



Sudbury, Assabet and Concord
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council

Great Meadows NWR

Weir Hill Road, Sudbury

October 25, 2016

6:30-8:30 pm

RSC members present: Anne Slugg (Chair/Sudbury), Sarah Bursky (NPS), Cindy Delpapa (State), Lisa Eggleston (OARS-Alt), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Jamie Fosburgh, (NPS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Libby Herland (USFWS), Jim Meadors (Lincoln), Karen Pelto (State), Tom Sciacca (Wayland).

RSC members not in attendance: M Antes (Wayland- Alt), E Brown (Concord), K Tyrrell (SVT),

Also attending: Paul Marcus (Bedford)

Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm by Chair Slugg.

Introductions made around the table.

Motion made to accept 27 September, 2016 minutes with the following corrections: Wayland DPW has agreed to take responsibility to install road crossing signs, liability to replace culpability under treasurer's report, emergency connections to some communities, delete the mention of 60 month drought, (Field-Juma/Sciacca). MSV with one abstention (K Pelto).

- *Providing input for the Conservation Plan update process - Discussion (Sarah)*

S Bursky has been researching, interviewing and querying a range of people to better understand the W&S conservation plans in the broader context, the SuAsCo Conservation Plan specifically and the role of the strategic plan. Both plans need to be revisited. J Fosburgh noted all of the W&S rivers have provisions in their conservation plans to review and update, as needed, every 5 years. After twenty years most groups find it necessary to undertake significant redrafting to reflect changes in regulations, management and environmental issues and the needs of the rivers/communities. S Bursky will send a proposed approach, including a budget, for revising the SuAsCo Conservation and Strategic Plans before the next meeting.

Small groups discussed two questions posed by S Bursky to help define RSC expectations and outcomes. Question 1, concerning the process, produced the following suggestions:

- Have a logical progression from the 5 values,
- have the planning sessions led by someone familiar with the SuAsCo,
- structure the process to allow time to think about the future,
- everyone must review the current plan first and be fully engaged in the work- (be fully prepared),

- understand practical constraints of what we are doing (e.g. a plan modification may trigger a bylaw change),
- Chapters 3, 4, and 5 should be the focus of the work,
- consider a retreat setting and the benefits of this approach,
- Product should be something people are excited about, (posted on web site, new member/public could understand),
- Have the current plan converted to an editable electronic document,
- Everyone needs to have a voice throughout the process,
- Everyone should fully understand the objectives, agrees on what we are doing and understands the mission of the RSC,
- Understand the RSC has several different products,
- get some perspectives from new people or people not intimately involved in the RSC
- should allow the public to comment on the draft,
- get some feedback early-on in the process and not wait until it is a nearly finished product,
- conduct an honest evaluation on how well the RSC has been doing.

Question 2 asked reps to consider measurable goals and metrics with the following suggestions made:

- The product should be in a form the 'public' can understand - concise, attractive, easy to read and capturing the essence of what we are doing, (photos and reports linked to summary),
- Have definite metrics, measurable goals, and assessment,
- Linkages are important- tools able to facilitate towns and individuals to understand how their individual actions impact the rivers, data sharing, web sites and story maps (interactive),
- Keep focused on getting the plan done- avoid veering off on implementation or other distractions,
- End with more definitive goals for the group- i.e. we will have a successful 5 years if we get X done,
- As tempting as it is to try to include all issues we need to recognize we have constraints.
- A potential approach is to find an initiative able to meet several goals.
- The plan details actual goals with the justification/explanation for the selection of the goal in an appendix.

In near term- S Bursky will be having more conversations and will present a process map at the November meeting and a budget to vote on.

- *Drought update and the role of RSC*

Chair Slugg asked what the RSC should be doing during a drought? What authority do we have? What sort of system should we have for questions related to the drought? Should RSC have a representative at the Drought Task Force meetings. S Bursky hopes to begin attending and Tom and Ralph volunteered to try to attend some meetings. (The next meeting is 8 November.) Suggested RSC speak for the river and support its right to water. RSC could advocate conservation and other actions are required sooner before conditions deteriorate significantly. Producing an education component was suggested emphasizing a watershed based approach which will be particularly important when SuAsCo basin permits come up for renewal in 2018. With the state beginning to revise the drought plan, it is important to have river advocates at the Drought Task Force meeting to show there is a constituency focusing on rivers and watersheds.

A Field-Juma presented on two other topics before she needing to leave the meeting: a proposal to apply an herbicide (Clearcast) to the Saxonville impoundment to control aquatic invasives augmented by hand pulling went before the Framingham Conservation Commission and the Billerica Dam feasibility

study will be completed in the near future. The consultant integrated all the questions and comments received into the final draft.

- *Updates*

- Community Grant Announcement: J Meadors covered the Lincoln ConComm, R Hammond sent to Bedford ConComm, DPW and Trails Committee. DER sent out a tweet. Should anyone receive an inquiry about deadlines please explain after the initial 11 November deadline submissions will be accepted on a rolling basis.
- Framingham herbicides applications in Saxonville Impoundment: B Fadden sent a link to the NOI via email to the RSC list. It was suggested the RSC might serve as a clearinghouse for information for other towns. It was suggested this information be shared with CISMA.
- Assabet Avenue Drainage Project: J Fosburgh reported the National Park Service just received a response to the detailed comments sent to the town about the project. In sum it appears the town is going to move forward with the project as it is currently designed. Concord Conservation Commission has put the review of the project on hold. This project also requires an Army Corps permit. If the town cannot be persuaded to reconsider constructing an outfall, the placement of the outfall could be improved. Consensus was the NPS should push for more storm water best management practices to reduce runoff volume. If the town remains committed to an outfall, the RSC should work with the town on a better outfall design and location.
- Nyanza funding: The Trustees have decided not to fund more water chestnut removal with Tier II funding, (Tier II funding will instead be directed to land acquisition). The loss of the funding will likely be a topic at the next CISMA meeting as the loss of funding will be a serious setback to the viability of the coalition. While groups and communities are still interested in the work of CISMA, a lack of outside funding, membership dues or an entity willing to support the 'maintenance' of the organization will likely be increasingly less viable. The RSC did fund CISMA to write grants to help fund operations but no outside funding was obtained. The state does not have funding to support invasives work. One possible model would be to consider pursuing the Mystic River group's approach which includes support from the City of Malden and from corporate sponsors for invasives control. Reps are asked to please email S Bursky with any additional suggestions/strategies.
- Signage needs and gages: S Bursky is taking the lead on identifying where W&S road crossing signs are needed. She will develop a budget to cover the cost of signs and installation. R Hammond suggested also including a water level gage, since paddlers and others are interested in this information, at the new 'Eagle Scout project' kiosk. C Delpapa will check to see if DER has a spare gage.
- Beaver letter: B Fadden sent out a draft letter he hopes the RSC will send to SuAsCo W&S Conservation Commissions requesting the RSC be notified when the Commission receives a filing to manage beavers/beaver dams. This notification would provide the RSC a chance to consider the proposed beaver management actions and potentially provide input to the Commission(s). The beaver dams are proving useful in creating refugia during this drought and contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity. Because of these important ecological functions, B Fadden recommends the RSC establish a policy of not interfering with beavers and let natural processes rule. People should send edits to B Fadden as soon as possible.

Chair Slugg and S Bursky will work together to send the letter to the appropriate Commissions.

- Insurance/agreement with SVT: S Bursky reported that she is in discussion with K Tyrrell about the option to have an internal agreement in lieu of insurance coverage. At this time it appears the funding allocated for the errors and omissions insurance will not be needed.

- *New business*

Annual report and town outreach discussion was tabled.

Holiday party Doodle Poll for a date was sent. More details will follow including if RSC reps can bring guests to the party.

Earlier RSC meeting time: There was an equal split on preference for the 6:30 pm start. Consensus at the table was to meet once more at 6:30 (29 November) to explore the popularity of the earlier time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM by Chair Slugg