



**Sudbury, Assabet and Concord  
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council Meeting  
2018**

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg-Chair (Sudbury), Sarah Bursky, Co-Chair (NPS), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Gail Hire (Concord), Eileen McGourty (USFWS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland),

**RSC Representatives absent:** Elissa Brown (Concord), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Jim Lagerbom (SVT Alt), Jim Meadors (Lincoln-Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Karen Pelto (MA DEP), Kate Tyrrell (SVT)

**Guest:** Ryan Brown, Massachusetts Audubon

This meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Sarah Bursky.

Ms. Bursky introduced Ryan Brown from Mass Audubon. He is the new coordinator for CISMA. Mr. Brown said that CISMA's new strategic plan focuses on early detection of invasive species. The group has completed an application for the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share. CISMA is working with OARS and the West Suburban Conservation Council (WSCC) on a joint project for water chestnut removal. A merger between CISMA and WSCC has been proposed. SVT is interested in strategic planning. It would like to work with other networks to increase the purchase of conservation land. CISMA would become a working group of the WSCC, with SVT taking on and funding the coordinator's position. The proposed merger is still being discussed and may be finalized in 2019.

Ms. Field-Juma said that it is essential to keep CISMA running, to keep its identity, and not lose what it has built. She hopes that SVT can work out the remaining issues. Funding for the CISMA coordinator position will run out in December.

Mr. Brown said that there are multiple CISMA website issues, including malware and an outdated platform. In addition, one computer is currently running very slowly as it has been infected by a Bitcoin mining application. He said that CISMA is considering using Word Press for its website but that is an expensive option. Another alternative would be to have staff from Audubon's education department manage the website. He said that CISMA is working on 3 small grants. One is in Sudbury for a reed monarch project known as SWEET. It will clear areas of black swallow-wort. A second project involves volunteer days for water chestnut and loosestrife control in addition to a drone mapping project. The last one is for work in Bolton and Concord to remove knotweed and to seed with wildflowers. The knotweed will be an ongoing project and an additional benefit is the development of a resource sharing list for items such as pruners, loppers, and expertise.

Ms. Bursky summarized that CISMA has a new strategic plan, a long term plan for sustainability, and is updating its website. She said that they are clearly acting on all they said they would do in their RSC grants. Their water chestnut subcommittee is an ongoing effort with 36 institutional members overall.

**Volunteer efforts for Riverfest:** Ms. Bursky said that brochures will be ready by Memorial Day weekend and that town representatives should pick them up and distribute them at various places in their towns

such as gyms, libraries, and banks. She said that posters will be ready soon and can be downloaded and printed, though she will also mail a few copies directly to all town representatives.

**RSC Officer election:** After a discussion on who would like to put their name or the name of someone else forward, Ms. Henderson motioned to nominate Ms. Slugg as Chair, Ms. Field-Juma as Vice-Chair, Mr. Fadden as Treasurer, and Ms. Dugan as Secretary. Mr. Sciacca seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Conservation Update:** Ms. Bursky said that the update follows the original plan and adds status updates. Though everything has been rewritten we can use the original parts on broad strategies for land protection. Ms. Field-Juma said that many structures for permitting have changed. Mr. Sciacca asked who will use this plan. Ms. Bursky said that it is a living document which will go out to towns for feedback. We can present it at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in October. It should reflect that towns value the plan and reference it once a year or so. She said that it won't do any good if it just sits on a shelf. Ms. Field-Juma said that the 5 year strategic plan will include more timely operational pieces. Ms. McGourty brought up the land protection mechanisms on page 15 and suggested that we re-state that entire section. Mr. Fadden said that the document should be a revision, not an update. He said that a reader shouldn't have to revert to the first document to understand the second one. Ms. Bursky said that other Wild & Scenic groups are just issuing an update. Additionally, she said that we have to consider different audiences: Conservation Commissions want more information while Selectmen and others want less. Ms. Slugg said that Conservation Commissions would be fine with keeping it brief and stating key ideas. Ms. Sciacca said that the original document had a significant discussion on historical sites and he was concerned that we are not giving that section enough attention. Ms. Field-Juma said that section was a part of the original discussion to educate towns before we adopted the conservation plan. The update is concerned with looking at what we need to do now. Ms. McGourty said that if any of the 1995 goals were not accomplished then we still need to act on those. Ms. Field-Juma said that wetlands protections have been rolled back and need to be strengthened. If new town laws can be more strict that will send a message to state agencies. Ms. Bursky said a draft of the report will be distributed in May. Ms. Henderson questioned whether the phrase we should be using is "outstandingly remarkable value" or "outstanding resource value" as both are used in our conservation plan. Ms. Bursky sided with "outstandingly remarkable value."

Ms. Bursky said that there would be no June meeting due to RiverFest and that there would be an afternoon paddle event in place of our August meeting.

Ms. Bursky said that our consultant from Mason and Associates will speak at our July meeting. The plan will go back to the towns and we will discuss what level of endorsement we would like from municipalities, Conservation Commissions, and Selectmen. It was decided that August is a busy season for town committees and that the plan will be presented to town organizations later in the fall.

Ms. Slugg said that she would like to do a speaker series on rivers at the Old Manse in Concord on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Sciacca mentioned Brian Donohue as a possible speaker. He was a RiverFest speaker once and was influential in getting the SuAsCo rivers designated. Mr. Fadden wondered about finding a

speaker on dams. He said that the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife once gave a talk on eels that was well received. Ms. Slugg said that the August paddle event was presently being considered at the Southbridge boathouse in Concord and that she would send out an email listing possible dates.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan