



**Sudbury, Assabet and Concord  
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council Meeting  
Sept. 25, 2018**

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg-Chair (Sudbury), Sarah Bursky, Co-Chair (NPS), Mary Antes (Wayland), Elissa Brown (Concord), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Gail Hire (Concord), Eileen McGourty (USFWS), Karen Pelto (MA DEP), Kate Tyrrell (SVT)

**RSC Representatives absent** Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Jim Lagerbom (SVT-Alt), Jim Meadors (Lincoln-Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

**Guest:** Robin Stuart, Mass Audubon

This meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by Sarah Bursky.

Ms. Tyrrell motioned approved the July minutes, Ms. McGourty seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

A motion was approved to move RSC meetings to the last Tuesday of the month on a trial basis from October 2018 through July 2019.

Ms. Tyrrell presented a budget update showing that the RSC has spent approximately \$85,000 of its \$100,000 in funding for this year. She said that remaining \$15,000 is allotted mainly for community grants.

Ms. Bursky said that she spoke with Julia Blatt of the Mass River Alliance about increasing our membership dues. Ms. Blatt said that because dues for organizations had not been raised in many years she is asking all member organizations to voluntarily increase their dues. Ms. Bursky suggested that we increase our dues from \$100 to \$250 because the Mass River Alliance benefits rivers across the state and that the additional \$150 in dues be taken from the Riverfest budget. She motioned this increase and Ms. Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Bursky said that a new magazine-like publication on the SuAsCo Wild & Scenic rivers has been designed. It will be distributed at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and other events such as professional conferences. She moved that \$1,000 from our community grants budget be used for this printing cost. Ms. Slugg seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Bursky stated that 11 RSC members submitted edits for the Conservation Plan update, that Julia Blatt had also looked at it, and that it might be sent to DEP for suggestions. Ms. Slugg wondered if the goals described in the document were realistic and if we could address them in the 5 year plan. Ms. Tyrrell said that she hoped that this would become a working document for towns. A discussion followed on getting the towns more involved. Ms. Pelto said that we might be helpful to the towns while they are working on issues such as creating their municipal vulnerability plan or integrated mitigation plan. Ms. Slugg said that there was not much communication back from town boards after last fall's town presentations. Ms. Field-Juma and Ms. Brown concurred. Ms. Tyrrell said that the request for feedback might not have been precise enough. Ms. Field-Juma suggested asking the towns which goals they might

support. Ms. Hire said that representatives could look for a controversial section of the update and find the right person in their town to look at it. Ms. Bursky said that if we knew which towns were working on their own planning updates and reached out to them during that process we could add those changes into our updated Conservation Plan. She said that Town-specific sections should be implementing larger, sectoral goals. Ms. Slugg will incorporate all members' edits received so far and then complete one last edit of the complete document. She will send it back to Ms. Bursky who will distribute it to members for their last edits.

### **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration**

Ms. Bursky said that the new administrator for MMNHP, BJ Dunn, has been an active partner in planning the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration event. He has brought 4 staff members to each planning session. These meetings have also been attended by representatives from OARS, SVT, and The Trustees. Nikki Tsongas agreed to receive an award and is looking forward to seeing town selectmen there. Other notable attendees might include Sue Burke of DEP and possibly the Secretary for Energy and Environmental Affairs. Events will take place starting at 2 pm. At 3:30 the main speaking event will start. There will be press coverage, raffle prizes, and other surprises.

### **Mass Audubon**

Robin Stuart from Mass Audubon (MAS) spoke about educational programs past and present which have been funded by the RSC. Their river school has been funded by RSC in one way or another for 10 years. This program takes students to rivers and local watersheds, working in different school districts over the years. In previous years the river program activities were not embedded in the schools' curriculum. Beginning last year MAS changed the way it worked with schools. In Hudson there was professional development and watershed studies built into the curriculum. The year began with a field trip to the river and continued with a curriculum around river issues. This same program was used at Curtis Middle School in Sudbury and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Hanscom. Ms. Stuart said that MAS would like to provide deeper experiences for students. The 2018-19 academic year will see more in-depth river study. MAS will work throughout the year with teachers on professional development topics such as ecology, how climate change is affecting watersheds, and community based action. MAS will provide 6 classroom visits. Teachers will work to embed these ideas in their curriculum and then present what they have learned to the school. Community based activism will be the culminating piece of the river school program. Field study opens and closes the academic year with river visits.

MAS will continue to work with Hudson this year and Hanscom is also interested in continuing with the river school. MAS involvement with Hudson will be limited to providing transportation to the river. MAS will bring Hanscom students to the river during the study unit on water. This is the pilot year for this new curriculum based change.

Ms. Hire suggested that there could be end of the year get togethers where all the river program schools could share their comments. It could be a symposium where students can share what they have been learning and doing. Ms. Field-Juma said that SuAsCo ORV's, such as a literary component, could also work the 5<sup>th</sup> grade water study unit. Ms. Bursky asked how river and watershed studies fit into the educational programs at Drumlin Farm. Ms. Stuart said that river schools work through Broadmoor Sanctuary to reach Framingham students. It sometimes meets with students in other watersheds, rivers or ponds once or twice a week in the spring. This can include environmental field study programs on watersheds, soils, or ecological issues. Ms. Brown asked how MAS chooses where to bring students. Ms. Stuart said that it depends on access. MAS prefers to be in that school's town so that students feel it is their backyard and they need to protect it.

Ms. Field-Juma asked if teachers know about the Junior Rangers program that was developed on one of our rivers. Ms. Stuart said that Happy Hollow incorporates that into their 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Ms. Field-Juma wondered if MAS brings up pollutants and emerging contaminants and pharmaceuticals. Ms. Stuart said that they only talk about it if it happens to come up. They usually discuss issues like runoff and what you can be aware of at home, such as fertilizer use, to make them think about individual actions they can take. Ms. Stuart said that Westford's 5<sup>th</sup> grade received approval from a local CVS to put up a poster on how to properly dispose of prescriptions.

## **OARS**

Ms. Field-Juma spoke about OARS' new river report card. She spoke about an NPS webinar on assessing the scenic value of our rivers. This webinar was attended by 8 local people and one NPS staff member from Pennsylvania. The topic was on how to assess river views. Some representative views of interest are in Hudson, Sudbury, Billerica, and Lowell as well as Fairhaven Bay and the Maynard ice house landing near Nashoba brook. She said assessment is built on only what you can objectively see. It is a rigorous process. She said that there will be another round which will focus on a different topic, such as what we next round will focus on what we know about historical properties. Once the grading process is finalized we can do it for any river. We can assess a view before development takes place. This is a practical tool for future assessments of recreation and water quality values. The process will continue through next spring and river grades will launch in the summer of 2019. She thanked Ms. Bursky for providing her with NPS contacts. Ms. Bursky said that river report cards are usually done for grand locations like Yosemite and are not usually done for all rivers. This could become a tool for all Wild and Scenic rivers across the country.

## **Updates**

Ms. Hire discussed a training session run by the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance on untangling the legislative process. Speakers including some from MAS spoke about their lobbying efforts. The focus was on effective advocacy training and how to pitch a bill to a legislator. There were discussions on how to influence your legislator. In-person lobbying was strongly encouraged. Attendees were told that legislators want a voter from their district accompanying a lobbyist, as well as those who represent groups in their districts. It was suggested you thank legislators for their work on a bill and for their vote. Gabby Queenan described the various stages of a bill becoming law and the importance of lobbying for Rivers Day. Ms. Field-Juma said that when lobbying for Rivers Day it is important to go in with other people and have a conversation with a legislator or staff person.

Ms. Bursky said that Ms. Slugg is setting up a Dropbox account so that the RSC has a shared way to store and access documents such as grant proposals.

Ms. Bursky said that two new Wild and Scenic rivers will be designated by Congress.

Ms. Antes said that there is a memorandum of agreement to design and repair a 1957 stone bridge located on the Wayland/Framingham border on the Sudbury river. Mr. Fadden said that Wayland allotted money to repair the first two arches and that is not enough. He said that Framingham may be able to contribute \$50,000 to repair both stone bridges on the border of the two towns. Ms. Bursky said that there is a controversy with the mussels near the bridge. Wayland does not want to provide extra permitting to move the state-listed mussels so the town is not permitting boat access. Mr. Fadden said that there is an old conservation plan that says if a federal project is on an historical property the RSC

has to review it. He believes that if the area must be de-watered that it should be a federal project. Ms. Field-Juma said it would be good if Wayland would submit their plan to the RSC.

Ms. McGourty said that Lihn Phu is the new refuge manager for Great Meadows.

Ms. Bursky said there will be a concert on Nov. 3 which is a composed piece about the Sudbury River and will be performed at the First Church of Marlboro.

At 8:03 pm Ms. Bursky motioned for adjournment, Ms. McGourty seconded and the motion passed unanimously.