

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, October 20th, 2022 6:30 PM – Westfield Community Center and via zoom

Attendees: Jacques Couture, Sarah Lunn, Jim MacCartney, Helene Croteau, Susan Staples, Dan Seeley, Russ Ford, Carol Hickey, Dean Pierce, Wendy Scott, John Little, and Lindsey Wight

- 1) Welcome and catching up; welcome back, Sarah!** Meeting was called to order at 6:38pm.
- 2) Review of September Meeting Minutes.** DS motioned to approve; SS seconded; minutes were approved as written.
- 3) Overview of Wild & Scenic Film Fest:** Attendees had a good time, bought raffle tickets. Early sales were up; had high hopes, but day-of ticket sales were low – did haven't a lot of locals that have come before. It's an expensive to host, so we will have to decide if we should keep doing it. Good pairing with the Bean and Brew (nice timing; although there were a lot of other events this fall that were in competition for attendees). The general feeling of the group is that it's a good event to continue to have on an annual basis. It will likely grow as we continue to host it (our plan to hold annually got derailed by COVID, so we're basically starting over). Next year, though, we need to confirm it early and solicit sponsors early (towards the start of the year, if possible).
- 4) Administrative business:**
 - Office building update from John: the project is really coming along well! It has good bones, now it's a bout matching those. The walls and sheet rock are up and are being painted. There was an excellent (and accurate) article about John's renovation of the building in VT Digger that was really well done. Possible move in date of early/mid-Dec?
 - Lindsey went over Cynthia's third quarter report; let her know if you have questions or would like a copy.
 - MRBA has connected with a bookkeeper – is UMATR willing to partner with this (it's due to UMATR that our books have gotten quite complex)? Upfront costs will be higher, but then will settle into ongoing accounting. JL motioned; WS seconded; all in favor of contracting with the bookkeeper.
 - Wetland delineation – MRBA is sending Ellen to a wetland delineation course (where one learns how to determine what qualifies as a wetland), which will behoove the watershed. This will be a benefit to UMATR, too – UMATR cover half the staff-time costs for the course (\$490)? RF motioned, WS seconded; all in favor.
- 5) River Community and Town Infrastructure Grants**
 - 2022 grants: Extension request from GMC for culvert on Tillotson Rd – a clerical error meant they didn't have this on their radar for this year; they sent many apologies and would like to do the project next summer if possible. JL motioned to extend through next September; RF seconded; all in favor.
Cold Hollow to Canada would like to alter their project to better suit their current needs and reflect staff changes at many levels of the project (CHC and FEMC) – will be able to get a new proposal to us in January. WS motioned to accept this new proposal timeline; JL seconded; all in favor.

North Troy has completed the ditching work from their 2022 grant; they weren't able to get the materials for the 2021 culvert project, but will do so next year (that extension was previously approved).

- Town Infrastructure Grants applications are due on November 1 – check in with your towns!
- 2023 River Community Grants: we received 8 applications totally \$32,750 (\$2,250 less than we had budgeted for). Sarah summarized the applications and highlighted some of the thoughts and/or concerns of the subcommittee.
 - Are inflatable paddleboards the right tools? Easier for beginners, but may not be good to store them outdoors on racks? Some conversation about what is the goal of the project/what is the best? Ask the applicant to discuss with an expert in the field (or confirm that they have).
 - Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the interpretive boxes, and the pollinator gardens? What is the plan for picking up the lawn signs?
 - Who will be involved in creating the historical plaques? Want to make sure they show accurate perspectives, and not just the colonial narrative.
 - Brush-hogging spreads bits of plants – how will the applicant address that both on site and at the next site (require cleaning?).

RF motioned to accept the recommendations of the subcommittee and fund all projects if Lindsey gets answers to the questions/concerns that were raised. SS seconded; all in favor.

6) 2022 events: MRBA's Knockout Knotweed Bonfire – November 18th.

7) 2023 event priorities: winter webinars – (virtual) in Jan, Feb, Mar, April. Ideas: wildlife, sojourn presentation, paddling stories, about W&S. S

Amphibian Road Crossing – Guilmette Rd was a good location. Could be block off some of the road for safety? North Branch Nature Center training: cost was \$175 last year. Webinar with school kids, to then entice them to bring their parents out? – partner with a teacher for extra credit? Get the volunteer fire department to provide safety folks? Should start planning now...Sarah: get names of some teachers to potentially partner with, and find roads?

Paddle Lessons – a Saturday in June and a Sunday in July

Paddle and Picnic – attempt a pretty autumn day: September 30

Paddle-Pedal – July 15

WSFF – nice with Bean & Brew; good time of year (foliage, etc). October 14th – Lindsey will ask Jay Peak. How do we get higher attendance? Get local papers to pick it up; do a story – get the word out with a press release; VT Digger, etc.

8) 2023 Seasonal Help: Stewardship. Videography? Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge/Northwoods Stewardship Crew? Hold this discussion for November.

9) Other/Public Comment

Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers meeting in December (7th-9th) in Florida. Any interest in attending? Lindsey and Sarah should go.

10) Upcoming Meetings

- November 17th, 2022 – Enosburg?

11) Wrap Up and Adjourn: WS motioned; RF seconded; meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.