

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee
Minutes**

Thursday, January 16, 2019 – Lowell Town Office, Lowell

Attendees: Russ Ford, Ellen Fox, Mark Higley, John Little, Jim MacCartney, Jeff Parsons, Dan Seeley, Sherry Willey, Ranier Lucas, Lindsey Wight, and Jenn Blay

Meeting called to order at 6:50. Ranier was our secretary for this meeting. Thank you Ranier!

River Community Grants: Jenn Blay from the Lowell School presented on the 2019 River Community Grant she received from us to do water quality monitoring and the Trout in the Classroom program. They had previously borrowed some equipment from the High School, and the students wanted to do more; this grant enabled them to purchase chemical tests, turbidity tubes, and kick nets. Tested some of the locations they had previously done, as well as new ones (Burgess Branch, Irish Hill, behind the Randall Farm). Also purchased equipment for Trout in the Classroom – which has led to students learning about triploid fish and hatchery vs natural fish. They are self-guiding their interest and writing argument papers about whether they should release the hatchery fish into our natural streams. Very inspiring to hear these stories and how students are learning in real life, within their own communities. The students will be presenting during Town Meeting.

Review of the December minutes: RF motioned; SW seconded; minutes were approved as written.

Other 2019 River Community Grants: Montgomery purchased 17 sets of snowshoes and poles that are publicly available. Montgomery Rec also held three youth canoe trips. NCSU Encore had their week-long canoe trip. Missisquoi Headwaters Search and Rescue purchased a backcountry rescue sled. Cold Hollow to Canada began the database work for their Keeping Track Monitoring Program. Green Mountain Club will be converting the Privy at Journey's End during the 2020 field season.

We also funded several "special projects" in 2019: food for Richford River Fest; scholarships for the River Explorers trip; sponsored the Paddle/Pedal; stone steps at the Lowell/Westfield line; overages for the Enosburg Conservation Commission's Kiosk; removing an old water tank from the Missisquoi River; and Bugworks.

Please keep reminding folks that our 2020 River Community Grant round is active, and that application are due on February 3rd.

Administrative Business: Lindsey went over the quarterly report for October-December 2019, then also went over our income/expenses overview for 2019. We brought in more money than we spent. We will need to spend this down – discussed using our funds to repair damage from the Halloween storm; possible cost-sharing to bring culverts up to WQ and wildlife passage standards. We can spread the word about these funds through legislative representatives, and also directly reach out to towns. Lindsey will work up an RFP about this work to bring to the February meeting, where we will discuss all things financial: grant decisions, next year's budget, and how best to spend our remaining funds.

Thanks for your responses to the Committee Satisfaction Survey; Lindsey also sent around a contact information list for Committee members to verify that she has the correct contact information.

Should we do a fun Committee-only paddle trip this summer? Positive response; Lindsey will send around a survey for people to select their desired level of paddle and possible dates.

2019 Annual Report/Newsletter: Lindsey and Ranier will endeavor to get this finalized by the end of the month.

Internal Projects Update: Ranier is working with Noah to get our mapping project actually completed. Needs pictures of landmarks.

Signage on town roads – Ranier will get these printed; then we will go to towns to request having them installed at the crossings. As more VTrans projects happen, we will ease into getting signage on state roads. Some

discussion about how to have these conversations – district maintenance crews? Not this time of year, but perhaps in the summer, just to plant the idea.

2020 Events: Events poster is mocked up; we just need dates. Snowshoes Feb 8th and Feb 22; June 6th Paddle and Picnic on the Trout River (Riverwalk to East Berkshire); June 20th Paddle/Pedal (Lindsey will confirm date with NFCT); August 1st and 2nd Adult overnight trip (need better name); September 5th/12th for the Montgomery River Clean-Up. W&S Gathering at Big Falls? Yes – July 26th.

Other events: Leave No Trace workshop this spring. Fishing Derby – need a pond to stock. Russ's pond could work for ~15 or so kids?

White water event? 2021... Sheldon Springs does a release – class 5 in flood level. But below the designation... what are these release dates?

Art event – sculptural installation? Should be something that reflects an homage to the river, but should come from the communities. Land art outside... Several contacts discussed.

Other/Public Comment: Carbon sequestration; global warming solutions act. Looking at forestry for climate change effort; ag land as carbon sink?; forest preservation.

Partnering: NC High School has a Kingdom Course – kids are outside 3 days/week, and have some community service requirements, too. We could tie in with this group.

Other partners: GMC is doing 200k of work on the northern Long Trail – some of this will be focused on stream crossing, wetland protections, and minimizing erosion.

Upcoming meetings: *February 13* – Franklin County – Richford?
March 19 – Orleans County – North Troy?
April 16 – Franklin County – Berkshire?

Wrap up and adjourn: DS motioned; JL seconded. All in favor; meeting ended at 8:35.