



Minutes for the October 27, 2020 meeting

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Laura Mattei (SVT), Amber Carr (SVT incoming), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Christa Collins (SVT-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Linh Phu (USFWS), David Witherbee (Concord)

RSC Representatives absent: Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

Guests: Ella Weber (USFWS), Kristin O'Brien (SVT)

Location: Zoom Video Call

7:06 pm

Ms. Henderson motioned to accept the September minutes. Ms. Slugg seconded and the motion passed unanimously, with one abstention.

SVT Mid-Year Report

Ms. Mattei and Ms. Collins addressed SVT's stewardship efforts to improve properties along or near rivers and spoke to the depth of SVT's Land Protection outreach. SVT's use of chemical treatments for an eradication effort to control buckthorn and bittersweet near the wet meadow at Wolbach Farm was approved recently by the Sudbury Conservation Commission. Chemical treatment is necessary because these species have increased in density despite years of mechanical removal efforts. SVT is working on a management plan for the Greenways Conservation Area in Wayland, which has shore line along the Sudbury River. SVT also funded mowing the north field for pollinators at the same property. SVT is doing title work for the CISCO property in Boxborough which contains priority habitat for Blanding's turtles and is a connector between other important conservation properties.

Ms. Henderson asked about the chemical controls SVT uses for glossy buckthorn. Ms. O'Brien said that foliage spray is used on cut stems and that manual removal is preferred when possible. Ms. Henderson asked if SVT had conducted outreach to riverfront homeowners near Mill Brook along the Bedford/Billerica line. Ms. Collins said they had not because that those are not considered priority properties as they are small and do not increase connectivity to other parcels in conservation.

CISMA update

Ms. O'Brien reported on CISMA's efforts for the current year. She said that fortunately not many rare riverfront plants are being threatened by invasives. CISMA created a full management plan for rare plants in Hopkinton, assisted the Stow Conservation Trust with a plan which included controlling invasive species, and awarded a small grant to Ashland to have a college student pull barberry plants in their town forest. A small grant to Stow for invasive species control was postponed due to the pandemic and that money will roll over to next year. Ms. Field-Juma asked if partner organizations are allowed to

use CISMA's boats. Ms. Carr said that Paddle Boston will use them 8 days per year for the next 3 years, with at least 5 of those 8 days reserved for the AMC.

Transportation Fellow

Ms. Phu introduced Ella Weber, Transportation Fellow for the Great Meadow and Assabet refuges. Ms. Weber has an 18-month position. Ms. Phu said that it would be helpful for Ms. Weber to attend RSC meetings because Ms. Weber's priorities are creating more physical and informational access to the refuges and increasing diversity among visitors. Ms. Weber said that she would look at both access and conservation issues while working with the Eastern Mass National Wildlife Complex, Parker River NWR, and 2 New Hampshire sites. Endeavoring to increase equitable access, she is developing a water access plan. She is currently assisting the Friends of the Assabet with their grant writing. She would like to develop an ambassador program to improve outreach to minorities. In order to enhance multimodal connections she is exploring connections to the Bay Circuit and Assabet River Rail trails, offering an option for bike shares, and talking with commercial outfitters about the possibility for kayak rentals or shares. She will investigate developing a shuttle bus route, perhaps extending to include Audubon properties. Ms. Slugg said that the RSC could look at our Five-Year Strategic Plan with regard to increasing access in ways that could benefit both the RSC and Ms. Weber's work.

Community Grants

Ms. Lord said that she had received 2 community grant proposals. First to be discussed was Sudbury's Hop Brook Protection Association's proposed study of excess phosphorus at Hop Brook. Mr. Fadden wondered about adding a site at Garden in the Woods. Ms. Field-Juma said that area is being sampled already and that adding a new site would increase the dollar amount of the grant. Ms. Henderson asked about budgeting. Ms. Field-Juma said that expenditures included the cost of sampling, training, revising the quality assurance program, and supporting the Association during its public presentation. Ms. Phu asked about measures of success and wondered if this work will help address remediation. She would like to see a communications plan from the Association, noting that the Town has not yet addressed this issue and expressing hope that the Association could spur the Town to act.

A discussion on the rolling grant process followed. Ms. Slugg explained that the RSC had previously had a hard deadline for community grants but moved to the current rolling basis after cycles when no grants at all were received. Mr. Fadden was concerned that important work could be denied later in the year if all the community grant money was given to the first organizations to apply. Ms. Phu said that having a longer period to submit might help expand the types of grants and the types of applicants. Mr. Chick said that reaching out to under-represented groups for grant applications could be part of the RSC's diversity discussion. Ms. Field-Juma suggested that we could do advance advertising over the summer to increase interest ahead of the deadline. Ms. Slugg advised that this discussion be re-visited at the February meeting.

Concord Museum's "Teaching Children About the Musketaquid" grant proposal was then discussed. Mr. Fadden noted that no Native American advisors were listed on the grant application. A discussion followed on whether having Native American advisors should be a pre-condition of the grant. Ms. Lord will check to see if the Museum can provide clarification on involvement of native people in this work. Ms. Slugg's motion to fund the Museum's request passed unanimously.

A vote to fund the Hop Brook Protection Association's grant passed unanimously, with Ms. Field-Juma abstaining because OARS will be doing the sampling for that project.

RSC Projects

Ms. Lord said that Carlisle is expected to submit a community grant for an interpretive panel. Ms. Henderson said that she is working on a contract for an interpretive panel for the Middlesex Canal Museum.

Ms. Lord said that she did an inventory of the functions now on our website. She listed areas for improvement as an interactive watershed map with points of interest on the home page, a news section, and listing our ORV's. Mr. Chick said that offering non-English language options and QR codes were important features. Ms. Carr said that Spanish and Portuguese translations would be essential for Framingham. Ms. Field-Juma suggested the possibility of adding Cambodian translations to reach Lowell users. Ms. Phu wondered if the RSC would utilize CMS translations or build that service from the ground up. She said this topic requires further research as there are many types of connectors for translation services, including API and add-on translations. Mr. Fadden suggesting integrating our map with OARS' map. Ms. Phu said that the RSC could consider purchasing and expanding upon a canned version of a story map, noting that the more programmed story maps were more expensive. She used the USFWS's "Find Your Hunt" as a good example of a story map that starts with an entry point and then expands to give more detail. Ms. Lord did not think we had the need for that level of detail because the RSC does not have nearly the audience that the USFWS does, and noted that we had only allocated \$1,000 for this first upgrade. It was agreed that this discussion would be continued at the November meeting.

9:24 pm

Ms. Field-Juma's motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan