

'Wild and Scenic' designation sought

This year at Annual Town Meeting, voters in nine Massachusetts riverfront communities will take up the topic of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers, and their possible designation as a "Wild and Scenic Rivers."

These nine communities, Ayer, Bolton, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Pepperell, Shirley, and Townsend have been participating with two New Hampshire towns as part of a Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee to explore designation of segments of the Nashua River from Lancaster to the New Hampshire border, and all of its two main tributaries, the Nissitissit and Squannacook Rivers, as Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The Study Committee has developed a locally-driven, voluntary Stewardship Plan. At Town Meeting in each community, voters will be asked if they wish to accept that voluntary River Stewardship Plan and its recommendation that the Nashua, Nissitissit, and Squannacook Rivers be designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

You can learn more about

the Wild and Scenic project at the upcoming Public Information Meetings:

- Tuesday, April 3 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall in Harvard, prior to regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting
- Monday, April 9 at 7 p.m., at the Town Hall in Shirley
- Tuesday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall in Pepperell
- Thursday, April 12 at 7 p.m. at the Bolton Public Library

The Public Information Meeting will be led by Study Committee members. All are encouraged to attend and learn more. For info about additional public forums in Ayer, Dunstable, Groton, Lancaster, and Townsend, and other events, related to this project visit www.WildandScenic-NashuaRivers.org.

Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell, Executive Director of

the Nashua River Watershed Association, says, "I have spent much of my life devoted to conservation efforts in this area, and I fully support the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers being designated as Wild & Scenic."

Campbell, who is a member of the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee goes on to say, "These beautiful rivers are home to incredible biodiversity and offer wonderful recreation opportunities. They are treasures for our local communities, and deserve to be protected now and for future generations."

The towns of Brookline and Hollis in New Hampshire have already voted "yes" on the question. After all 11 towns have voted, it will be up to the US Congress to pass legislation awarding the designation and up to the President to sign it.