



## **River Stewardship Council Minutes Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg, Co-Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord, Co-Chair (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Laura Mattei (SVT), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), David Witherbee (Concord)

**RSC Representatives absent:** Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Elissa Brown (Alt-Concord), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Jim Lagerbom (SVT-Alt), Linh Phu (USFWS), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt)

**Location Change:** Video conference arranged by Laura Mattei and the SVT due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

7:06 pm

Ms. Slugg thanked Ms. Mattei and SVT for arranging the video conference for this meeting.

After two corrections were made to the February minutes, Ms. Slugg motioned to accept them. Ms. Henderson seconded, and they were passed unanimously.

### **Riverfest**

Ms. Lord said that because March 31 is the deadline for accepting Riverfest events we still have time to decide whether to go forward with Riverfest as planned, to cancel, or to re-schedule events. A discussion followed on how events might take place remotely, the possibility of river trips by individuals and families being posted on RSC social media if no group trips were offered, and the obstacles and timing issues we could encounter by moving Riverfest to the fall. Ms. Lord said that our final decision could wait until mid-April.

Ms. Lord said that she has been considering updates to our website. She will send out a Doodle poll asking who would like to help update the content and organization of the website. A telephone conference will be arranged for those who wish to become involved in brainstorming social media issues. Ms. Mattei suggested that we contact Debbie Pullen for advice on social media ideas as she does an exceptional job for SVT.

### **Strategic Plan and Funding**

It was suggested at our February meeting that we update our strategic plan fairly soon. Ms. Lord and Ms. Slugg believe that updating is better left until we can meet again as a group in person. In the meantime they will work on ways to make the plan easier to update annually.

Ms. Slugg reminded the group that we set aside money this year for implementing measures relevant to the strategic plan. She explained that two strategic plan initiatives for 2020 do not need the funding we

allocated for them. One project was obtaining signs for the Upper Sudbury River. That plan has been postponed. The second item, which was creating a river clearing policy, will be done by RSC members and will not need funding. She proposed allocating \$2,600 for an Upper Sudbury River visual inventory to be done by OARS. Ms. Field-Juma said that this section of the river extends from Framingham into the Westboro headwaters. Ms. Mattei thought that parts of the watershed not located directly on the river could also be candidates for OARS' visual inventory since they are crucial to water quality. Ms. Field-Juma said that OARS would be most likely to choose free flowing segments. Mr. Sciacca said the reservoir along Fountain Street in Framingham which feeds directly in the Nyanza site would be a good choice to consider for a fall photograph. The foliage there is reliably at its peak in October. Ms. Slugg motioned to allocate funds to OARS for this visual inventory, Mr. Hammond seconded. The vote passed 9-0 with Ms. Field-Juma abstaining.

## **Updates**

Ms. Henderson brought up some preservation of scenery issues in Billerica. She said that there is a tree down on Jug Island, which is owned by SVT. Ms. Field-Juma said that there is also a blue tarp on Jug Island and Ms. Mattei said that there is a large statue which is too heavy to move. Nearby private land along the river is unsightly due to storage of multiple canoes, deck chairs, and other items.

Ms. Henderson wondered if the RSC could allocate more money to community grants if Riverfest is cancelled. Ms. Slugg said that funding for community grants does fluctuate over the years and that we could vote on Ms. Henderson's idea at a later meeting.

Ms. Mattei said that she asked SVT if their AmeriCorps intern might have some time to work on outreach materials for the RSC. She believes she will have a better idea if that is possible in 2 or 3 weeks.

Mr. Sciacca said that he had an extra Wild and Scenic sign and wondered if Mr. Chick thought that it could be placed at the River Street bridge in Framingham. Mr. Chick said that he would be happy to take the sign if no one else had a greater need for it.

Ms. Field-Juma said that she and Ms. Dugan went to Washington during the first week of March to lobby the entire Massachusetts delegation for funding the state's Wild and Scenic Rivers. There was a day long workshop with members of a new Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition which was quite productive. Ms. Field-Juma wondered if we wanted to reach out to the other Massachusetts Wild and Scenic rivers. There was agreement in the group that making contact would be mutually beneficial and should be given further thought. Mr. Sciacca said that years ago the RSC was supposed to join the Taunton Wild and Scenic Council to paddle a section of the Taunton River but the event never took place. Mr. Witherbee said he had a personal contact with someone at the Nashua Wild and Scenic River group and volunteered to see if they would like to meet up or make contact somehow. Ms. Field-Juma said that the partnership river groups usually meet every 2 years and regional Wild and Scenic river groups for the New England and Atlantic rivers usually meet in the intervening years. Ms. Lord thought that cross pollination between the Wood-Pawcatuck, Nashua, and CT river groups would be valuable. Ms. Mattei wondered if there would be interest for a New England roundtable of partnership rivers. Ms. Lord said that she would follow up on these ideas.

9:04 pm

The meeting was adjourned.