



Sudbury, Assabet and Concord
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council
Minutes, March 1, 2016 Meeting

Present: Anne Slugg (Sudbury), Kate Tyrrell (SVT), Libby Herland (USFWS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Sarah Bursky (National Park Service), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland). Lisa Eggleston (SVT-alt), Karen Pelto (State), Cindy Delpapa (State)

Absent: Mary Antes (Wayland- alt), Nancy Bryant (SuAsCo Community Council), Jessica Furbeck (OARS-alt), Betsy Gallagher, (Billerica), Jim Meadors (Lincoln), Steve Perlman (Carlisle), Elissa Brown (Concord)
Guests: Jamie Fosburgh (NPS)

Meeting called to order By Anne Slugg at 7:04. Introductions made around the room.

Minutes:

Minutes of January meeting were discussed. A correction was requested to change wording to US Fish and Wildlife Service. Motion to approve January 2016 minutes, (Herland/Field-Juma). MSV

Treasurer's Report:

B. Fadden reported he met with K. Tyrrell to review the RSC finances and appreciated how well the records were kept. Financial statements were provided to attendees showing current funding commitments and expenditures. There is currently \$512 of this currently year's funds yet to be allocated. K. Tyrrell explained page 2 contained information for all of the individual MODS and shows the funds balance. The quarterly report OARS is required to file with the NPS was not available because of timing of other grants but this report will be provided as soon as OARS can manage.

J. Fosburgh informed the RSC that the NPS is requiring more in the quarterly reports including requiring progress reports. Another requirement is the need for hum to 'sign off' on the quarterly reports before they are filed with the NPS headquarters. B. Fadden requested clarification on whether the RSC needed to review and approve the quarterly reports before they are provided to J. Fosburgh/NPS? This RSC review would provide a check and balance on the funding. J. Fosburgh recommended the treasurer's report be reviewed and approved each month at the RSC meeting. This approach would document approval of financial activity in the RSC meeting minutes.

K. Tyrrell offered the suggestion to combine the OARS and SVT financials on one statement. She further recommended reporting only on the open MODS and not complicate the statement with reports on closed MODS. Anne suggested the officers discuss a suitable financial tracking and reporting method at their next planning meeting. J. Fosburgh added an additional change to consider- that of reducing the

number of continuing agreements (CAs) from two to one as the SuAsCo is the only Partnership Wild and Scenic River with two CAs. He predicts the NPS shift to more scrutiny of W&S funding will make it difficult to maintain two CAs into the future.

Old Business:

CISMA asked for an extension to allow their invasive control of buckthorn to be moved to the autumn as this will allow the work to be in sync with the season and result in a more favorable outcome. No objections to granting the extension were made. A. Slugg will contact CISMA (A. Carr) to let her know the extension was granted.

SWEET submitted a Community Grant application to request \$1,177.45 in funding to undertake three projects related to butterfly habitat. The RSC currently has \$6,660 dollars remaining in the Community Grant funds. A question was raised on how/if this work is connected to the river. It was pointed out that the black swallowwort is river related. Members praised SWEET for their partnership with the High School's senior day of service as the work would have significant educational value. Motion to award Community Grant funding of \$1,177.45 to SWEET, (Sciaccia/Field-Juma). MSV

Budget Discussion:

It is anticipated the RSC will send out a project partner funding application to our long term partners following this budget discussion. Project proposals would be due before the next meeting where funding decisions would be made. The application would include the funding priorities decided during this discussion to provide guidance to potential applicants.

In general people felt good work was being done. There was strong support efforts to increase the number of people on the rivers- especially those individuals who are not the 'outdoorsy' type. The rivers have limited access points. This deficiency complicates efforts to get more people on the river. It was suggested, should the Wayland community center moves forward, the RSC advocate for and potentially fund a 'river room' to raise the profile of the rivers. The pending Raytheon land transfer was mentioned and how this parcel has potential for educational and recreational activities

More than one member reiterated the need to increase public awareness of the rivers and the RSC. While Riverfest does help with awareness to an extent, it was suggested the RSC might wish to pro-actively encourage trails along the river and over wetlands through their funding priorities and decisions. This could be achieved either through Partner or Community grant monies. Supporting the installation of a dock was briefly discussed but it was noted docks require significant yearly maintenance and there are liability issues. Other access projects were discussed including the failure of the mats to be installed at the Rte 20 access site, the viability of the proposed Wayland boat house and the King Philips Wood Community Grant. It was recognized that the access issue is challenging and the state's Wetland/River Protection regulations can be a deterrent. The most effective short term approach to the access issue may be improving existing access points which would require identifying site ownership and assessing the likelihood the owner would accept maintenance duties. It was generally agreed Mass

Highway would not be a willing partner. It was suggested the RSC intermittently provide funding for maintenance since there are access points without a dedicated caretaking entity but that the RSC should not begin to offer annual funding for maintenance.

Other funding priorities were discussed.

- The RSC would like to see more direct meetings with RSC communities- ideally members would initiate this work and make every effort to liaise with their communities regularly.
- Additional research work may be advisable. This may be especially important should the Birch Road well reactivation remain viable leaving a limited window for compiling the science needed to argue for protection of the river. Another (related?) study would be to investigate the flow augmentation possibilities on the Sudbury River.
- A question was raised about the need for research related to the renewal of the Water Management Act permits. It was agreed the RSC needs to keep current with the process and perhaps direct energies toward influencing any mitigation required of the towns through the Sustainable Water management Initiative (SWMI).
- With the Phase II Stormwater permit renewal to be issued soon, efforts to promote low impact development and beneficial recharge would be timely.
- Another topic raised in the discussion was how emerging contaminants may be impacting aquatic life. It was recommended this should be in the mix but funding at this time may not be necessary.
- A suggestion the RSC support the goals of fishable and swimmable for the river. OARS receives questions every summer on whether it is safe to swim in the river. OARS does not perform bacteria testing and has not been successful in getting funding for testing. Knowing bacteria would get to the swimmable part. L. Eggleston cautioned bacterial work can send one 'down a rabbit hole' because of the innumerable factors confounding interpretation of bacterial data. Such an effort would require an enormous amount of testing with no guarantee of making things better.
- Another water quality issue is cyanobacteria and whether cyanobacteria are present in the rivers. Some ponds are impacted. Suggested this work maybe a literature search at this time.

It was noted the RSC does not have invasives on the list of priorities. Many felt funding for water chestnut removal is needed as it remains a serious problem and will be for several more years. It was reported that an Americorps crew would be in place for the upcoming season. J. Fosburgh noted \$20,000 from National Park Service will be used for a crew to combat invasives.

RSC Bylaw Revision:

Given the time remaining in the meeting, consensus was to postpone the final discussion and vote until the April meeting. **Members must send their edits and questions to S. Bursky BEFORE the April meeting.**

Riverfest, River Steward Awards and Publicity:

S. Bursky is working with Julia at OARS to get up to speed. Have a great kick-off meeting and at this juncture Riverfest is likely to follow the format of past years. Kick-off will be the Friday party and the Solstice Celebration will serve to close the weekend festivities on Sunday. **Riverfest events need to be submitted by March 24.** C. Delpapa will work on the kick-off party. Will ask Tony Toledo, the storyteller, to be the keynote 'speaker'.

The League of Women Voter's River Steward Awards committee has met. The League wants RSC's help to get award nominations. **Nominations are due 11 April to Mary.** It was recommended someone contact the LWV to ask for a website update as their site is not current. C. Delpapa will contact J. Rothrock. T. Sciacca suggested someone working on climate change should be recognized if possible.

S. Bursky encouraged all RSC members to think about publicity in general and would like to discuss the topic at RSC meetings. Networks should be used to the maximum extent possible. Publicity will also be needed for River Story events (5/21 in Wayland, 6/13 in Lincoln, Riverfest weekend, and 6/25 in Sudbury) funded through the NPS and three Community Cultural Councils.

New Business:

The public meeting on fish passage and dam removal was informative. The consultant presented the findings of the fish passage study. This work was funded through Nyanza Natural Resource Damages. Some interesting findings include the water level in this reach of river is influenced by a ledge and not the dam and should the dam be removed, the upstream water level will not be significantly impacted. The report is currently in draft form and the consultants are accepting comments. It was agreed an **Action Item** is for members to review the draft study, (<http://tinyurl.com/ConcordRiverFishStudy>). The NPS will draft comments to share with the RSC who may then offer additions and edits.

T. Sciacca requested the RSC send a Letter of support (copy sent to member via email) to support a grant application by the town of Wayland for rehabilitation funds to repair the Stone Bridge. Motion made to have the RSC send a support letter, (Field-Juma/Eggleston). MSV T. Sciacca will send the letter promptly.

Meeting Schedule:

Consensus was reached to adjust several upcoming RSC meetings. Since the February meeting was moved to 1 March to accommodate the conflict with the fish passage presentation, members agreed to **move the regular March meeting to the fifth Tuesday (29 March).** This change gives project partners an additional week to prepare their applications for funding. **The April (26th) meeting will start early** to accommodate Tony Toledo presenting the story he has prepared for final edits and suggestions from RSC members. People who are able and interested should come an hour early- 6:00 PM. One additional meeting change was requested to accommodate the OARS annual meeting scheduled for the same night as the May RSC meeting. **The RSC will meet on the 5th Tuesday, 31 May.**

Sarah passed out copies of the PWSR 20 years of Success booklet prepared by the NPS.

Motion to adjourn. (Field-Juma/Sciacca) MSV. Meeting adjourned at 9:09