



**Sudbury, Assabet and Concord
Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council Meeting
October 30, 2018**

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg-Chair (Sudbury), Sarah Bursky, Co-Chair (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Eileen McGourty (USFWS), Karen Pelto (MA DEP), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Kate Tyrrell (SVT)

RSC Representatives absent: Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Elissa Brown (Concord), Gail Hire (Concord-Alt), Jim Lagerbom (SVT-Alt), Jim Meadors (Lincoln-Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt)

Guest: Christa Collins, Director of Land Protection for SVT, Dave Henkels, Sudbury Conservation Commission

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Sarah Bursky.

Christa Collins, SVT

Ms. Collins spoke of recent SVT protection and conservation efforts within the SuAsCo watershed. She cited the completion of hiking trails at Horse Meadows Knoll in Harvard as an important example of SVT's landscape program. She discussed the importance of SVT's Prioritization Map of high value properties for securing connectivity, species diversity, and/or climate resilience within the watershed. SVT will soon acquire the Smith property in Littleton. This is a significant piece of the High Ridge which runs through Harvard, Boxborough, and Littleton. SVT has begun a pilot program in more urban areas. It has an AmeriCorps volunteer assisting their consultant on inventorying street trees. This project will be followed by a grant proposal to plant native trees in denser neighborhoods. Ms. Pelto said that the state is also making efforts to get urban residents interested in conservation. One project is working with residents in Framingham to reclaim the highly polluted Beaver Brook. A second program is the Greening the Gateway Cities program which provides assistance in planting trees if a community wants them. Mr. Henkel said that SVT might consider working with regional organizations to attract large companies to fund the mitigation and restoration efforts which are difficult to fund with grants. Ms. Collins said that SVT has had difficulty in finding companies to fund preservation but they have frequently been successful in getting trail easements from corporations. Cisco Systems in Harvard was one example.

September minutes:

Mr. Fadden motioned to accept the September minutes. Ms. Henderson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

50th Anniversary Event:

Ms. Bursky inquired about representatives' reactions to the October event. There was unanimous agreement that it was a great success and that it was due largely due to Ms. Bursky's excellent organizational skills. Mr. Henkels said that he was impressed by the integrity of the RSC, that Ms. Tsongas' speech was very well defined, and that the photography contest was a popular addition to the events list. Framingham, Concord, and Sudbury were commended for bringing the highest number of Town representatives.

Conservation Update:

Ms. Bursky said that at the 50th Anniversary event each Town's representative was given a bound copy of the Conservation Plan Update in its final draft form. She said that there is no overarching federal guidance on how to get a Wild and Scenic Conservation Plan update to towns. Approaches have included a 60 day comment period and asking for a certain level of endorsement. She will send out electronic versions of the draft to Town representatives asking for their comments. The email addresses for these individuals will be forwarded to Ms. Bursky from RSC town representatives. A discussion followed on which Town departments should be included in this list, with town planners, water departments, and DPW's being popular choices. Suggestions for improving the comment process included getting an action item they could sign and having RSC members sign the document as town representatives. Ms. Bursky and Ms. Slugg requested that RSC representatives meet with their Town boards before the 60 day comment period has concluded. Ms. Bursky said that after December the RSC should work diligently on its strategic plan, using the Conservation Update as a guide.

Community Grants:

Ms. Slugg advised a change from the RSC's usual approach of publicizing that the grant process for the new cycle had begun and then waiting for grants to be submitted. She suggested that the RSC list ideas that would meet its goals and then engage in outreach to encourage grants from community organizations that would be well suited to achieving these goals. A discussion followed on changing the deadline for proposals from January to February. It was noted that consideration should be given both to smaller groups which may need a long period of time to write their grants and to others that have the organizational ability to apply relatively quickly. Ms. Pelto advised a later deadline as this is public money and therefore a fair amount of time should be given for submission. Ms. Slugg said that the RSC grant planning committee will meet in either November or December.

Ms. Slugg said that because of the Thanksgiving holiday there would a December 4th meeting in place of our November meeting. Mr. Chick offered to host the RSC's holiday party with a possible date of December 18th. Ms. Slugg offered to send out a Doodle Poll to help select the final date.

A discussion followed on how much future grant money should be given to gear versus programming. It was noted that Billerica recently received funds for a boat trailer and that Wayland will submit a grant for boats so that high school students can access the river behind their school as part of their curriculum. Ms. Pelto said that asking for matching funds from towns would discourage the behavioral changes we are trying to encourage.

OARS activities:

Ms. Field-Juma spoke about the River Report card process and how challenging it is to establish values on river qualities such as recreation and scenic attributes. The Report Card project will launch in the spring. Each SuAsCo river will get its own report card, as will the upper and lower reaches of each river. These grades will be for the entirety of the rivers, not just the Wild and Scenic segments. She said that new grades would be given out every few years. She also said that OARS is currently reviewing Maynard's wastewater permit for which comments are due by November 21st. Ms. Bursky and Ms. Slugg will sign the comment letter for the RSC.

Ms. Bursky reminded the group that an orchestral piece inspired by the Sudbury River had been composed by the Landscape Music Composers Network and would be performed on November 3rd at the First Church, Boston.

Mr. Sciacca said that there is a real possibility that leeching from artificial turf in Wayland is creating toxic conditions for fish in the Sudbury River, with a possible link to an increase in intersex fish found in a 2008 study. When comments were made that artificial turf is currently manufactured with less toxicity than in previous years Mr. Sciacca said that only the first layer has been improved while the inner one containing phthalates has not changed very much and is still problematic. Ms. McGourty said that she had been in touch with Mr. Sciacca about this issue and forwarded the 2008 study to a colleague at the USGS. She said that pursuing this issue would most likely involve an expensive and multi-year project.

At 9:04 Ms. Slugg made a motion for adjournment which was seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.