



**Sudbury, Assabet and Concord
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council Meeting
February 26, 2019**

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

RSC Representatives absent Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Jim Lagerbom (SVT-Alt), Jim Meadors (Lincoln- Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt)

Ms. Bursky opened the meeting at 7:02 pm

Minutes

Mr. Fadden motioned to accept the January minutes with the inclusion of 2 corrections and Ms. Field-Juma seconded. The minutes passed unanimously with one abstention.

Strategic Planning session

Ms. Bursky organized small groups to discuss the highest priorities among SuAsCo's five ORV's and to suggest concrete steps that we could take to advance those priorities. The groups reported their results:

- We could partner with the Thoreau Society and local historical societies. We could look for municipal partners who share our interest in scenic resources.
- We could use Mr. Fadden's existing spreadsheet on signage opportunities to help identify bridges on our rivers. We could use town contacts who would update us on the status of bridges being considered for maintenance.
- We could play a research role in gathering and synthesizing information and identify gaps in our knowledge of species that could be impacted by the river.
- We could explore new partnerships with universities and fund long term monitoring.
- We could conduct outreach to Billerica on the Talbot Mills Dam and update towns both upstream and downstream on how it affects them
- We could ask local planning boards to include inventories of important lands in their open space plans
- We should review the recommendations for member towns from our Mason & Associates report

At our March meeting we will discuss grant opportunities concerning our partner organizations. Ms. Bursky said that it is likely that the RSC will receive \$100,000 in federal money for FY 2020. Some FY 2019 money has been set aside for a follow up mussel study this summer, dependent upon whether drought conditions make it feasible.

Community Grants

The grant proposal committee determined that the Lowell proposal "Connecting Youth, Fish & River Health" was too similar to an earlier RSC funded grant to be considered since the RSC cannot fund the

same project twice. A discussion followed on adding a line item to our budget specifically for fish related projects. Ms. McGourty suggested a separate line item as well for future work which might potentially involve activities such as camera monitoring, tagging fish, MAPC suggested river hydraulic projects, and creating standards for bridge replacement. Ms. Slugg made a motion to allocate \$5,000 of community grant money for a fish restoration line item for this year's budget and to fund fish restoration by the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust. Ms. Field-Juma seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

A proposal for Sudbury's Haskell field hydration station was discussed. Some members believed it was located too far from the river and did not match our strategic plan. Those in favor thought that it would further our branding efforts, which is a stated RSC goal. Ms. Slugg motioned to fund the grant, Mr. Chick seconded. The vote was 9-1 against funding the proposal.

Ms. Bursky said that the grant proposal committee declined to recommend a new SVT proposal as it was focused more on land owners and not enough on community involvement. The RSC still has about \$11,000 remaining in the budget for this year. Any funded projects will need to be completed by August 2019.

Ms. Field-Juma said that we should consider strategies for removing woody debris in the river. She suggested that we talk to an independent consultant to create a grant to come up with a plan. Mr. Fadden noted that we have previously funded debris removal from Stone's Bridge.

Education and Outreach

Ms. Bursky considered ways to mark the 20th anniversary of the designation of the SuAsCo river. She said that we could march in the Musketaquid Earth Day parade and/or the Concord Patriots Day parade. Ms. McGourty, Ms. Field-Juma, Mr. Witherbee, Mr. Hammond, and Ms. Burksy agreed they would march in the Patriots Day parade on April 15th.

The Riverfest planning meeting will be Wednesday, Feb. 27th. The kickoff party will be on June 21st and Riverfest itself will be on June 22-23.

Updates and Town business

Mass River Alliance is organizing River Lobby Day on March 28th from 1-5 pm at the statehouse. Ms. Field-Juma encouraged SuAsCo town volunteers to participate since legislators want to meet with constituents. Meetings are already set up with Sen. David Nangle and Sen. Cindy Friedman.

Ms. Bursky inquired about interest in the September 16-17 Partnership River Program meeting in Great Egg Harbor, NJ. She said that some travel money could be allocated. Mr. Chick expressed interest.

Ms. Field-Juma said that the annual Washington, DC lobbying effort will be conducted in district this year by Mass River Alliance and OARS.

Ms. McGourty reported that she reached out to colleagues in other federal departments to inquire more about the possible relationship between artificial turf and intersex fish. She learned that that the EPA has been collecting data on possible harmful effects of artificial turf. She, Mr. Sciacca, and Ms. Field-Juma will have a conference call to discuss steps that the SuAsCo could take based on the 2008 USGS study. Mr. Sciacca expressed concern that mussels may be especially sensitive to phthalates.

It was noted that Mr. Sciacca drafted a comment letter from SuAsCo on proposed regulation to lower mercury emission standards and that Ms. Field-Juma emailed the proposed language published in the Federal Register to RSC members. The public has until March 25th to comment. The RSC authorized town representatives to encourage their towns to submit comments as well. Ms. Pelto said that river based remedies created on the assumption of atmospheric mercury levels would decrease if the new standards are approved. Ms. Slugg said that we would vote by email on the final language for the RSC's comment letter.

Mr. Fadden said that there needs to be a presentation to the RSC on the next steps for Stone's Bridge. He will be attending the town meeting in April when this will be discussed. He stated that the RSC has review responsibilities for this project and that the plan ought to be considered by the US Corps of Engineers.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan