NASHUA RIVER
WILD & SCENIC
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
Nashua • Squannacook • Nissitissit Rivers

NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

Update to Town Boards of Selectmen – December 2020

Background

In 2018 the Annual Town Meetings of 11 towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire (Ayer, Bolton, Brookline, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Hollis, Lancaster, Pepperell, Shirley, and Townsend) approved the *Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Stewardship Plan* (*Stewardship Plan*) and its recommendation to seek federal designation of these rivers as Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers. With the passage of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act into law on March 12, 2019, sections of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers were so designated. And, as required by the *Stewardship Plan*, shortly following designation the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council) was formed, comprised of a representative and alternate from each of the 11 towns, and representatives of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) and National Park Service (NPS).

The Stewardship Council

The mission of the Stewardship Council is to preserve, protect, and enhance the outstandingly remarkable resource values of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers and their tributaries, particularly the biological diversity, recreational and scenic resources, and historical and cultural resources as set forth in the *Stewardship Plan*. Since its formation, the Stewardship Council has organized itself through adoption of Bylaws and supplemental Policies and Procedures; designated the NRWA as its fiscal agent; and adopted a budget and work plan for the $150,000 provided under the first year of a five-year Cooperative Agreement with the NPS (detail on reverse side). It has also undertaken or is considering the following projects:

Conservation Networking Breakfasts: Periodic meetings for town conservation agents focused on resource protection. Speakers have been invited to discuss topics such as culvert replacement and upgrades, siting solar arrays, dealing with invasives, conservation leadership, and creative land protection.

Canoe Access Assessments: The Stewardship Council identified, evaluated and mapped 27 formal and informal canoe access sites on the Squannacook, Nissitissit, and Nashua Rivers. These sites are being prioritized for possible improvement.

Shoreline Surveys: Nearly 20 discrete segments of the three rivers, totaling over 50 miles of river frontage, have been surveyed from water to assess the condition of the waterways and identify issues for remediation, such as bank erosion and sedimentation.

Invasive Species Control: The Stewardship Council is developing a program to work with and educate W&SR communities on the identification and control of invasive plant and insect species.

Riparian Land Management Educational Brochure: The Stewardship Council is preparing riparian habitat stewardship and "best practices" for landowners abutting the Wild & Scenic rivers, tributaries and streams. The brochure will be shared with towns for distribution to their community as they see fit.

Off Highway Vehicles Usage Educational Brochure: The Stewardship Council is preparing a brochure regarding use of OHVs on public and private lands: harms to habitat and wildlife, risk to public safety, and relevant regulations. The brochure will be shared with towns for distribution to their community.

Forest Legacy Program: The Stewardship Council will work with landowners, and local and regional land trusts within the river towns (and their immediate abutting towns) to identify tracts of important, threatened and strategic forested lands which when aggregated together could qualify for an application to the federal Forest Legacy Program.

Self-Guided Driving Tour: The Stewardship Council will develop a map of historic and cultural sites associated with the rivers, which will include explanations of each site's importance, for use in exploring this area.

2020 Budget

Outreach and Education - $15,000

Educational materials, brochures, maps, reports, kiosks, and articles on Stewardship Council work are being developed and will be shared at community events, with municipal boards, and with local newspaper and social media outlets. Increased public understanding about the rivers will help to foster greater appreciation and voluntary stewardship of these special resources.

Projects and Stewardship Plan Implementation - $57,000

The Stewardship Council will identify high priority projects that will advance the Wild and Scenic designation by implementing *Stewardship Plan* recommendations for protecting and enhancing important river values. These high priority projects can cover a variety of topic areas such as recreation, habitat restoration, public education, land protection, and science and research.

Program Support - $43,000

The NRWA will provide a part-time Outreach and Project Coordinator to serve as staff for the Stewardship Council. The Coordinator will be overseen by and assist the Stewardship Council in administering outreach and project activities related to Wild and Scenic designation and *Stewardship Plan* implementation. NRWA staff members will provide project management as needed to implement priority projects and other activities that advance the Wild and Scenic designation.

Community Grants - $20,000

Community Grants will be used to support a wide range of projects such as recreation, habitat restoration, public education, land protection, and science and research. The Stewardship Council will initiate an annual Community Grants Program by contracting with the selected recipients. Awards will be determined using selection criteria established by the Stewardship Council and based on applications submitted in response to a request(s) for proposals.

Fiduciary & Indirect - $15,000

The NRWA incurs fiduciary and other indirect costs that are not directly accountable to particular projects or products. The rate for these indirect costs is 10% of the total budget.

For more information, visit the Wild and Scenic Rivers website: www.WildandScenicNashuaRivers.org