

**Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
combined Wild & Scenic and full committee
February 14, 2017
Lee Safety Complex, 20 George Bennett Road, 7:00**

APPROVED MARCH 14, 2017

members present: Al Hall (Candia), Cynthia Kelsey (Deerfield), Anne Lightbody, Dick Lord (Durham), Joe Foley (Epping), Kitty Miller, Preston Samuel (Lee)

staff present: Jim MacCartney, Suzanne Petersen

members absent: Emily Schmalzer (excused), Sharon Meeker (excused), Elizabeth Dudley (excused), Michelle Shattuck (excused), Carolyn Matthews, Deb McNelly

guests: Colin Lawson, Joel DeStasio from Trout Unlimited

Meeting began at 7:03.

summary of motions passed:

Preston Samuel made a motion to accept Trout Unlimited's proposal to relocate obstructive wood and recreate a recreational navigation pathway from the Route 87 bridge in Epping to the Lee Canoe Access near Wadleigh Falls and that LRAC fund this effort up to but not more than \$5824.00. Dick Lord seconded. The motion passed among Wild and Scenic representatives with 4 yes votes and 1 no vote.

Anne Lightbody made a motion to amend the outreach specialist's contract to include a reference to future rate increases based on the Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Boston, Brockton, Nashua area. Preston Samuel seconded. Motion was passed unanimously by the Wild and Scenic Committee representatives.

Dick Lord made a motion to amend the grants specialist's contract to include a reference to future rate increases based on the Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Boston, Brockton, Nashua area. Preston Samuel seconded. Motion was passed unanimously by the Wild and Scenic Committee representatives.

discussion of proposal from Trout Unlimited for canoe passage enhancement between Route 87 bridge in Epping and Wadleigh Falls in Lee.

Copies of the proposal were sent to all LRAC representatives. This proposal was requested by LRAC. In short, TU will evaluate 8 sites where woody obstacles span the river's width, create a plan for creating a 6 foot wide opening that is 3" deep at base flow of 100 cubic feet per second, and then perform the work to create the opening. TU will contact landowners and secure waivers of liability. NHDES has been contacted and no permits are required for this project as proposed. The cost of this work has been established as up to but not more than \$5824.

Discussion points:

- Preston Samuel will work with TU to provide names and contact information for landowners whose land will need to be accessed.
- Prior to work at each obstacle, details of the strategy for that site will be shared with Preston Samuel, the project's LRAC contact person.
- The schedule is tight, but unless weather really comes into play, the work should be completed by the end of June.
- Wood removed from the passage will be placed into the existing obstacle whenever possible.
- Because some wood is overhanging the river currently, the net amount of wood added to the river might be greater than the amount of wood removed from the water.
- When whole trees span the river, the passage will probably be created at the branching end, not the root end or the middle.
- Even at the end of the project, some portaging might be required.
- The three Wild and Scenic Outstandingly Remarkable Values for the Lamprey are ecological integrity, anadromous fish, and archaeological/historical features. The Wild and Scenic category of "recreational" pertains to the amount of human presence around the river, not its recreational value.
- Recreation was noted as an important use of the river by both the state and the federal government in the designations of the river. Recreation is valued by residents and visitors and serves as an important reason for people to protect the river and its resources.
- The LRWA/LRAC joint investigation report suggests posting signs at Route 87 and at the Lee Canoe Access warning paddlers of sometimes challenging conditions. The recreation workgroup discussed this and agreed that placing a sign at the Route 87 bridge is appropriate, but a sign at the Lee Canoe Access is unnecessary. Starting in Lee, it is easy for paddlers to turn around and return to the starting point; however, for paddlers starting in Epping, turning back is not so easy and can involve trying to get through tricky sections with a fast flow. Paddlers starting in Epping should not be expected to turn around.
- Observations of the section last fall indicate that someone or some group has been using saws to cut brush on shore to facilitate portaging. There are signs of erosion at these sites from people and boats. If we do nothing, these rogue paddlers will probably continue their work. If we act to remove obstacles in the most protective way, we can keep people in their boats where they do little damage and off the shore where they can do serious damage

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approval of minutes from January 10, 2017:

Al Hall made a motion to approve the minutes. Anne Lightbody seconded. Minutes were passed unanimously.

financial report:

The customary cash flow ledger, year-to-date budget, Chick and Dee-Dee sales status, and land protection ledger were reviewed. No unusual activity was noted. Joe Foley noted that he spoke with the executive director of SELT to renew the current land protection specialist's memorandum of agreement, but noted that next year's budget for SELT's services will be significantly reduced.

project review update:

No projects were reviewed this month. The group met for supplementary training on reading plans.

outreach update:

Plans are being made for spring activities to include *Chick and Dee-Dee* readings and associated activities at libraries, Herring Aid, and the Curriculum field trip.

recreation update:

The group discussed the section between the Route 87 bridge and Wadleigh Falls. The group voted to recommend approval of the Trout Unlimited proposal by the full Wild and Scenic Subcommittee and further recommended that the W&S Subcommittee pay for the project from the operating budget. The members also recommended that grants be pursued to help defray costs for the project. Following up on recommendations made in the LRWA/LRAC canoe passage report, the members voted to affix a cautionary sign to the Route 87 kiosk to inform paddlers of potential obstacles. The possibility of installing trail cameras was discussed. Follow-up information was requested on the legalities and potential harm from invasion of privacy.

land protection:

An appraisal is being requested for a property of interest.

history:

No update at this time.

water:

A revised 303D New Hampshire waters impairment listing was made available that listed a large region of the Lamprey. Specifically, high chlorophyll A and low dissolved oxygen were noted. The extent and meaning of this listing was not clear, but the implication was that the river's water is in bad condition despite our findings that water meets standards most of the time. Anne Lightbody offered to locate a map that defines the area and get some context for the listing.

wildlife:

The group has gone from 2 members to 5 and has come up with several possible projects to consider. The group agreed to meet monthly on the first Tuesday at 9:00 at the office.

approval of outreach specialist contract:

The contract for the outreach specialist was approved in January, but the amount of increase for hourly rate was not finalized. One person suggested 2%, another suggested COLA which was 0.2%. Joe Foley suggested the Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which for 2016 in the Boston, Brockton, Nashua area was 1.2%.

Anne Lightbody made a motion to amend the outreach specialist's contract to include a reference to future rate increases based on the Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Boston, Brockton, Nashua area. Preston Samuel seconded. Motion was passed unanimously by the Wild and Scenic Committee representatives.

approval of grants specialist contract:

The draft contract was reviewed. **Dick Lord made a motion to amend the grants specialist's contract to include a reference to future rate increases based on the Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Boston, Brockton, Nashua area. Preston Samuel seconded. Motion was passed unanimously by the Wild and Scenic Committee representatives.**

town issues:

It was noted that many towns cannot fill volunteer positions on boards, commissions, and committees. This lack of participation is worrisome.

Adjournment:

Dick Lord made a motion to adjourn. All Hall seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

ATTACHMENTS

Recreation, History, and Outreach Meeting Notes Feb. 1, 2017

attending: Elizabeth Dudley, Dick Lord, Jim MacCartney, Sharon Meeker, Suzanne Petersen, Preston Samuel

Trout Unlimited (TU) proposal to address woody obstacles between Route 87 bridge and Wadleigh Falls

- TU conferred with NHDES and no permits will be needed. All wood to be removed will be by hand and will be relocated nearby in the river.
- As requested by LRAC, TU has modified the initial proposal to include coordinating landowner meetings and waiver signing for \$350.
- Discussion:
 - Should TU be asked to monitor this section and perform touch-up work as necessary? The group agreed that this is an unreasonable request to make of TU. If new trees or branches come down and create obstacles, LRAC can contact TU for a potential new MoA. Future costs will probably be lower, because the scope of work will probably be much more limited.
 - Best estimates for continued paddling access are 5 or more years under normal conditions. If we have a major flood or extreme winds, we should expect more wood.
 - **The four representatives present voted to recommend approval of TU's proposal as written by the LRAC W&S group.**
 - Should LRAC W&S be asked to foot the entire bill (up to but not more than \$5824) from the operating budget?
 - ?? \$3000 (already paid) from illustrating book line item
 - ?? \$2400 from history & archaeology
 - ?? \$5000 from Small Grants
 - ?? \$800 from recreation
 - ?? \$24 from miscellaneous

- Future budgets could be reimbursed from a higher rec budget in FY 2018?
 - **The four representatives present voted to recommend that LRAC W&S pay for the project from the operating budget.**
- A suggestion was made to install wildlife monitoring cameras at the start and end of this section.
 - Top-end units could cost about \$650 each. These have battery lives of 6 months or more, can take thousands of photos, and are easy to install and maintain.
 - Data captured would provide missing information concerning how many people paddle this section in its unimproved state, how many more people would use it if it were improved, wildlife that might be using the section that we don't know about, and how many users start at one point and either return the same access point or go to the next.
 - Having these numbers can help the committee assess the return on investment, the risk of over-use and potential harm to the river's habitat, and the value in future recreational improvements.
 - The cameras could be used in the future to monitor specific wildlife concerns.
 - Low-end camera units might not be reliable, be difficult to install and maintain, and be difficult to secure against thieves.
 - Some attendees noted concern about possible invasions of privacy and possible legal notices to users that surveillance cameras are in use. Suzanne will research and report back to the group.
- A suggestion was made to follow-up on the recommendation of the woody obstacles study group to install signage at both ends indicating that natural conditions might be challenging. After discussing pros and cons, **the four representatives present voted to affix a cautionary sign to the Route 87 bridge kiosk but not at the Wadleigh Falls access.**
- A suggestion was made to seek grants to help offset the costs involved with the TU proposal and cameras. If these grants come through, the money will go to reimburse line items from the operational budget that pay for the expenses. **The four representatives present voted to recommend that grants be pursued to help offset costs for the pilot project pertaining to the TU proposal and for surveillance cameras.**

Schoppmeyer Park update:

A check for \$10,000 was mailed to Newmarket in January and was officially received by the town finance department recently. This payment was approved by the W&S Subcommittee on Jan. 10 to help with expenses related to the conservation easement for the future park. The main concern at this point in the process is to provide help with the kiosk when the time comes.

Mendum's Pond dam repair signage:

The NHDES engineer mailed LRAC a note asking for input with content for the sign to be placed on the new dam. Rather than simply supplying potential content, the group would prefer to confer with the design group so that the whole sign has cohesiveness. Dick will contact the engineer to set up a meeting. The sign needs to be ready for fabrication by mid-March.

wildlife workgroup revitalization:

It was noted that wildlife is an important resource along the Lamprey, but the current wildlife workgroup chair is perhaps facing too many other commitments right now. Dick will contact her to ask if it would be helpful to appoint an interim chair so that regular meetings can be re-established. Three attendees noted that they are willing to join the workgroup to help move work along.

Wildlife Workgroup Meeting Notes Feb. 6, 2017

attending: Elizabeth Dudley, Cynthia Kelsey, Dick Lord, Kitty Miller, Suzanne Petersen

introductions, past work:

Elizabeth, Cynthia, and Kitty provided wildlife back ground information and reasons for being a part of the workgroup.

Kitty listed past projects and noted that reports are available:

- freshwater mussels
- dragonflies and damselflies
- birds
- mammals
- turtles
- vegetation and plant communities
- fish
- stream crossings
- bio-inventories and conservation management
- floodplain

possible work areas for 2017:

- aquatic weeds
The area near the confluence with the Piscassic warrants monitoring. Suzanne is trying to establish a group in Newmarket to do annual surveys, such as a team from the conservation commission, recreation program, or high school students. Elizabeth noted that the state's boater safety program stresses the importance of clearing all gear of potential aquatic weeds and preventing the spread of invasive species.
- turtle crossing signs
At least one sign exists on Tuttle Swamp Road, but turtles have also been seen crossing Bay Road and Route 101. Signs for Route 101 might be difficult, but we might be able to effect something on Bay Road in Newmarket. Elizabeth and Suzanne will try to gather anecdotal data on how many turtles are seen and if they tend to cross in certain areas. Most drivers will slow down and give way to turtles, especially when they know of high risk areas. Signs also are good for public awareness that wildlife, not just people, uses the area.
- herpetology study
The last turtle study along the river took place about 20 years ago. The original Lamprey River Study did not specifically include snakes or amphibians. Updates to the state's wildlife data base could be helpful.
- bat study
Little is known currently about bats along the river. How many bats are here? Where is the best habitat? Where might they be hibernating?
- mapping of identified issues and threatened species or habitats
The office laptop is equipped with Arc View GIS technology and it has long been hoped that we could use that computer to map LRAC's issues. This resource is not being used. Elizabeth offered to spruce up her mapping skills to include open-source GIS mapping and work on identified issues. It was noted that the NH Coastal Viewer would be an excellent, user-friendly way to go.
- wildlife cameras
The recent recreation meeting included a discussion about potentially using two trail cameras along the Route 87 and Wadleigh Falls stretch. These cameras would largely be

used to keep track of human use in this area. Cameras strictly for wildlife monitoring would probably need to be purchased and deployed independently of the recreational use, especially in terms of seeking grants to cover the costs. On-line research revealed that using cameras, even without public notice, is allowed in almost all public areas. Notable exceptions include prohibitions against recording conversations, bathrooms, locker rooms, employee lunch rooms, and (in New Hampshire) images that capture vehicle license plates and drivers. Suzanne will investigate possible grant funding for wildlife monitoring cameras.

- relocating turtle nesting sites
The development project proposed for the intersection of routes 27 and 125 in Epping might include creating a new turtle nesting site to compensate for the loss of a well-utilized site that would be destroyed by the proposed facility. Theoretical mitigation is available, but no evidence for on-the-ground success could be found. Options that include protecting rather than mitigating this site should be explored.
- Schoppmeyer Park, Newmarket
Elizabeth reported that she made contact with someone on the park committee. She offered her services as a landscape architect to help ensure the least amount of environmental harm as the project moves forward. Dick noted that some trade-offs might be required to balance public access and habitat preservation.
- migratory birds and emerging insects
Kitty noted that research is showing that many migratory birds rely on the emergence of aquatic insects such as mayflies to supply an important source of food early in the season prior to the emergence of more terrestrial species. She will share this material with Suzanne for inclusion in future newsletters for the community. The workgroup could also consider a study to determine key areas along the river.
- river herring
Wadleigh Falls remains a major obstacle to fish migration. We probably will have to bide our time until an opportunity presents when we can work with the landowner to improve instream fish passage. The annual Herring Aid event is scheduled for Saturday, May 13 at Macallen Dam.
- landowner outreach and engagement
Given that so much of the river is surrounded by privately owned land, we need the support and cooperation of landowners. Under the umbrella of outreach work, a separate newsletter just for abutters is being developed to address their special role in protecting the river. This is also an opportunity to offer a workshop and engage them personally. A key piece of this outreach might include subsidizing the cost of making *Landscaping at the Water's Edge*, a fantastic UNH Cooperative Extension publication on landscaping, available for abutters.

future meetings

The wildlife workgroup has had a sporadic schedule in the recent past. It was suggested that the group meet on a regular monthly schedule. Until further notice, the group will meet the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00 at the office.