, non-licensed dams to consider on the Squannacook, as well: the Townsend Harbor Pond Dam and the Hollingsworth & Vose Dam in West Groton.

Al then took us on four virtual fly-over tours of the three rivers via Google Earth. The first tour was of the Nashua River from Rt 119 in Groton northeasterly to the New Hampshire border. While most of this river segment would meet the criteria to be classified as Scenic, there was some question as to whether the segment containing the impoundment behind the Pepperell-Hydro Dam would have to be classified as Recreational. There is also the stretch of river (~1/4 mile, at most) just below the dam and adjacent to an abandoned mill site which should be classified Recreational. Jamie said the impoundment might qualify as Scenic given its limited accessibility and the shorter segment below the dam might not be worth a separate classification given its relative length compared to the entire Nashua main stem. We could seek to designate this whole stretch as Scenic and let the NPS reviewers in Washington, DC weigh in on any concerns they had and discuss such with them then.

Our next tour was of the Nashua River from Rt 117 (which is about 1 mile north of the confluence of the North Nashua and South Nashua) north to Rt 119 in Groton. With the exception of the Ice House Dam and the 5-mile impoundment behind it, this segment would meet the classification as Scenic. Lucy pointed out that the impoundment contains the large oxbow wetland complex which exists irrespective of the dam. Jamie felt that, as with the stretch from Rt 119 to the NH border, this stretch would also merit classification as Scenic.

The third tour was of the Squannacook River from its headwaters in Ash Swamp to its confluence with the Nashua in Shirley/Ayer. With the exception of some development on the east side of Townsend Harbor Pond and the small Spaulding Cooperage Dam, most of the river has a protected shoreline, limited development and limited accessibility, which would support it being classified as Scenic.

The fourth and final tour was of the Nissitissit River from Lake Potanipo to its confluence with the Nashua in Pepperell. It was readily apparent that the river should be classified as Scenic. Al noted the Shattuck Oil facility adjacent to the river and wondered if that segment should be pulled out and classified Recreational. Jamie felt it was too short a run to merit a different classification than Scenic.

After traveling the three rivers, there was some discussion about the merits of separating certain segments (such as the dam impoundments) as Recreational and the balance as Scenic. Jamie felt a case could be made for doing that, but also an equally valid case could be made to designate all three rivers in their entirety as Scenic. He explained that these few, isolated segments were not large enough to warrant a different classification (Recreational). The Committee agreed to classify all three rivers as Scenic.

#### ORRV Subcommittee

Lucy reported that the ORRV Subcommittee was recommending that the Study Area be limited to a 1/4 mile corridor on either side of the rivers. She reminded the Committee that previously the intention had been to include the sub-basins of the Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers in the Nashua NRWA - NPS W&S Study Committee Meeting February 16, 2017 Notes FINAL

Study area. There were several reasons for the present recommendation. First, all of the tributaries in the sub-basins to those rivers would need to be named in the Study and legislation, which the ORRV Subcommittee felt was an over-reach. Second, the Study and legislation could include specific language that it “recognizes the importance of specific (named) tributaries where they flow through specific (named) towns,” thereby capturing the tributaries we do consider noteworthy. And third, the Management Plan can cover the sub-basins of these two rivers.

The Subcommittee had also finished its review of the Historical/Cultural and Recreational/Scenic ORRVs sections in Al’s draft Case Statement. Paula Terrasi noted that a request had been made previously that members of the Study Committee reach out to their communities for specific historical and/or cultural resources that should be included in the Study or Management Plan. Al has received information for Shirley from Heidi Ricci. Leah Basbanes is collecting information for Dunstable.

Liz Lacy’s 2/16/17 chart for organizing the ORRVs, both by category and by rivers, was distributed and reviewed. Of particular note was the differentiation between Outstanding Value (cited in the Study) and Supporting Feature (cited in the Management Plan in support of a given ORRV). In response to a question about order, Jamie noted that the ORRV categories do not have to be prioritized, though it would make sense to start with the “Marion Story” and make it “front and center” in the Study. Given the decision to classify all three rivers as Scenic, the ORRVs and Supporting Features should relate to their Scenic designation.

Lucy asked about the timing for the Management Plan. As Liz will be drafting the Study, Jamie said we should start drafting the Management Plan now, using the Study as the basic “architecture.” The Plan should start with the outstanding values, threats to the values, gaps in protecting these values, and include a strategy for implementing the Plan. He also agreed that the ORRVs for the Nissitissit River in NH should be included in the Plan, and even the Study, in case Hollis and Brookline decide to be included in the designation, either with the initial filing or in the future.

Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell reported that Mark Archambault is reviewing the town bylaws. Mark indicated he will have a chart at the next ORRV Subcommittee meeting showing the bylaws, compliance with storm water management, etc, of the eight towns in the Study area. He will also look at Bolton and at the NH towns as time permits before the next meeting.

#### Outreach Subcommittee

Al also gave a brief tour of the website as it has been updated and improved since our last meeting. As Cindy Knox is away for the next 10 days, it probably will not go live for another two weeks. He asked for suggestions and thoughts on the website. Mike Fleming thought it would be good to have a “Contact Us” button on the page with the draft Case Statement in case readers wanted to add to or correct its information. There was some sense that “Contact Us” buttons might be useful on other pages, in addition to the generic button “Contact” on the home page. It was also suggested that the legislation authorizing the Study be included with documents that are accessible from the website. Jeff Barbaro offered to provide a link to the USGS’s real time river gages. Finally, in addition to referring to this website in our communications, the Outreach Subcommittee will be asking each town to provide a link to the website from its own website. It was suggested that the Outreach Subcommittee issue a press release when the website is going live.

Al asked for confirmation from each town representative that they were comfortable with the website as constructed. Members should notify Lucy who will then advise Al, Cindy and Elizabeth. Once all eight towns have responded, the website will be able to go live.

### Other Business

- At Drew Kellner's invitation, Jamie and Al recently met with representatives of several conservation organizations to explain the Wild & Scenic Rivers program and purpose of the Study. Drew has heard back from a few of the participants and reported on those reactions to Al; reaction to the possibility of their joining has been mixed. Jamie felt they have started a good dialogue.
- Elizabeth reported that work is underway to reach out to Bolton to join the Study.
- Budget Update. Elizabeth reported that the NPS is seeking another \$60,000 for our work. To date, the Nashua River Watershed Association has received the following amounts under the Cooperative Agreement with the NPS:
  - \$10,000 - initial funding
  - \$44,000 - modification #1
  - \$12,000 - modification #2
  - \$66,000 - total to date has been authorized

Of this amount, roughly \$32,000 has been spent as of 12/31/16. While we can shift funds between line items in the budget with Jamie's permission, Elizabeth asked how the members would like to allocate the next \$60,000, which is intended to get us most of the way to completing the Study and Management Plan. She added she has applied for a \$10,000 grant from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation for this project, but has no assurance we will receive it.

After some discussion, it was agreed that while most of the funding will be designated for personnel, \$9,000 should be designated for potential contract or consultant expenses, \$1,000 will be allocated for supplies, and about \$500 for travel within the watershed. Committee members suggested that the potential contract items could include contracts related to the web-site, public relations, and printing; the contracts could also include a canoe outfitter providing tours of the rivers to municipal officials and others.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

The next regular W&S Study Committee meeting will be on March 16th at 7 PM.