

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee
Minutes**

Thursday, September 19, 2019 – Troy Town Office, North Troy

Attendees: Sue Brassett, Jacques Couture, Helene Croteau, Ellen Fox, Carol Hickey, John Little, Jim MacCartney, Bethany Remmers, Keith Sampietro, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Dan Seeley, Sherry Willey, Ranier Lucas, Matt Farney, and Lindsey Wight

Meeting called to order. Sherry was our secretary for this meeting. Thank you Sherry!

We bid farewell to Sue, as this meeting is her last as a Vermont resident. We will greatly miss her!

We bid hello to Ranier Lucas, who will be serving as our ECO AmeriCorps member until August 2020.

Lindsey wanted to respect our visitors' time, so we adjusted the agenda somewhat; beginning the meeting with **River Community Grants:** Matt Farney reported on the improvements by the North Troy School to the Middleton property. The property was donated to the school 3-4 years ago; this grant covered exploring the property from an educational standpoint and making it a useful place for classes to go. The 6/7/8 graders marked out trails and used tools to start clearing. Pre-K through 8th will use this space for Nordic/tracking/plant id; working with teachers for outdoor ed – the hope is to use this property much as the school is currently using the Jay Rec property. There are more needs for the property (parking; bathroom), but the goal is to develop this into an outdoor classroom. Additional project on this property: The VYCC crew that was here in September improved the mapped trail and built several structures (bridges, bog bridges, steps) at the property (partnered with MRBA on this project), since they were not able to do the bank stabilization work in Westfield. They also built benches at the North Troy property near the American Legion. We could put plaques on these to dedicate them to Jim Starr.

Montgomery Rec offered 3 canoe trips to local youths: the day trip just had one person sign up. The overnight for ages 10-12 had more interest – perhaps this age group would like a 2-day trip at some point.

PWSR Meeting: Wendy, Lindsey, John, and Jim attended the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers biennial meeting. It was held in NJ this year; we received updated and networked with the other 16 PWSRs. Great gathering. One thing that was noted is that many of the rivers have similar issues with both the WSR and the watershed group – however, several of the other rivers have more than one staff person and some concern has been noted that Lindsey is stretched too thin – perhaps we can explore expanding our staffing. One of the rivers in MA presented on a Report Card that they had done: assessing the health of the rivers over many factors – very neat way to look at the rivers. Lindsey will send out more info about this, so that we can see the Report Card. Jim is optimistic that there could be an overall budget increase – three new rivers were designated this year. At least, there will likely be a temporary continuing resolution to keep funding at the same level. Other discussion was getting together more frequently with the other regional rivers (New England) to share ideas/hear about projects, and to support each other.

Wild & Scenic Gathering: The Gathering was fairly well attended – more kids this year (lured in by VINS?). The attendees very much enjoyed all the walks/programs that were offered. In advance of the Gathering, Ellen twice brought her herd of sheep down to Big Falls to attempt poison ivy control. She learned a lot, and the poison ivy was definitely eaten back, which made getting to the water much more pleasant. She brought pictures, which Lindsey will send around.

River Clean-Up: 12 attendees collected about 15 bags of trash, 1 bucket, 1 cooler, and 1 bumper. Targeting the swimming holes was a good idea.

Other projects: The VYCC crew, as aforementioned, accomplished a lot in their week with us. They also built a new, larger, privy that will be placed at Doe Camp – this spot is getting increased use as we offer/fund canoe trips. Keith suggests that we also consider adding something for privacy to this privy (Jim recommends a vault toilet with a dutch door for maximum function and enjoyability – Middleton property?). The hot water tank was removed from the Missisquoi River thanks to great partner efforts. Noah and Aric Brown (VT DEC) did the

physical removal work, with some adventure thrown in. Great project for establishing partnerships, assisting landowners.

Grants (cont): Request from Enosburgh Conservation Commission to cover unexpected shortfall in their budget – discussion about the responsibility of the grantee/grantor and the language of our application. CH motions to grant them 90% of their requested additional funding (\$430.20); SB seconds. Voice vote: one opposed, but the motion passes.

We should consider adding language to our application about “any additional funds must be approved in advance of being spent”... Our application should be re-visited and perhaps revamped in generally before the 2020 grant round.

Projects: Black Fall Road – funding needed to replace culverts and one bridge for better backcountry rescue access. Concerns that this is private property, and that the backcountry access is not actually approved by landowners – what are the permissions? Are these fish-bearing streams? Bridges may be cheaper than culvert replacements.

Bank stabilization on Longley Bridge Rd, downstream of the area that will be stabilized through a Transportation grant – would make sense to do these together. Lindsey is meeting with a team to look at the downstream section and will report back.

Another spot in need of stabilization: the Trout between the Center and Village. Army Corps, landowner, and DEC are involved.

Events: Fishing tournament – Keith will see if Corey Hart can come to a meeting to help us plan. Big Falls or Riverwalk Park? Need to make sure it won't conflict with another tournament date. Sponsor possibilities: Jay Peak? Wright's in Derby?

Fishing kits for schools/libraries? Sounds problematic – fragile, how would regulate safety aspects? Let's not pursue.

Leave No Trace workshop – good idea to offer to local outfitters/members of the public. Lindsey will look into who could lead, who we would invite, where we could host, and how much it would cost.

“River Rats” – JL has idea that a smaller number of kids (5 – 6), likely age 14-16, could be taken out and taught boating safety/how to run rapids; basically the next step from Keith's trip. Increase the overall safety of our community, while instilling more love of rivers into our youth. Adjacent idea: publicly available life jackets, for use by any in the community (Russ sent a picture of such an offering out in OR).

Wild and Scenic Film Festival: Committee members please ask local businesses for sponsorships and/or donations for the raffle. Sponsors will be recognized on the screen as people enter the theater, raffle items will be recognized on the item and during the drawing. Some Committee members noted locations they would ask. Please also get the item value, so that we know how much to recognize them for (and for tax purposes).

Places to advertise: buy ad space on FPF. FB/Flyers/listserves. Ranier will see if he can recruit AmeriCorps members to help.

Marketing/Branding: Concerned that we don't have consistent marketing – maybe not our whole logo, but just a part of it should appear on everything we make (i.e. the waves that are on the bottom of our 2019 events flyers?) or part of the logo? This discussion will be continued.

Other/Public Comment: There is a culvert on Coombs Rd that is being replaced – AOP culvert designs by Ripple; need to discuss design/feasibility – put this on the agenda for Oct/Nov.

Upcoming meetings: The next scheduled meeting conflicts with the Cold Hollow to Canada annual gathering – change our meeting to WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23rd at the Montgomery PSB/library.