

Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee
Notes from the Study Committee Meeting
NRWA's River Resource Center, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
November 16, 2017

INFORMAL NOTES

Members Present: Beth Suedmeyer (Ayer); Rona Balco (Bolton); Jordan Bailey (Brookline); Jean Haight (Dunstable); Lucy Wallace (Harvard); LeeAnn Wolff (Hollis); Bill Flynn (Lancaster); Paula Terrasi (Pepperell); Bill Wilkinson (Townsend)
NRWA Staff: Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Al Futterman, Martha Morgan
Ex Officio: Anne Gagnon (DFW)
Guests: Mike Fleming (NRWA Board member)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by the chair, Lucy Wallace.

Administrative & Sharing

The meeting opened with its usual round of introductions by Committee members.

The minutes of October 19, 2017 were approved as presented.

NPS Update

Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell and Al Futterman had spoken recently with Liz Lacy and gave an update on the status of the draft Study. Liz had reported that the draft Study had been reviewed by staff in the Washington, DC office, although all of their suggested edits and comments may not have yet been incorporated into the draft. Liz is willing to send the current version to the Wild & Scenic River Study Committee for review but it cannot be posted on our website at this time.

Elizabeth reported she had asked Liz if all three New England rivers' projects were on track to be presented together after the 2018 spring annual town meetings. Liz is not certain if all three will be ready by next spring, noting that our Committee was the furthest along in developing its Management Plan.

For the benefit of the newer Committee members, Lucy briefly explained the three categories of ORRVs delineated in the Study and on which the Management Plan was based and tracked in its Action Plan.

Visual Resource Inventory

Al invited Committee members to join those already participating in our first visual resource inventory (VRI) on Friday, November 17th. He explained we would gather at the River Resource Center at 8:30 AM before heading to our first site: the Petapawag boat launch. He hoped to do two more sites before returning to the River Resource Center for lunch. He also expects NPS representatives to join us midday. Other possible sites to visit include Townsend Harbor and Fitch's Bridge.

Those signed up to participate included: Cindy Knox, LeeAnn Wolff, Lucy and Al. Others who might join included: Jordan Bailey and Bill Wilkinson.

ORRV Subcommittee

Update on 11/9/17 Meeting: The draft notes of the meeting were distributed. Lucy gave a brief update, noting that the Subcommittee had completed review of the draft Action Plan for the Historical & Cultural and Scenic & Recreational categories. Jordan asked Al if he had a preferred way in which to receive edits and comments. Al replied he did not; that he does want Committee members' comments however they can provide them.

Jordan reported she had contacted John McGee at NH Fish & Game (Anne Gagnon's counterpart) regarding the Study and Management Plan and asked that he share the draft Plan with his colleagues. She also gave him Anne's contact information.

Website: Elizabeth reported that given Cindy's commitments in Ayer, she cannot always update the website in a timely way. Therefore, she has been training Al and Wynne Treanor-Kvenvold (NRWA Communications Manager) on managing the website. In that way, Al can upload current versions of the draft Management Plan as he updates it.

Public Input Sessions and Opportunities:

- **River Recreation Users:** Lucy began the discussion with an overview of the evening program recently offered to recreational users of the river which was attended by approximately 30 people. Elizabeth asked those present who had attended the program for their assessment of the evening. Paula Terrasi thought it had been well received and that people were engaged. LeeAnn agreed, noting that the format was positive, organized and invited feedback from the public. Lucy asked if the video taping of the program would be made available to the other towns for broadcast on their local access channels. Elizabeth reported that Wynne is looking into how the towns would like to receive copies of the taped program. In addition, Wynne is looking into providing a link to the program on our website.
- **Upcoming Stakeholders' Outreach Sessions:** Elizabeth reported that two more outreach sessions will be held the week after Thanksgiving. The first, Biological Diversity, will be held the evening of November 28th; the second, Historic & Cultural, will be held the evening of November 29th. Both will be at the NRWA River Resource Center. Jean Haight and Paula offered to bring refreshments to the meeting on the 28th.
- **Town Outreach:** Al is scheduled to meet with the Townsend Conservation Commission on December 6th. Bill Wilkinson will join him, as will Lucy. The Shirley Conservation Commission is hosting a program on Shirley's waterways on November 28th. The NRWA has been invited to make a presentation; Martha Morgan will mention the work of the Wild & Scenic Study Committee. Bill Flynn will be going to the Lancaster Conservation Commission's January 24th meeting.

Outreach Subcommittee

Although the Outreach Subcommittee has not met recently, the Committee discussed the next steps for getting to the spring annual town meetings and vote to approve the designation and Management Plan. Lucy reminded those present that the town representatives had been asked to give their town administrators (TA's) a heads up about an article to be included on the annual town meeting warrant. Elizabeth distributed a draft script that could be used if the representative felt it would be useful. The TA's in Brookline and Hollis have both been notified, as have those in Harvard and Pepperell. Rona Balco felt that she would approach the Bolton Conservation Commission for its support and then ask it to go to the Selectmen with the request for the article. Elizabeth noted it would be up to each town representative to determine the best way to handle this, adding NRWA staff would be available to assist, if necessary.

In addition to the TA's, we need to reach out to the Boards of Selectmen, Conservation Commissions, Planning Boards, Historical Commissions and other town private groups (i.e garden clubs). Elizabeth noted another script which town representatives could use in approaching their Conservation Commission. Lucy noted the script was easily adaptable to whatever group a representative was seeking to meet with.

The question arose of how best to use the 10-15 minutes we would be allowed on committee's agendas and what printed information should we provide. In the Committee's packets were a couple of examples to consider. First, the one-page summary AI provided at the recent Squannacook Rail Trail program, which was very town and location specific. This could be adapted for each town. Second, Elizabeth pointed to the 3-page, high-level summary of the Management Plan provided to the NRWA Board at its last meeting. Paula and Mike Fleming, as the respective Pepperell and Shirley conservation agents, agreed to review it and give Elizabeth their feedback. Every presentation, however, must include reference to our website as it now contains useful information beyond what can be presented in 10-15 minutes.

Other examples of information flyers or handouts that AI will email to Committee members include those for the Taunton River and Lower Farmington River.

Both Bill Flynn and Lucy urged that we develop and use a single, consistent message. Jordan asked if we could have that by mid-January, as that is when NH representatives (and MA too) will begin an extensive outreach campaign. Leeann and Bill offered to help with the messaging.

Other outreach ideas included:

- Bill Flynn suggest meeting with local newspapers and providing information for a story on our work;
- Beth Suedmeyer suggested developing an announcement slide for local access to broadcast (similar to an ad), including a link to our website;
- LeeAnn suggested identifying and priming key townspeople to speak in favor of the designation and plan at annual town meeting;
- Elizabeth offered to create a calendar if members would give her meeting dates for both public boards and private groups in their respective towns that we need to go before;
- Key groups to reach out to include land or conservation trusts, land owners abutting the river, possibly the individual most likely to speak against the article at town meeting; and
- Jordan advocated for a note on any flyer that the designation will **not** impact a river abutter's use of their land. Martha suggested inviting the river abutters to the meeting with the Conservation Commission.

Plan and Committee Name

Martha had noted a variety of names used for different rivers' management plans, one being stewardship plan. She asked if we would want to change the name of our plan from Management to Stewardship. It was felt this change, though subtle, would be less threatening and more in keeping with the purpose of the plan and its oversight committee. After a brief discussion it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that, subject to Jamie's approval and being consistent with NPS requirements, we replace "Management" with "Stewardship."

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Next meeting: December 21st 7 – 9 PM at the NRWA's River Resource Center.