

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

***Wednesday*, August 14, 2019 – Richford Town Hall, Richford**

Attendees: Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Jim MacCartney, Dan Seeley, Carol Hickey, and Lindsey Wight

Meeting called to order at 6:43 pm. Carol was our secretary for this meeting. Thank you Carol!

Minutes of the July meeting were reviewed. DS motioned to accept the minutes; CS seconded; minutes approved.

Administrative Business: River trips – some concerns were raised about the condition of campsites after trips that we have sponsored. What is our responsibility – should we require trip-plans (locations of campsites, number of participants, etc) prior to these? Let's consider sponsoring a Leave No Trace workshop for local outfitters (incl. WFA training?), then have outfitters explain LNT to campers.

River Rats – John Little has an idea that we should teach rescue/rapid skills, to ensure that folks are able to handle the river access we are providing. We will discuss this further.

Purchases: water bottle samples arrived; we prefer the middle-sized bottle for Committee members; smaller bottles (similar to the ones we had before) for giveaways. The new UMATR tshirts are in. We will have them at Big Falls – discussed going a drawing for folks who filled out a survey and giving away 3-5 of the shirts. Jim suggested that we ask a question: "If there is one thing you could do to improve the river, what would it be?"

Lowell – Thanks to Cynthia, Dan, and Adele for sitting with Lindsey at Cajun's trying to reach Lowell residents about W&S. Unfortunately, we didn't get a whole lot of interest, and many we talked to were not from Lowell. We'll continue to try to figure out ways to reach Lowell residents. One of the concerns from 2013 was about hydro. Jim suggested that we target the river landowners who would be the most impacted by W&S designation. Be prepared for this process to take a while – will have to go back to congress, then get rolled into the Omnibus (i.e. when another river gets designated).

Projects: Westfield bank stabilization (Mill Brook) – This project is still on hold. Jim/Lindsey/Jacques are reaching out to the State/NRCS folks to see if we can move this along and enable project completion this year.

Jim did several site visits to check on river-related projects: 1. East Richford bridge is complete. There is a W&S sign! But it may need to be made bigger – traffic volume and speed dictate a 10"x12" sign, but it also didn't have the river name on it – the new one should be 18"x24". There will also be signage on the Trout River bridge that is slated for re-decking in Montgomery. 2. Marriner property in North Troy – they are open to a vegetated geogrid method as opposed to riprap – they applied for riprap, as they had done riprap in 2008, and will be moving forward with this project. There is some timing concern, but if they can't get it done by Oct 1, it will be ok until next year. 3. Montgomery drainage tile/bank stabilization.

Lindsey has been contacted about a hot water tank that is in the river in North Troy. It's in a difficult location and she is seeking creative ways to remove it. Jim suggested using a Grip Hoist. Lindsey will see if any of our partners (i.e. NFCT) has one.

Montgomery Conservation Commission is concerned about Wade Brook erosion on the VAST trail. There are some culverts that could do with replacing. We would like more info before making any funding decisions, but are interested in the project.

Forest, Parks and Rec have been assessing Black Falls Road on their property as a way of accessing the backcountry for search and rescue missions. There are 3 culverts and a 25' bridge that need repair for this access to be feasible. Again, we feel that we need more information – are the culverts on fish-bearing streams? Is AOP a concern, or water quality, or are the issues primarily infrastructure?

Cold Hollow to Canada plans to submit an off-cycle grant to develop a website/database system for housing the data from their Keeping Track program and making it publicly available. If we were to fund this, we would want to have the W&S region searchable, or the data from the W&S area called out in some fashion.

Jim suggested that future projects might include identifying key parcels of land to protect/easement/purchase. I.e. linkages for wildlife corridors/larger tracts of state land, etc. Could some of our funds be used to fund some hours/month of someone at the TNC, VRC, or VLT to identify these and then monitor/check in with landowners in the W&S region (can take a long time to achieve easements, etc., so just need to keep checking back in with landowners)?

2020 River Community Grants: This topic was held over until our September meeting.

Wild and Scenic Gathering: Coming right up! Activities will include the NRCS rainfall simulator, VINS, a bird language walk, Bugworks, and a forest ecology walk. Games and crafts will be available all day, as well as a DIY sandwich station. As discussed earlier, we will do a survey/win a tshirt. If anyone has tables they could bring/lend, Lindsey would appreciate it! Please come by 10 to help set up.

2019 Events:

- August 18: Wild & Scenic Gathering
- September 7: Montgomery River Clean-up
- September 15-17 – Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers meeting in NJ
- November 30 – Wild and Scenic Film Festival

The next Wild and Scenic meeting will be September 19th in North Troy.

Wrap up and adjourn: WS motioned/CS seconded; meeting is adjourned at 8:40