

SuAsCo RIVER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
3 February, 2015
Lincoln Town Offices

Present: Bill Fadden, Framingham; Alison Field-Juma, OARS; Jim Meadors, Lincoln; Kate Tyrrell, SVT; Aviva and Doug Brooks, Concord; Jamie Fosburgh, NPS; Cindy Delpapa, Commonwealth; Nancy Bryant, SUASCO Community Council; Invited guest Christa Collins, SVT; Julia Khorana, OARS

Absent: Anne Slugg, Sudbury; Libby Herland, US F&W; Lisa Eggleston, SVT; Tom Sciacca, Wayland; Mary Antes, Wayland; Steve Perlman, Carlisle; Betsy Gallagher, Billerica; Ralph Hammond, Bedford

Meeting called to order at 7:07 pm by Chair with thanks to attendees for being flexible about the rescheduling of the meeting and last minute change of venue brought about by the winter storms.

Minutes: Motion made and seconded (Fadden/Brooks) to accept the minutes of 2 December, 2014 with corrections. Motion passed with one abstention.

Treasurer's Report: Anne was unable to attend the meeting as she is ill. Fortunately Kate volunteered to provide some information including a budget sheet detailing the funds managed by SVT (this does not include the funding in the separate Cooperative Agreements) and reported she and Anne have been meeting to work through the budget. Kate offered to talk with those partners who have received funding during FY14 if there are remaining questions about allocated funds and reimbursed amounts.

Kate explained she tracks funds first by CA modification with further characterization by categories. The budget sheet provided shows allocation, reimbursements and remaining funds, (if any). The stormwater workshop reallocated funds are still in this category for now but will be moved once the \$1000 already reassigned to the Boston Pops' Sudbury River piece is invoiced.

Alison, Kate, Anne and Jamie will work together to estimate the funds needed to cover Riverfest organizing costs this spring and report at the next meeting. There should be enough immediately available funds to cover the costs of organizing Riverfest.

Progress Reports on 2014 Projects: Because of the storm and the need to reschedule, several partners were unable to make the meeting but their written reports were forward to the RSC members. Representatives from OARS and SVT were present to summarize their RSC funded work and answer questions.

Outreach Support & Riverfest: Julia Khorana reported the use of social media for outreach and publicity has expanded. There has also been a shift to have events centralized at activity hubs. Riverfest 2014 was well-attended under lovely weather and river flow conditions. Julia explained there were 45 different activities with many based at one of 3 hubs (Old Manse, Great Meadows NWR, and Wayside Inn). It has been a challenge to get the volunteer activity leaders to report on the number of attendees at their activity but OARS was able to provide a reasonable estimate of participation. Kick-off planning meeting for Riverfest 2015 is next week (Tuesday). The RSC took this opportunity to vote on the dates for Riverfest 2015: Riverfest Party on 19 June with the Riverfest weekend spanning June 20-21. Motion was made, seconded (Field-Juma/Brooks) and passed.

Monitoring and Policy: Alison presented on the OARS monitoring work on behalf of Sue Flint who was unable to attend the rescheduled meeting. Sue prepared an additional handout highlighting monitoring results. Biomass monitoring continues in impoundments in the Assabet. While phosphorus levels are greatly reduced with the enhanced wastewater treatment being conducted at the municipal treatment facilities, biomass has yet to display a similar downward trend. A drop in biomass reflecting reduced nutrient inputs may take time. Currently biomass tracks more closely to weather conditions. Invasive water chestnut is spreading in the Assabet River. There has also been a shift in the flora being found in some impoundments (e.g. the Hudson impoundment has shifted from a predominance of duckweed to filamentous green algae). The volunteer based water quality monitoring program went well and annual reports are available on the OARS web site. Unclear if Wayland will contract with OARS to do their NPDES permit-required monitoring this season or opt to do it themselves or engage a consulting company. Some additional dissolved oxygen monitoring in impoundments was done in 2014 as a follow-up to a 2013 fish kill.

Alison reported on OARS' policy work in 2014. The Concord NPDES permit renewal and the town's appeal of select permit requirements was a significant issue. Aviva was able to provide valuable assistance to bring together river advocates and the town to discuss the permit. Concord lost their appeal and there has been no indication the town will continue to fight the disputed permit requirements. MCI- Concord was found to have illicit releases from their site related to stormwater runoff. MA DEP issued a Notice of Noncompliance in response. The facility is required to submit a report to DEP this month outlining actions taken to prevent further prohibited releases from the facility. OARS has been analyzing the findings from the fairly recent USFWS study of emerging contaminants (hormones) in the river. The results from the study were explained in a straightforward article in the OARS newsletter.

Land Protection: Christa Collins from Sudbury Valley Trustees updated the RSC on the major land projects of this past year. SVT was able to secure a \$1.47 million Landscape Partnership grant (restricted to land purchases of 500 contiguous acres or more). SVT has been able to raise \$146,000 in matching funds to date allowing steady progress toward securing 500 acres in the Northborough/Berlin/Boylston tri-town part of the watershed by 2017.

SVT assisted Wayland in securing lands east of Concord Road straddling Hazel Brook- a tributary to the Sudbury River. SVT launched the Headwater Initiative to identify these important and fragile waterways and work with landowners on how to best steward lands adjacent to headwater streams. SVT is incorporating research and analysis done by The Nature Conservancy on lands more likely to be resilient to climate change to update their planning for land protection. This resiliency information provided an interesting new dimension and was found to line up well with the Headwaters Initiative. SVT plans to tackle outreach to communities on resiliency in the future.

Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers: The National Park Service has detailed a new approach to budgeting and planning for PWSRs and shared this planning document with the rivers in their efforts to be more transparent. On an annual basis the Washington DC office will discuss how a pot of \$55,000 will be allocated to PWSR. It appears there will be start up funding for the newly designated Missisquoi River (VT) in FY 2015. The NPS will also be allocating a small amount of money to do a campaign highlighting the Wild & Scenic Rivers 20 years of success. Also the NPS has allocated some money in the budget for Park Service staff to attend trainings.

RSC Staff Hire: Authorization has been granted to hire a replacement for Lee. The exact timeline for the hire is not certain- there is a possibility someone might be in place for Riverfest. The job will be posted on USA Jobs and is an open recruitment. The RSC is encouraged to make this job notice known locally. It will be a part- time position and will not be shared with Taunton River.

Flow Study: Allison Roy and Stephen Jane of the Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit will present results of a study investigating links between stream flow, habitat, and ecology in the Sudbury River. The presentation of findings will be held at the Framingham DPW at noon on 13 February. Thanks to Bill for working to make this happen. The written report will be ready soon. Bill expressed dismay that the study did not include the Oxbow area which is the river reach most likely to suffer the greatest impact if the wells are brought back on-line.

The USGS groundwater flow study is also completed but they have a more extensive quality check and approval system so it is unclear when their report will be released to the public.

NPS special grant requests: Jamie was happy to report the grant requests to the special NPS funds were granted though an official notification has not been received. The RSC will get money for the storyteller and Audubon will be managing a grant for CISMA to hire summer help to combat invasive plants.

RTE 4 Boat Launch: The MA DOT finally filed a Notice of Intent with the Billerica Conservation Commission for the boat launch at the RTE 4 bridge crossing. The Commission requested some changes, including a redelineation of site wetlands. A revised plan is expected this month and Jamie will review the changes. Several RSC members asked if an electronic copy of the design could be acquired from MA DOT and made available to the RSC? Jamie said the MA DOT has not provided electronic copies in the past because of the large file size of the plans but will see if just select sheets would reduce the file size enough to share.

Riverfest Funding: The RSC will need to vote to provide some advance funding for this year's Riverfest, (FY15 funding will likely not be made available until August – well after the Riverfest need). OARS will work with Jamie, Kate and Anne on the amount of funding needed and present to the RSC at the next meeting.

A discussion about the Riverfest Party raised some issues and Nancy wondered if it was worth the money to have the 'kick-off' party. She inquired about the intent and audience for the party and if the party succeeds in reaching the desired audience? It was noted how few local elected officials attend the party. Consensus was most of the people sent invitations do not attend. Many of the volunteers leading events attend and it is a thank you for these volunteers, for RSC members, and W&S partners. The event offers opportunities to network and socialize. A suggestion was made to consider email invites as a less costly and potentially more effective invitation method than snail mail invitations? Jamie suggested the RSC consider asking each member to identify 5 (or more) invitees and their current emails. Consensus was the party had value and a sub-committee will be assembled to help plan the party.

River Steward Awards: The League of Women Voters handles almost everything but a representative from the RSC helps in the selection process. Ralph was recommended as a possible representative for the RSC given his ties within the watershed communities.

New Concord Rep: (Unfortunately) Aviva and Doug's term as RSC reps for the town of Concord is nearing an end (Concord limits reps to two terms). Cindy will work with Aviva to identify possible replacements and how to approach the Concord Selectboard to gain approval for a new representative and alternate. Aviva and Doug have already identified someone who may be interested.

Outreach to Senate and Congress: Alison is planning to travel to Washington DC to meet with staff of our Congressional Delegation. It is important to have our elected officials understand the benefits of designated rivers and support our funding. Cindy will be working on an in-state meeting with Senatorial aides attended by representatives of all three MA designated rivers and the Commonwealth's new study river.

New Business: Bill reported Massachusetts Central Rail Trail is planning some repairs to a bridge over the Sudbury River in Wayland. It was suggested Mary, as a Wayland Selectboard member, may know about this project and could provide some background to the RSC.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM