



**Sudbury, Assabet and Concord
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council Meeting
January 29, 2019**

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg-Chair (Sudbury), Sarah Bursky, Co-Chair (NPS), Elissa Brown (Concord), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Laura Mattei (SVT), Eileen McGourty (USFWS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

RSC Representatives absent Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Jim Lagerbom (SVT-Alt), Jim Meadors (Lincoln-Alt), Karen Pelto (MA DEP), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt)

Guest: David Witherbee, Concord resident

Minutes: Ms. Field-Juma Alison moved that the minutes of our December meeting be accepted, with edits to be submitted later by Ms. Bursky. Ms. Henderson seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

Community grants: Ms. Slugg reported that two community grant proposals were received: one for a Lowell fish restoration project and one for a phase 3 treatment of water chestnuts in Framingham. She explained that both of these projects are nearly identical to projects previously funded by the RSC and therefore are ineligible for consideration because the RSC does not fund grants for multiple years.

The Grant Proposal Committee recommended that the RSC offer Mr. Kevin Martin \$500 for a talk on Big Trees at Riverfest in lieu of awarding him a grant to write a book on Big Trees. Ms. Slugg motioned that the Grant Proposal Committee extend this offer to Mr. Martin, Ms. Henderson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with one abstention.

Ms. Bursky said that the comment period for the Conservation Plan update was originally scheduled to end on December 31 but needed to be extended for a few weeks due to the government shutdown.

Strategic Planning: Ms. Bursky said that the RSC's strategic plan would be developed over the January and February meetings. She led a discussion which resulted in listing our core activities: coordination with partners, giving out partner and community grants, managing Riverfest and educational events, hiring consultants, and enlisting town representatives to communicate with their town boards.

The RSC broke into small groups to choose priorities from the list draft Conservation Plan. The groups reported back:

Historical/scenic/literary: This group thought the highest priorities should be conducting risk assessments on vulnerable scenic areas and carrying out a visual assessment similar to that for the River Report Card, developing a list of SuAsCo bridges that we believe will be considered for repairs in the next 5 years, strengthening existing relationships such as those with the Old Manse and MMNHP. An oral history project on the RSC should be considered as should using the SuAsCo River Rangers program as inspiration for a children's book which could be introduced into local schools.

Water Quality: Science-based decision making is important, the RSC should continue supporting OARS, should measure key indicators, continue the Report Card, continue water quality monitoring and get more volunteers involved.

Water Quantity: the flow management group should continue their work, the RSC should participate in SuAsCo dam discussions, the RSC should reach out to member towns on best practices for river clearing.

Education and recreation: The RSC should try to assess the enforcement of local regulations such as zoning and building codes when they would impact the health of the watershed, town representatives should highlight the SuAsCo rivers when towns are in the midst of land use planning, and should strengthen links to collaborative efforts with organizations such as CISMA and the West Suburban Conservation Council. The RSC should become more involved in land protection. When significant properties become available the RSC should encourage towns to add conservation restrictions or offer the right of first refusal to interested nonprofits such as SVT.

Ecology: Priorities should be to update flood maps for member towns, develop clear goals for river restoration, and update the inventory of unprotected land along the SuAsCo. It was noted that a previous suggestion had been to recommend by-law language to towns facing issues of importance to the RSC and this action could be added to the ecology priorities.

Other news and updates:

Ms. Slugg stated that Mass Audubon has bought a large property on the Concord River thereby protecting more riverfront land.

Mr. Sciacca brought up topic of intersex largemouth bass found in the Sudbury River in a 2008 study. He wondered if the RSC could test for the presence of particular phthalates being released into the river from artificial turf in Wayland. He said that we could consider hiring a consultant, working with a partner, or even using citizen science methods. He suggested a study group to discuss how expensive a phthalate study would be. Ms. McGourty said she could ask for input from other federal agencies. Ms. Field-Juma said that she could conference with Mr. Sciacca and Ms. McGourty later to discuss the feasibility of this study.

Mr. Sciacca asked for opinions on a comment letter he had drafted concerning a proposed EPA rule change on mercury emissions. Ms. Field-Juma said that she would prefer to wait on this discussion until the rule has been published in the Federal Register and we have the actual language.

Mr. Chick said that a state representative from Framingham will co-sponsor a new bill on invasive species management. Ms. Field-Juma encouraged members to contact their state representatives to co-sponsor several pieces of legislation which are of interest to the RSC. She announced that Connecticut Rep. Joe Courtney has agreed to work with the RSC on federal legislation now that Niki Tsongas has retired.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan