

Nashua River Wild And Scenic Passes Vote

In a clean sweep, eleven riverfront communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire all voted "yes" at their Annual Town Meetings to accept the "Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Stewardship Plan" locally-developed by the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee, together with its recommendation to seek Wild and Scenic River designation.

Lucy Wallace, Chair of the Study Committee and the Town of Harvard's Representative,

said, "The diligent and dedicated work of the Study Committee has led to this significant accomplishment. It's thrilling to have earned the support of the eleven participating town meetings!! We're all eager to begin the next phase of stewarding our treasured river resources."

The town votes come after two and a half years of activity by the Study Committee which worked to identify the outstandingly remarkable resource values of these three rivers, conducted extensive outreach in the eleven communities to gather input, and then developed the voluntary Stewardship Plan. The entirety of the Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers is included in the Stewardship Plan, as is the mainstem of the Nashua River in Massachusetts up to the New Hampshire border.

"Even for those of us who were familiar with our rivers at the start of this Study, it has been fascinating to dig deeper and come to a greater understanding of their value," observed Brookline, New Hampshire's Representative to the Study Committee, Drew Kellner. "These three rivers have incredible biodiversity, they're won-

derful places to enjoy outdoor recreation, and they are tied so closely to the history and culture of our communities."

The Study Committee is made up of representatives appointed from each of the eleven towns, in MA: Ayer, Bolton, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Pepperell, Shirley, and Townsend; and in NH: Brookline and Hollis, along with the National Park Service and the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA).

"It's been a thorough process with a great effort to be inclusive and seek as much public input as possible," said Robert Pontbriand, Ayer Town Manager and Chair of the Outreach Sub-Committee of the Study Committee. "For me, it's been a pleasure working with the Town Administrators."

The next step will be the work by the National Park Service and Congressional offices to draft legislation to be introduced to Congress. Jamie Fosburgh, Manager of the Northeast Rivers Program for the National Park Service said, "Now that the Stewardship Plan is completed and the eleven towns have so resoundingly expressed their

support, we look forward to making the case to Congress for designation of these three rivers as Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers."

"As a person who well remembers the grossly polluted Nashua River of the 1960s that we've all worked so hard and so successfully to restore, it's particularly satisfying to be part of this effort to seek Wild and Scenic designation for these sparkling rivers," commented Bill Flynn, Lancaster Representative to the Study Committee.

"The Study Committee members have all worked hard over the past two and a half years to represent their communities and gather input from the public. We thank everyone who participated in the process and who attended their Town Meetings," stated NRWA's Executive Director, Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell. "The affirmative votes were a critical step in the process of seeking Partnership Wild & Scenic designation for these magnificent rivers. Onward!"

For more information contact Al Futterman, Study Committee Coordinator at alf@NashuaRiverWatershed.org.

Continue to check the Study Committee's website for updates and to read the Stewardship Plan: www.WildandScenicNashuaRivers.org.

