

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes**  
**Thursday, October 19th, 2023 6:30 PM – Westfield Community Center**

**Attendees:** Susan Staples, Jenn Grace, Jacques Couture, Bryan Dickinson, Dan Seeley, Jim McCartney, John Little, Lindsey Wight, and Sarah Lunn in person, Cynthia Scott via Zoom

**Welcome, greetings:** Meeting called to order at 6:39 PM.

**Review of September Meeting Minutes:** BD motioned to approve; SS seconded; Minutes approved as written.

**Updates on business from the September meeting:** JL will ask Berkshire town clerk about lighting permits; Chad Tyler concerned about misuse of property.

**Event Overview: Paddle & Picnic - 16 people; No Other Lake showing - 22 people; Film Fest - 75 People!** Paddle and Picnic was great, launched from the stone house on Marvin Rd to East Berkshire at the take out below the bridge. Started discussion of potentially improving the access point by the office. No Other Lake showing was a success - Duane seemed to be intrigued about potential filming with us - SL and LW will reach out about Sojourn filming. Film Fest overall was a good, good selection of films. Costs us money, but still good outreach. Suggestions for next year: have a kids price vs adults price, use local business to generate sponsorships. JG felt good seeing her business up on the sponsorship slide!

**Grants/Projects:** Update on 2023 grant projects: final reporting from Enosburg Rec, Richford Conservation Commission, Berkshire - River Rd culvert. Reminder that Municipal Grants are due November 1st - the subcommittee to review applications is SS, BD, JG, and JL. 2024 Access point options: East Richford - JL will connect with Trevor Gross. Berkshire by twin bridges? North Troy - nursery property?

**2024 River Community Grants Overview; funding recommendations from subcommittee; final decisions - Overall:** Committee voted to fund all six projects, though some with some stipulations. A note for all grants - an increase in media outreach is requested. In the award letter (or in the grant application process), LW will ask for particular media outreach and create guidelines. "Brag about the project in these ways".

- Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRD) - Missisquoi River Fishing Festival, request of \$4,000, DS made motion to approve, JG seconded, motion to fund grant approved.
- FCNRCD - Piloting Wildlife Habitat Assessments, request of \$4,000. Concern over the connection to waterways in the application. BD made a motion to accept conditions as long as the project is within the UMATR region, and involves waterways. SS seconded motion. Motion passed with one opposed.
- FCNRCD - Wildlife Tracking Day with Montgomery Elementary School, request of \$4,000. Concern over how the budget is laid out for staff time vs event time. Committee requests more details about the project, and has asked FCNRCD to develop a plan explaining their funding. BD made motion to approve, DS seconded motion. Motion passed.
- Lowell Graded School - Lowell Middle School Burgess Branch/East River Study, request \$1,130. Committee supports the project and is excited for this new connection into Lowell. SS made motion to accept, BD seconded motion. Motion passed.
- NCSU Encore After School and Summer Program - Requested \$5000. Committee supports the

program, but some concerns were raised about the sustainability of the program since UMATR has funded the program for the last 6 years. LW will discuss with them about the possibility of finding other sources for next year. Committee also does not want to give \$5000 instead of \$4000 as they do not want to set a precedent of receiving more than the grant cap that had been originally stated in fairness to all applications. BD made a motion to fund the program with \$4,000. SS seconded motion. Motion passed to allot \$4000 for grand award.

- Richford Conservation Commission - Our River, Our Community, Our Future, requested \$3,903.80. Committee fully supports it. JL seems to remember purchasing the original equipment that they now are replacing! JL made a motion to accept, BD seconded, Motion passed to fund.

### **2023 Upcoming UMATR Events: None!**

- **Other:** MRBA's Knotweed bonfire and maze on November 9th, 3-6 PM at Riverwalk Park

### **2024 Events:**

- Speaker Series (Jan-Apr meeting openers) – Sarah has started working on this
- Snowshoe event(s)? – Feb/Mar - reach out to County Foresters for possible dates
- Another Open House? - Yes! May timeline suggested. SL and LW will check with MRBA Board for their thoughts
- Amphibian Road Crossing - Mar/Apr - Committee agreed that online training is unnecessary for this year and to try to host a crossing without the pre-training.
- Sojourn 2024 - plan for early June again? Could be a nice film? - JM suggested a shorter and longer styled film to use as marketing and could be posted on the W&SR YouTube. LW and SL will reach out to Duane for contacts and begin looking at grant funding available.
- Paddle Lesson – all day “workshop”? – July 14th (depending on Paddle-Pedal)
- Paddle-Pedal – likely July 20<sup>th</sup> (or 13<sup>th</sup>?) - will swap Paddle Lessons weekend depending on what date Paddle-Pedal is decided
- Paddle & Picnic - August 18th, 2024
- Swimming Hole Clean-Up – Sept 7<sup>th</sup>
- WSFF paired with Bean & Brew again? - (which will probably be October 12th)
  - Committee on board with the festival again. Suggested showing of No Other Lake as part of the festival next year?
- Other event suggestions: Tubing event on the Trout river, with picnic? River Explorers trip?
  - Committee likes River Tubing events - gets people who don't use the river to use it in other ways. BD made a motion to pursue tubing with extra grant money. CS seconded. Motion passed. SL will get in contact with Montgomery Rec about their interest in taking this on as an event.
- Nature Paddle with Jared Nunery - June?: SL has reached out and awaits his availability. Committee suggested potential pairing with sojourn and nature paddle day? SL will inquire about Jared's interest.

**Other/Public Comment:** BD took 7 students on the Missisquoi from Lowell to Westfield. BD noticed the sign is down in the river on Loop Rd, and there was an excavator on Mineral springs - appears to be pushing sediment into the river. LW and SL will follow up.

**Upcoming meetings:** November 16th - UMATR office, Potential combined MRBA and UMATR Meeting on December 7th, LW will confer with MRBA Board about interest.

**Wrap up and adjourn:** DS made motion to adjourn, SS seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.