



Minutes for the May 25, 2021 Meeting

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

RSC Representatives absent: Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Larry Buell (Lincoln), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), David Witherbee (Concord)

7:16 pm Minutes

Ms. Slugg opened the meeting. Ms. Field-Juma's motion to approve the April minutes was passed unanimously, with 3 abstentions.

7:19 Riverfest

Ms. Lord said that the Riverfest events page will appear on the SuAsCo website by May 28. Promotional postcards will be ready soon and will be made available for local distribution. Mr. Chick suggested adding QR codes to the postcards. Ms. Lord added that we could place postcards on signs which already have QR codes. Ms. Lord said that the Old Manse will be a hub location for multiple events on Sunday afternoon. Other events include group paddles and walks as well as online and self-guided activities. The paddles and walks will have an online registration process.

Ms. Henderson said that registration for her walk will also be available through Evenbrite. She noted an issue with the way that the virtual tour of Billerica is appearing on the SuAsCo website. The introductory video is large and prominently placed while the main video is much smaller and is being overlooked by users. Ms. Lord said that she would look into making the video of the main tour more prominent and the introduction smaller in size.

7:28 pm FY22 Internal Projects

Ms. Lord said that she received suggestions from Council representatives for approximately 15 new locations for WSR interpretive signs to be installed by the summer of 2022. Each site was discussed individually. Ms. Lord said that additional sites could still be added to the list, including Bedford, Concord, and Carlisle boat ramps and a conservation area in Carlisle. She suggested prioritizing signs at sites that get a lot of visitors. Ms. Field-Juma said that the boat house at Fairhaven Bay could be a good site. It was noted that Lincoln might benefit from a kiosk instead of the small signs it has near its boat launch. Ms. Slugg reminded the Council that any trails now in the planning stage will need to be completed by August 2022 because the allocated money for new signs must be spent by then.

River Steward intern

The River Steward position needs further development. Ms. Lord will write a job description. Ms. Phu (USFWS) and Ms. Carr (SVT) said that their organizations might be able to offer office space but could

not provide supervisory time. Ms. Phu said that if the intern's responsibilities are clearly defined, such as greeting visitors at the river or creating website resources, then different points of contact can be designated for each task and the supervisory responsibilities can be spread out between different organizations. Ms. Phu said that interns working under a USFWS cooperative agreement are tied specifically to USFWS land and that the USFWS carries liability for that position.

7:45 pm **Other Updates**

The Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC) has requested comment letters for a one-year Massachusetts Environmental Trust grant investigating issues regarding the possible removal of the Talbot Mill dam. The MRWC has an interest in fish passage and migratory patterns. They are seeking partners such as OARS, the RSC, Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, NOAA, and others. The grant proposal includes work to monitor macro invertebrates, convene important river stakeholders, and do public outreach and education about the dam removal. OARS would consider how dissolved oxygen in the river would change from pre-dam removal to post-dam removal conditions. Ms. Lord said that exploration of Native American relics located under the dam is also being considered under this grant.

Ms. Lord said that the RSC and OARS will work on the Dragonfly Mercury Project again this summer. They will use the same 3 sampling sites (one on the Assabet River and two on the Sudbury River) that were used last year. The RSC may need to cover the lab costs of our sampling. Mr. Witherbee assisted in the project last year and RSC members have the opportunity to volunteer this year as well. Dragonfly Mercury Project partners in the Merrimack River watershed will also be engaging and working with students in Lowell and Lawrence. Ms. Field-Juma said that she has made an inquiry into whether the state has any plans to do a mercury study on fish tissue this year. If so, it would be useful if they could use the same sampling sites as the Mercury Dragonfly Project, which would allow us to see how the data correlates and if dragonflies can continue to be a proxy for fish. Fish have not been sampled for a few years. She has not yet received a reply to this question.

Ms. Phu spoke about the JEDI work happening at Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge (ARNWR). A recent Speaker Series featuring Parker McMullen Bushman focused on equity and inclusion in conservation and the outdoors. This video talk was attended by 30 people. A fishing event was held in partnership with Outdoor-Afro and the DFW at Puffer Pond where 18 people caught their first fish ever. Later this season the RSC's own David Witherbee will lead a walk in Concord specifically for people of color who are first time birders.

8:35 pm

Ms. Henderson motioned to adjourn, Ms. Lord seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan