

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes**  
**Thursday, November 19, 2020 – Zoom**

**Attendees:** Jacques Couture, Carol Hickey, John Little, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Jeff Parsons, Dan Seeley, Jim MacCartney, Ellen Fox, Russ Ford, Bethany Remmers, John Little, Ari Lattanzi, and Lindsey Wight

**Introductions; call to order:** Meeting called to order at 6:31pm

**Review of the October minutes:** CS motioned to accept the minutes from the October meeting, WS seconded; minutes were approved as written.

**Administrative:** Cynthia went over the Quarterly Financial Report for July 1- Sept 30. Discussion of how much is left from the National Park Foundation grant (Mill Brook project), and probably future uses of those funds (if granted approval from NPF, will follow up to better ensure success and also story telling of this project). DS motion to accept the report, CH seconded; report accepted as written.

**River Community Grants/Storm Impacts Grants:** What timeline should we do – can release early, and then have an earlier due date; but this could get muddied due to the holidays. Also concern about leaving it lie too long – what if we release it now, and then send reminders after the holidays, with the deadline remaining in February (Monday, Feb 1, 2021, with notification of awards in early March).

About the application: shall we include a place-making map (Ari has designed)? Yes, may help with making clear that actions must be in our W&S region. Discussion on emphasis and messaging about cultural ORV – will put specific examples on the website to spark ideas, garner interest (thank you to the Committee for submitting ideas). Additional suggestions: focus on the material culture of native communities (ash baskets, medicinal plants).

How should we distribute? Just digitally: FPF, FB, Historical Societies, Libraries, email Listserv. Also, we should invite the tribes to apply (but be very clear about the geographic constraints). Please also share with your networks so as wide a reach as possible.

“Storm Impacts Grants” are now “Town Infrastructure Grants” – these we’ll send out to town selectboards and clerks. Get these out sooner than later, so that towns can plan – budgets are being formed by early January. Awards should be made by May 1 at least. Town meetings will likely be remote – with votes potentially being cast by Australian ballot. And sometimes selectboards, etc change over at Town Meeting. Would be better to have due date after that.

Towns are excited about the grants, now that they’ve gone through one cycle – Westfield and Berkshire both had positive experiences with the funds and the reporting requirements. Having extra funding available means they can make projects better.

Timeline: we’ll announce the funding now, with the RFPs, and then send reminders in February and in March, with applications due Friday, April 2, 2021. A reminder that the towns who did submit were very appreciative of the help provided by the Committee members – you can assist, and perhaps improve your town’s chances 😊

Types of projects: towns can use these funds to enhance waterways and other areas that convey water to the rivers – examples: plant trees, improve culverts and ditches, green infrastructure...

Discussion of application language: “roadway/infrastructure” doesn’t have much to do with the ORVs – but that helps expand understanding of our ORVs. Maybe emphasize Water Quality, and Natural Resources for AOP? Should we add a clause about “bonus points for addressing all 4 ORVs” in the checkbox area (and adjust rubric)? Adjust working from COVID to include any unforeseen circumstances (large scale, global, regional).

Overall timeline of our grant programs: Having the grants end in September aligns with the NPS fiscal year and makes UMATR reporting easier (all the dollars must be spent at the end of a Cooperative Agreement, which closes on September 30<sup>th</sup> in its final year. NOT THIS YEAR, but would it work for projects to switch next year’s grant cycle to end in September? We will check in next summer and consider rolling out the RFPs in the early fall – post RFPs in August, due in September, award in October?

**2021 Events:** Play a little by ear, but it would be nice to have some things coming up. Snowshoeing seems pretty safe – outdoors, easy to space (wear long snowshoes! 😊). Let’s do one on a Saturday and one on a Sunday in Feb and again in March. Get guides, make themes (foresters, local knowledge keepers).

We will reassess spring events after the New Year.

**River Access & Mapping:** Would be good to have a targeted efforts – form a subcommittee? Ari is interested in mapping; our old GIS license went kaput, time to update – we are looking into GIS non-profit deal and also playing with Google Earth. It will be great to finally have maps on website and printable. Ari has skills but limited knowledge - needs input. This is hard to do in full committee meetings, are there any folks who are interested in helping with mapping efforts for Ari to reach out to? JL and JP both expressed interest, and Jeff has access to imagery dataset in GIS.

Ari showed off the Google Earth Map that she has created – a way to show what is our W&S, for people who are just coming to the website. Lindsey will send the link to the Farmington Story Map. Some discussion of extent of W&S and existing dam boundaries (Eburg has a big project boundary due to FERC; the Chase dam’s backwater is excepted because of the riverine nature). The dam’s extents are drawn in the Study Report – Appendix 5.

Other updates: Lindsey showed the animation of erosion at Mill Brook, which will be on the webpage for this project along with photos and timelapse footage. Jacques told the story: erosion really started in the storm of 1997; Westfield got hit hard. The sand bank has gotten bigger; now the inner channel will flood in high water and will take pressure off the bank hopefully. Any estimates for cubic yards washed away? Lindsey gave the estimate, but her calculations were off – a more accurate estimate is: 340 cu yards annually since 1999 (a total of ~6,800 cubic yards of soil lost in the past 20 years).

Knotweed Control Stipend for Landowners: Different application process than our other RFPs – envision something simple, with guidance. Discussion of use of chemicals – do we want to restrict the types of actions that landowners can take (prohibit chemicals, or prohibit in floodplains, areas that flood; require injection only? Maybe some wording about “only formulations that have the least impact – brush on, limited timeframe, etc...)? Chemicals require multiple applications, but are more effective than some other control methods. Would it make sense to allow one blast of chemicals, and then follow up with non-chemical? There is some evidence RoundUp doesn’t affect fish, but the surfactants used with glyphosates

may impact mussels, insects, and plants. But landowners are not trained herbicide applicators (glyphosates are not controlled chemicals)... maybe discourage chemical treatment, focus on mechanical for the small patches; focus on education/outreach to prevent the spread into new areas. Don't mow it! We could identify landowners who are committed to getting rid of it, who will put in the effort, and then just focus our work with those xx (maybe 10?) and work with broader group to just prevent spread. Discussion about knotweed and where it grows (all over – Jeff found no clear correlation between land use, flood plain, bank slope).

More to learn: Jeff and Jacques are interested in exploring more; will work with Lindsey, Ari, Ellen to think through some of these problems, draft some language, and come back to the Committee.

Other methods will be explored if MRBA gets a grant they applied for. Ellen reports that sheep and goats will eat knotweed; and suggests it would be good to learn/teach how to nurture natural communities to outcompete knotweed. Possible steam??

Knotweed control takes repeated effort and commitment. Offering these grants may boost morale around working to control it.

**Other/Public Comment: none**

**Signs of the Season:** A moose on the Long Trail; snow!; snowy owls (mostly coastal so far); rock with bear scat (bear had a diverse diet); pine grosbeaks are back in New England; trout pool is empty again - 30 trout migrated to this spot to spawn and then left. We need to know where these biologically significant places are! Could be due to an upwelling of oxygen – the East Branch is ~10 degrees cooler than Burgess, despite Burgess being forested – groundwater fed? JL and RL enjoyed a “stroll and float” on the river and the Rail Trail – new event??

**Upcoming meetings:** December 17 - via Zoom

**Wrap up and Adjourn:** JL Motioned, DS seconded; meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.