

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, July 16, 2020 – Westfield Community Center (with Zoom option)

Attendees: Jacques Couture, Ellen Fox, John Little, Mike Manahan, Keith Sampietro, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Jeff Parsons, Sherry Willey, Ranier Lucas, and Lindsey Wight attended in-person; Jim MacCartney and Karen Bates joined via Zoom.

Meeting called to order at 6:34. This will be Ranier's final UMATR meeting; thank you Ranier for all your hard work and adaptability this year!

Review of the June minutes: JL motioned; CS seconded; minutes were approved as written.

Tactical Basin Planning: Karen Bates joined us; the Missisquoi Tactical Basin Plan is up for renewal this year. A major focus will be on BMPs (i.e. riparian plantings) – where they should be at the HUC 12 scale. Another area of focus will be modelling from ag impacts - an ag group will help identify WHERE to do fixes (cover crops, no till) and help pinpoint similar areas throughout the basin. JP asked if this will include on-the-ground assessments; do we need to update the geomorphic assessments? He is currently mapping Japanese knotweed occurrences along the river, and is noticing areas of erosion – should we incorporate this for the TBP? i.e. areas where cows are in the river – can address with funding for fencing and alternative water sources. RAPs will help enforce. KB asks if the OCNRCD is aware of this spot where cows are accessing the river? JC mentioned that his farm has received funding to do this sort of work (EQIP).

The Floodplain Continuity Project is focused on floodplain enhancement – could add a field component to id where things are incised, and assess how we can fix?

And this update will also highlight more protection of high-quality waters, so we can also assist by helping to identify these good areas.

KB will provide some specific steps in the coming months. Also a good opportunity to create some story maps – KB can help with this.

JC mentioned that one of our focuses should be to get people to understand the cause and effect of actions – offer some zoom presentations – need to figure out how to market these, get people to actually attend.

Administrative: Ari Lattanzi will be joining us in September as our 2020/2021 ECO AmeriCorps member. Ari hails from California, attended Middlebury College and has most recently been a teacher. We look forward to welcoming her.

Cynthia went over our Quarterly Financial Report covering April-June of 2020.

Lindsey shared a document tracking our budget and projected expenses. We are doing fairly well, but may have some overage. JM said that if there is work not being done due to COVID (especially on the projects that we have funded through our grants program), we may be able to get a no-cost extension. Lindsey will check in with our grantees. Lindsey also asked Committee members to come up with a list of projects that could utilize quick dollars (some suggested ideas included: major clean-up sites (car in river), eroded steps/access areas. CS motioned that this should include Lowell and Jay; JL seconded, all approved. Please send Lindsey ideas and if possible a contact person for the project/location.

KS suggests a paddle clean-up; perhaps the students from the Lowell school?

Mill Brook: Lindsey brought some pictures of the work that was completed during the last week of June/first week of July. It was a great collaborative project; awesome people to work with, and exciting to see come together! Continuing ideas: encouraging riparian reforestation – could do hydroseeding – the VTFWD would help, but we'd need to collect the native seeds; Committee interest? Also some discussion about natural reveg and how swiftly that could happen without our interference.

We do need to do outreach related to this project. Lindsey has lots of video, so we'll do something with that. Would also like to offer site visits, depending on COVID concerns.

Marriner's project – similar in nature – happening in August. Volunteers needed to harvest willows the weekend before – any location suggestions of willow stands near Troy? Jacques says we can return to his property if needed.

Other Projects: Summer Days on the River – youth kayak trips, with all safety measures in place. 8 dates beginning July 28th. Please help spread the word!

Also: Keith has a bead on a potential partnership with REI, now that they have opened a store in Williston. They're excited about the youth-on-the-river connections that we forge.

Adopt-A-Site program – partner with MRBA, Lindsey and Ellen are rolling this out.

Bat Boxes will be installed around Montgomery; we still have a few that the Committee made – let Lindsey know if you'd like one. JL, KS, JP requested.

CISMA – a group is investigating the formation of a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area in Orleans County; would the Committee be interested in signing on as a supporting organization? Seems like a good move; Lindsey will continue to participate.

NFCT work summary – with the funds that we had budgeted for an access point this year, and the additional funds that we reallocated from the Paddle/Pedal, the NFCT redid the steps at Davis Park, made some improvements to Doe Camp, and built a stage and benches at the access point below Overlook Park in Richford (with matching funds from the Richford Library).

Other: Misty regrets that she has become so busy. Still wishes to be engaged, but feels she should step down as Vice Chair.

Upcoming meetings: August 20 – set for Berkshire town hall. September 17 – North Troy/Big Falls if nice weather? Committee Paddle?

Wrap up and Adjourn: KS motioned; JL seconded; meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.