

RIVER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
February 24, 2015

Present: Mary Antes, Wayland; Doug and Aviva Brooks, Concord; Nancy Bryant, SUASCO Community Council; Cindy Delpapa, Commonwealth, Lisa Eggleston, SVT; Bill Fadden, Framingham; Alison Field-Juma, OARS; Libby Herland, US Fish and Wildlife; Jim Meador, Lincoln; Tom Sciacca, Wayland; Anne Slugg, Sudbury; Kate Tyrrell, SVT; Jamie Fosburgh, National Park Service

Absent: Betsy Gallagher, Billerica; Ralph Hammond, Bedford; Steve Pearlman, Carlisle

Guests: Amber Carr and Robin Stuart, Mass. Audubon

Cindy Delpapa called the meeting to order at 7:01 with introductions and a thank you to Anne for arranging for meeting space in the Sudbury Town Offices. The RSC will probably return to Great Meadows Headquarters for the April meeting.

Project Presentations

CISMA: Amber Carr reported that CISMA was awarded a small grant of \$4,500. CISMA used this for a small grants program where they had requests totaling \$15,000 and ended up funding 5 separate. Projects included control of *Phragmites* along Route 2 by the Concord Land Conservation Trust, glossy buckthorn control by SVT, and mile-a-minute vine control by Westford; creation of early successional habitat by the Southborough Open Land Foundation; and updates to the CISMA website. The \$620 rapid response grant will be used in the spring to map early detection species.

SuAsCo Rivers Schools: Robin Stuart, interim contact for Rivers Schools, said that the RSC grant of \$3,000 has been extremely useful in renting buses to get students from Hudson, Maynard, and Lowell to the river for hands-on experiences since their schools have limited funds for field trips. Susan Erickson is now in the Weston School District but she continues to share student work data and reflections and provides support for teachers and students. The 12 teachers participating in the program meet three or four times per year. Libby noted that teacher retention in the program is very good: one Lowell teacher has been involved for 10 years and a Hudson teacher for five.

Minutes

The minutes of February 3 were approved with one correction by a vote of 9-0-4 (Field-Juma/Bryant).

Treasurer's Report

February expenses included \$5,000 for the Sudbury Flow Study and \$24.99 to replace a broken frame for the rotating photography exhibition. There is \$3,500 remaining although we still do not have a bill from Monty for work on the website and Riverfest 2014. Anne suggested having regular financial reports for SVT and OARS- the entities with whom there are CAs. It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the treasurer's report (Sciacca/Eggleston).

Old Business

Jamie said the February 13th flow presentation in Framingham was very good. While Alison agreed, she was not sure how to use it. From the habitat point of view, the river has degraded to supporting mostly pond species. Tom was most interested in the report on mussels. Bill said the reservoirs would have to be actively managed to maintain flow. The written report needs two peer reviews and then it is final.

Aviva and Cindy will organize the Riverfest party. We will move to electronic invitations and try to reorient the invitation list to those people who may actually come with the help of the RSC members.

Funding, Priorities, and Budget Discussion

It was previously agreed to postpone a thorough review of the 2010 strategic plan until the new Park Service staff person is hired. Currently the RSC initiates and supports its partner organizations to meet land protection and land stewardship goals through river-based advocacy, scientific studies, control of invasive species, and land purchases or conservation restrictions.

A new funding option might be to discuss with SVT and OARS the work the RSC considers its next year's priorities to see which may mesh with OARS & SVT's work, decide on funding levels for each of these shared priorities, identify remaining priorities in the work plan, and then solicit responses broadly to cover work on the RSC priorities. Nancy asked why fund primarily OARS and SVT, why not the towns. She believes it is important to include the decision-makers. Jim said he thinks the towns benefit from the work of the two organizations.

Lisa suggested setting aside the March meeting to focus on the plan after having time to review the 2010 and 2015 documents. We could then solicit proposals in April and have a final funding round for community and small grants. The cooperative agreements could be submitted to the Park Service in May. It was suggested that other organizations be notified of the delay in funding application/decisions this year.

Riverfest Funding

The Riverfest funding for 2015 is about the same as last year plus \$300 for inflation. The money will come from the \$3,500 unallocated and \$5,000 from small grants. It was moved, seconded, and voted to allocate \$8,500 for Riverfest expenses, including Monty (Meadors/Sciacca).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08.