

## Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee

### Minutes

Thursday, July 20, 2017

Enosburgh EMS Building

**Attendees:** Larry Benoit, Jacques Couture, Russ Ford, Mike Manahan, Misty McCartney, Bethany Remmers, Cynthia Scott, Susan Staples, and Lindsey Wight.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Lindsey Wight. Susan Staples is acting as secretary for this meeting – thank you Susan!

**Minutes** of the June 15th meeting were reviewed. RF motioned to accept. MM seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

### Administrative Business:

- a) **Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Meeting** - Lindsey, Misty, Jacques, and Jim MacCartney attended the Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers (PWSRs) meeting, held on July 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>. We will receive \$99,000 for our rivers in the year starting in October. Our National Park Service partners will receive \$76,000 – our total congressional allocation is now equal to that of all the other PWSRs (\$175,000!). One of the concerns voiced was about how the funds allocated by congress (\$175,000, of which we'll receive \$99,000) are spent by the National Park Service (the remaining \$76,000 of our allocation). Some questions were raised about how the funds are spent by the NPS, and efforts will be made towards more transparency in this area.

Misty noted that she was inspired by the projects and activities other river committees are doing, and said that she would like to see us do a video to share with our communities. Jacques shared his observation that there are some common threads between river committees, such as wanting signs that denote the river is Wild & Scenic and some of the difficulties that committees have – more difficult to sign federal roads than town roads. He also said many committees find it difficult to attract volunteers from the river towns to be representatives on the committee. Lindsey explained our work so far to the other PWSR attendees. It was interesting to really see that we are, in fact, a newly designated river - and it's ok that we're still learning our way. As a point of reference, the oldest designated river is 25 years old. Other attendees were eager to share their experiences and help others make a meaningful impact on their communities. All-in-all, it was a valuable experience for our attendees.

In addition to PWSR concerns, the 50th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Act is next year, and all W&S rivers are encouraged to join the celebration (which will start this October). The theme will be, "It's Your River. Make a Splash!"

- b) **Visual Resources Inventory** - Lindsey and Jim stayed for a Visual Resources Inventory training session, which addressed ways to assess valuable viewpoints along Wild & Scenic Rivers. When people stop to enjoy the view, what do they see? What are the highlights? What can be improved? Is there anything that can be moved? A neat tool, for sure, but doing a Visual Resources Inventory is time consuming. Is there anyone in Vermont who has already done an inventory of scenic views that we can talk to? Some possibilities are the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Vermont Tourism, and Parks & Recreation.
- c) **Financial Report** - Cynthia and Lindsey went over the third quarter report and current budget. We have significant funds remaining from our current year; these need to be spent or at least allocated by the end of September.
- d) **River Community Grants** –Lindsey gave an update about the organizations that received Round 1 Grants this spring: A) NFCT/Missisquoi Paddle-Pedal – the race went well, attracting more than 40 participants, despite the very high water level from the torrential rain. Some participants chose to forego paddling and simply cycle. It sounds like enthusiasm for the accompanying Richford River Fest may be waning; perhaps we can assist with attracting more folks to that next year. B) VRC/Richford Riverside Conservation Area & Public Access Project – moving along nicely. The conservation easement is completed and signage should go up in August. Site improvements such as a boat ramp and landing are planned for 2018 using other funding sources. C) Troy School/Missisquoi River Planning – the project is moving forward; a training session with teachers will be happening in the fall. They have asked for an extension to complete the project. RF motioned to extend the deadline to October 30, SS seconded, and the motion passed. Committee members have been invited to attend the training session with the teachers. RF and SS both expressed an interest in attending; Lindsey will keep everyone posted. D) Franklin County NRCD/Stream Scientist - Lindsey was not able to get and update on this project before the meeting; she will bring one to the next meeting.

**Logo Items:** We decided to order embroidered, full brim hats for Committee members – with logo on the front and our Committee name on the back. We will also order stickers, metal water bottles, and whistles that read “Vermont’s Wild and Scenic Rivers”. MMc motioned to approve expenses of up to \$1500 for this gear, SS seconded, and the motion passed.

**Access Points:** Lindsey talked to the farmer who owns the land on Lane Road in Westfield where people put in/take out their boats. He likes the idea of allowing us to put in steps to make it nicer and easier access. JC suggested we need to get an idea of what contracts and paperwork are necessary. RF motioned that Lindsey begin the process of permitting and researching to build this access point, MMc seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. Lindsey is still looking into the possibility of improving the access point at the Lowell line near the monastery (Brown’s Ledges). Lindsey shared the idea of putting game cams at certain spots along the river. She said we could use the photos in social media outreach. RF gave an example he’s seen of taking a photo at the same time every day to show water levels so paddlers know what to expect.

**Mapping:** In the interest of spending time addressing upcoming events, we will hold off on our mapping activity until our August meeting.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wild and Scenic Act:** We tabled this, as well, so we could finalize preparation for upcoming events; come to our August meeting with event ideas for next year.

**Events/Planning:** July 22nd Paddle and Picnic — Lots of people signed up! Lindsey is arranging for a Jay Peak Resort van to shuttle people between the put-in in Richford and the take-out in East Berkshire.

August 5 Full Moon Paddle — Lindsey plans to do a moth inventory, a bat inventory and perhaps have a handout with the constellations of the night sky. Plus snacks (always snacks).

August 20th Gathering at Big Falls — Activities will include: face-painting by Mimi; MRBA-provided Bugworks; Keith Sampietro will lead an inventory of the various species in the river using an educational method of shocking fish to count them; Craig Cimmons will provide games, and offer adventures through Lynx Mountain Guides of Vermont – including a tyrolean traverse and a chance to try rappelling into the gorge. The Missisquoi River Band will play music. We are still seeking folks to lead a bird walk, and edibles walk, and a forestry walk. Susan Staples will be the announcer and also give out prizes to kids during various games. Susan confirmed that Scott Staples will be our photographer. Lindsey will contact the pizza truck and 242 BBQ about selling food. Misty and Russ will help man the information table. Let Lindsey know if you have availability to help out!

Co-Sponsored – The Lake Champlain Sea Grant is interested in offering a tour of the Enosburgh waste water treatment plan to help people learn about how water resources are managed in the Lake Champlain watershed. We will co-sponsor, and help advertise.

Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals conference – in Burlington April 2018. We could sponsor, and have a table as well as attend - \$1000. Lindsey was asked to find out projected attendance from our region, so we know who the audience might be.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

August 17th — Orleans County — North Troy

September 21st — Franklin County — Montgomery?

October 19th — Orleans County — Lowell?

**Other/Public Comment:** Misty mentioned an upcoming webinar about how to hold a river cleanup. She plans to participate; Lindsey will send out the information about the webinar in case anyone else wants to participate. Misty would like to do a cleanup as part of the 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Larry mentioned that he recently cleaned up the area around the Creamery Covered Bridge swimming hole in Montgomery. He says he does this once a year. We all expressed our gratitude that he has taken the initiative to do this, since it is a heavily used area.

**Wrap up and adjourn:** RF motioned that we adjourn; MMc seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.