



**Sudbury, Assabet and Concord
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council
28 June, 2016 Minutes**

Present: Anne Slugg (Sudbury), Elissa Brown (Concord), Sarah Bursky (NPS), Cindy Delpapa (State), Lisa Eggleston (SVT-alt), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Libby Herland (USFWS), Jim Meadors (Lincoln), Karen Pelto (State), Tom Sciacca (Wayland),.

Absent: Mary Antes (Wayland- alt), Nancy Bryant (SuAsCo Community Council), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Betsy Gallagher (Billerica-alt), Steve Perlman (Carlisle), Kate Tyrrell (SVT).

Meeting called to order at 7:03

Minutes:

Request to delete J Furbeck as OARS alternate as she is no longer with the organization. In the sentence, "Sciacca questioned the appropriateness of the natural flow regime" change "appropriateness" to meaning and "centuries" to millennia. Motion made to accept May minutes as corrected, (Brown/Herland). MSV with 3 abstentions.

Riverfest: reflections and date for next year

A big thanks offered to the many people who worked hard to make the events a success. S Bursky provided some preliminary statistics on attendance and activity. The opening kick-off had approximately 75 people. Thirteen events reported a combined total of approximately 400 visitors. The Solstice event had approximately 150 attendees. RiverFest website saw 2,500 hits originating from 743 websites.

S. Bursky asked people to share their thoughts on the value of RiverFest. Responses included: to raises awareness of the rivers; it is a visible event; connects residents to what the RSC does, (unlike a comment letter); helps build our constituency; people from outside the watershed learn about the rivers; people may not be aware of the Wild & Scenic concept but likely notice the paucity of visual intrusions; makes it easy for people to get out and enjoy the rivers; memory making; RiverFest is not so much about advocating for the resources but enjoying the river; and makes people aware of the resources in their backyard. Additional observations and suggestions-

Pluses: Serves a diversity of people/ages; many types of experience available; Great Meadows as a location works.

Change: have a canoe race – a new event to keep things from getting stale; consider holding RiverFest biennially; fewer locations to concentrate events to allow people to easily try multiple activities and generate a festive feeling; get word out to youth; try more social media to publicize RiverFest; Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge is not a good location; consider targeted autumn event at one site.

People were interested in knowing: if more people attended on Saturday or Sunday; Duck Race review; how many other local events there were competing against RiverFest for attendees. RSC agreed to take at least an hour of a future meeting to discuss RiverFest timing, length (1 or 2 days) and frequency. The RSC will be asked to explore more about metrics in the future.

Lawn sign inventory- Frank has 5, E Brown brought one to meeting, T Sciacca has 7 plus a banner, L Herland has 5, J Meadors has 1. OARS has 6. B Fadden has 3 signs, Musketaquid has 1.

Membership

Reps were asked to identify a possible alternate for their town/organization if needed. Reps will also need to arrange their reappointment to comply with the RSC bylaws if their appointment occurred more than three years ago. E Brown checked with her Concord officials and found them supportive of appointing an alternate. She has already drafted a list and will be reaching out to potential alternates. A Slugg reported John Drobinski still wishes to be the alternate for Sudbury. She will work on her reappointment. Betsy Gallagher was contacted and agreed to send recommendations to A Slugg. J Meadors said the existing Lincoln alternate, Jim Henderson, is willing to

continue in this role provided he does not have to attend meetings. J Meadors has asked the Lincoln ConComm for suggestions for an alternate. B Fadden did not have an update as he was engaged in other RSC business. S Bursky will contact Steve Pearlman to assess his status and ability to attend meetings. A Slugg requested reappointment letters by this autumn. Reps are encouraged to reach out to A Slugg or S Bursky if assistance is needed.

W&S Signage priorities

S. Bursky has compiled the information provided on where W&S signage is lacking. Two sites on the Assabet River were identified for new signs. Delia Kaye recommended that despite Concord's strict sign policy it would be worthwhile to again ask the BOS for permission. Two new potential sites are Pine Street and Route 62. There are four more spots on the Concord River in Concord and also two more sites for the Sudbury. Suggestion made to wait until new signs are ordered for those sites where permission must be obtained and use existing spare signs where approval already exists. The RSC discussed the merits of placing signs on the river and not just at road crossings. S Bursky noted her list contains only sites reported by reps and how many signs are currently needed at each site (1 or 2) and additional reconnaissance may identify more potential sign sites. Consensus to replace the sign on the Wayland side of Sherman's bridge, (there is no sign on the Sudbury side).

Strategic Planning facilitation

In the past the RSC has used a NPS facilitator (no longer an option) though Lee facilitated the last strategic planning process. If outside facilitation is desired for this upcoming effort the RSC will need to find funding to cover the cost. Discussed the extent of revision needed for this review as this is a key factor in the facilitator decision. A completely new strategic plan may warrant a facilitator but an update of the current 5 year plan may not. No strong support to hire an outside facilitator was offered. Chair Slugg advised that the success of this strategic planning effort likely hinges on reps doing their homework including careful assessment of the existing plan to see if it still resonates and/or identifying needed changes.

Updates

- Concord Market-E Brown explained the town approved this project as an improvement over existing conditions, (a strip mall abutting Mill Brook- tributary to the Concord River). The intent of the project is to create an upscale market with considerable site improvements. Some alteration of an a small isolated wetland is proposed to accommodate additional parking area. Current status- the Concord Conservation Commission has issued an Order of Conditions and there has been a site visit with agency staff.
- Fish Restoration presentation- There was an additional meeting in Lowell focusing on the potential for diadromous fish restoration in the Concord. Eric Hutchinson of NOAA was the speaker. People are interested in fish runs, (this year was a record year for anadromous fish returns) so there is support for this study to move forward. This planning phase will conclude with a response to all comments received. The next phase will then be determined.
- DEP NPDES delegation- The MA governor filed a bill to approve the process to seek delegation. The environmental community has joined together to educate legislators about the issue. Currently the bill is in the joint Environmental/Agriculture Committee to determine, by 30 June, whether to forward the bill out of committee. If it does not come out of committee it will not be considered this year by the legislature.
- Water flow subcommittee- B Fadden sent in the request for the Sudbury River to be considered for priority project (for flow assistance) status to MA Div. of Ecological Restoration. It will be a few months before the selection process is completed. B Fadden emailed the RSC with an update about the current low flow in the Sudbury and reported the USGS is willing to measure flow if conditions reach significant low flow conditions, (he has the contact information). Beavers have done more work on their dam upstream of the Oxbow causing flooding of the larger beaver dam. MWRA has trapped-out two beavers and removed some of their dams. If RSC is interested in beaver issue it would be worthwhile to ask the local Boards of Health in the W&S towns to contact the RSC whenever they receive requests associated with beavers. B Fadden offered to draft and circulate such a letter.
- Tony Toledo performances- J Meadors reported the performance in Lincoln was sparsely attended. He found the story more entertaining but less educational. T Toledo offered to give another performance

(gratis) if a better venue can be found. The local environmental school is interested but the event will have to wait until autumn when school is back in session. A Slugg reported 13 people attended the Sudbury performance which was heavily publicized. There was no sign interpreter as there was at Lincoln. She was disappointed on the story's reduced SuAsCo specific information. RSC had a short brainstorm of how to generate greater attendance at the story.

- Refuge Water Chestnut Harvesting – L Herland reported their current focus is in Carding Hill Pond followed by Stearns Pond. Grist Mill will be done with hand pulling. The plan is to harvest the river in three weeks if the water level allows access (the new harvester is smaller but still needs some water). USFWS works with Hop Brook Assoc. on the eradication efforts. There is a question about the possibility of the harvester be spreading other invasives such as milfoil which makes an argument for herbicides treatment instead of harvesting.

New business

No new business

Next meeting

Next RSC meeting is 26 July where the funding priorities the next round of Community Grants will be discussed. Also a Doodle Poll will be sent to explore interest in adjusting the meeting time.

Betsy is willing to host a boat trip- if there is enough water- in August. A Doodle Poll will be sent to help select a date.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 (Eggleston/Field-Juma).