

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee - Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 20, 2019 – Enosburg Community Center**

**Attendees:** Jacques Couture, Russ Ford, Mike Manahan, Misty McCartney, Bethany Remmers, Keith Sampietro, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, Dan Seeley, Sherry Willey, Lindsey Wight, and Meryl Braconnier

Meeting called to order at 6:40pm. Sherry was our secretary for this meeting – thank you Sherry!

**UVM research project:** Meryl Braconnier is doing a research project through UVM in conjunction with the Vermont Land Trust, examining the social acceptability of river conservation efforts. We posed some questions that she might pursue when doing landowner interviews, and suggested that she incorporate visuals into her communication tactics. Meryl will keep us in the loop with her results, and may even be able to come back and present to us.

**Minutes of the May 16<sup>th</sup>** meeting were reviewed. DS motioned; WS seconded; minutes approved.

**Sojourn Overview and next steps:** We enjoyed ourselves greatly, and got quite a number of people involved. Some more than one day, but usually differed daily. It was fun to see new/less familiar section, and fun to take experienced paddlers into some of our own WILD spaces, encouraging appreciation of OUR local rivers.

Our main paddlers kept river journals. We also had press along for a couple of sections – we got a mention in the Newport Daily Express and are going to be featured in a VT Sports “Paddles of Vermont” story. We’d still like more media attention.

For events like these, we need to make sure that safety is a priority – have a person who is IN CHARGE and sets the limits. We also need to make sure that we have enough safety equipment along with us in some of these larger-group situations.

We’ve contracted with Ben Maddox to create some videos that we will use for promos. Lots of footage was shot with our new GoPro!

**Administrative Business:** We’ve purchased an event tent that we’ll use at Richford River Fest and other community events. We have more Committee member logo gear on order – let Lindsey know if you would like an item and haven’t order yet. We have stickers!

The River Explorers campers will get tshirts and water bottles. Lindsey will look into ordering more water bottles – and will bring pricing for a “good” (i.e. insulated) water bottle and a cheap “giveaway” option to the next meeting.

Lindsey brought the final options for our UMATR definition tshirt: A Committee vote chose option A for both the front and the back; Lindsey will get that order in shortly.

KS mentioned that it would be good to have a photo printer for events – especially if we hold a fishing tournament. CS has a friend looking to donate one; Lindsey will contact.

We had a request for a Splash Not Trash sign in Highgate. Discussion that this might cause confusion because it’s outside our W&S area. However, it would be good to have such signage available throughout the watershed – perhaps we can fund the MRBA purchasing such signs?

Our next AmeriCorps member will be starting in September. Let Lindsey know if you have project ideas that he could take on – she is thinking of our outstanding mapping project, for sure, but would love to hear other suggestions. She is also interested in building out our website to include a page highlighting our local business, etc.: perhaps Ranier could “interview” the businesses while crafting this.

We would like to get Lowell incorporated in, if they are interested. Let’s get out and into the community, to gauge their interest. Table at Cajun’s on the weekends?

Email account: we have some issues with our current system. WIX (our website host) offers G-Suite emails, but it would increase the overall annual cost (to about \$300). It would make things easier for Lindsey and Jenevra, and will still feature vtwsr.org as our account name. JC motioned to approve the increased cost; RF seconded; all in favor.

**Fishing/AOP:** We are involved in a work group (Chris Smith, USFWS) to connect with towns and identify projects for priority with an Aquatic Organism Passage slant, putting emphasis on culvert replacement projects that will increase connectivity for fisheries (i.e. if the culverts are too small and need upgrading instead of just replacing). The group will work on where to focus – likely the headwaters (W&S) or the Tyler Branch. Mainly focused on fish, but maybe other creatures, too. Discussed a few areas that are in need of replacing, and could potentially connect/improve passage (Combs Rd/Westfield/Lowell).

Could we partner with a town and use some of our funds (or grants) for culvert work?

Keith suggested we hold a kids fishing tournament. Arrange for stocking (brookies), even maybe trophy trout (browns). Late April/May/early June. We'll need to pick a spot by October. Possibly the hole below Big Falls? Let's get prizes donated from local businesses for fun awards for the kids (not just "largest"). There is likely a fishing tourney in May in Berkshire. Lindsey will put this on the agenda for August or September, and maybe Corey Hart (from Let's Go Fishing) can come talk with us about this.

Montgomery Conservation Commission is thinking about showing a Patagonia Film: Artfishial – it's about farmed fish and their impact on native populations. It's based mainly out west, with salmon fisheries, so we'd need to get a local panel. Suggested panelists: Corey Hart, Keith Sampietro, Ellen Morrison (UVM?), Chas Salmon, Ron Wright in Newport, James Ehlers from LCI? Lindsey will go to the MCC meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Projects:** The Stewardship Crew from the Northern Forest Canoe Trail has been building us a set of stone steps on the Westfield/Lowell town line. New access to get to this part of the river – provides a great little trip from Lowell into Westfield.

Mill Brook bank stabilization project – National Park Foundation grant. We've gotten an extra \$5,000 from a pilot program called Love Your Park to expand a bit on this and reach new audiences with this project. NRCS is doing the engineering design, which is moving forward. We are still waiting to hear from Army Corps about permitting, etc.

We've gotten the ok from VT State Parks to have goats try controlling the poison ivy at Big Falls. Hoping to find local goats, but also have contact with the woman whose goats worked in Montpelier along the bike path.

North Troy: need to set up the Community Café to get more input on projects along the river.

**Events:** - Paddle Pedal and Richford Riverfest: tabling; stickers; give away tshirts with a survey? Lindsey will need help setting up/tabling/breaking down – June 22.

- Paddle and Picnic: Border to Richford; folks are signing up. June 30.
- River Explorers: Many repeat campers. Put in at border, go as far toward the lake as they can. Aug 5-9
- Wild & Scenic Gathering: Kurt again. Elliot Cluba again? Other walks/activities. Echo?
- Partnership W&S Meeting – in NJ. Lindsey will look up the closest airport and communicate travel options.
- Film Fest: Let's get sponsors. Misty said hit her up in November and she'll make rounds. Can we get a beer sponsor?

**Other/Public Comment:** Places for Splash Not Trash signs: Creamery Bridge. Gibou (Lynn Locher). Melanie Gross – Notch playground. Linda Collins – Davis Park.

Do a Fresh Air canoeing trip next year?

**Upcoming meetings:** July 18<sup>th</sup> at the Westfield Community Center.

**Wrap up and adjourn:** RF motioned; DS seconded; meeting adjourned at 8:33.