



## Minutes for May 30, 2023

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Elissa Brown (Lead River Ambassador), Ron Chick (Framingham), Dan Cook (Carlisle), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Ellie Sablak (Assistant River Ambassador), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt)

**RSC Representatives absent:** Sam Corbin (SVT), Carlene Hempel (Concord), Stephanie Koch (USFWS), Frank Richichi (Bedford-Alt), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

**Guest:** Sara Bower, Mass Rivers Alliance

### Welcome and March Meeting Minutes

7:04 pm Ms. Field-Juma opened the meeting. Ms. Lord recognized Ms. Sablak, who was completing the first day of her season as Assistant River Ambassador.

7:06 pm Ms. Field-Juma asked if there were any corrections to the April Minutes. Ms. Lord said that Mr. Sciacca had emailed a correction. Ms. Henderson motioned that the Minutes be accepted with the addition of Mr. Sciacca's comments, Mr. Chick seconded and the motion passed 11-0.

### Mass Rivers Alliance – Stormwater Financing Workshops

7:08 Ms. Bower spoke about Mass Rivers Alliance Stormwater Financing Workshops, a technical assistance curriculum program which was created for the eight SuAsCo WSR communities. The workshops are being developed with some financial support from the RSC via a Community Grant. Mass Rivers Alliance is collaborating with OARS, Tighe & Bond, and Raftelis Financial Consultants. Workshops will offer tips, tools, and guidance on assessing project funding opportunities and creating long-term revenue streams to support stormwater programs. The first workshop will be a 1.5 hour virtual session discussing new regulatory pressure and project funding through grants. The second will be a half-day, in-person workshop on federal funding (loans, bonds, grants), stormwater utility fees, and collaborative funding approaches. The last workshop will be a 1.5 hour virtual session and will look at overcoming barriers to stormwater financing, community buy-in, and stakeholder engagement. The workshops will showcase watershed stormwater needs, available funding streams, state & federal guidance, case studies/example communities, local, regional, and national expertise. Additional workshops are being planned for dates from July through September. The intended audience is municipal staff. Ms. Bower requested that Council members reach out to municipal staff in their communities to raise awareness and publicize the workshops. The Council discussed this outreach effort and determined that reaching out to staff within local Finance, Conservation and Planning depts, as well as MAGIC Regional Council and the 495/MetroWest Partnership members would be helpful.

### River Ambassador Updates

7:25 pm Ms. Sablak introduced herself as a 2021 graduate of Concord-Carlisle High School who is pursuing a

double major in Biology and Geography at Macalester University in Minnesota. Ms. Brown presented slides of some of the places she visited over April and May. In Billerica, she visited Katie Durant Park, Ralph Hill, Bartlett Landing, Minnie Reid Conservation Area, and Governor Thomas Dudley Park. She contacted all eight SuAsCo representatives about their towns. She shared a photograph of an abandoned motorboat in the Concord River in Billerica. All electronics, the engine, and mechanical parts have been stripped. Ms. Henderson said that this is now a criminal case as the boat was likely stolen. Ms. Brown said the Bedford boat launch was relatively busy when she visited it. She noticed 15 parked cars. She visited several sites in Wayland with Mr. Sciacca, including the Mass Central Rail Trail, Greenways Conservation Area, the railroad trestle bridge which is a subject of concern because of flooding, and Old Stone Bridge. She visited several Framingham sites, including the Carol Getchell Trail, the Danforth Street Bridge and the Saxonville Mill and dam gates. In Carlisle she visited Great Meadows NWR and an impoundment area. She spent time at several Concord sites including October Farm, Brewster's Woods, Minuteman National Historical Park, the North Bridge and Old Manse, Wright Woods, as well as others. She visited Fairhaven Bay, Mt. Misery, and the Route 117 canoe landing in Lincoln. She visited Weir Hill and the Great Meadows NWR in Sudbury.

She said that she and Ms. Sablak will be attending an AMC clinic on paddling strokes which she thought could be useful if they interacted with river visitors. She and Ms. Sablak are creating a database of different put-ins, parking spots, location of brochure holders, etc. Next month she expects to help Ms. Sablak familiarize herself with the SuAsCo and the responsibilities of the Assistant River Ambassador. She will investigate having a new sign warning of fish contamination for Bedford. She will introduce the River Ambassadors to Conservation Commissions in Billerica, Carlisle, Bedford, Wayland, and Lincoln. She has reached out to a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) contact at REI and would like to work with DEI boards in SuAsCo communities. She is considering reaching out SuAsCo public libraries about adding information on NPS' Junior Ranger Program to end-of-year packets that are sent out to younger students. She expects to promote Riverfest events at farmers markets. Mr. Cook said that Carlisle would have liked to have had a Riverfest Ambassador at its Old Home Days and hopes that the timing will work better next year.

### **Riverfest Summer 2023**

7:44 pm Ms. Slugg assumed the Chair. Ms. Lord said that Riverfest events would be held from July 1<sup>st</sup> through August 13<sup>th</sup>. She is working on a Riverfest brochure. She will email Council members when it has been printed so they can distribute copies at appropriate places in their towns. She shared a draft showing event locations, activities, and maps. There will be an activity hub on July 29<sup>th</sup> which will include wildlife demonstrations as well as fishing and archery activities for children. Enviroscape demonstrations by the River Ambassadors may also be included in that activity hub. Some events will require preregistration.

7:51 pm Ms. Slugg said that the Riverfest working group was working on printing RSC materials. Ms. Lord is working with the RSC's website designer on promotional materials such as stickers, car magnets for river ambassadors to put on their cars at river sites while they were working, baseball caps to identify the river ambassadors as RSC staff, and T-shirts for Riverfest leaders. Mr. Cook suggested an organization called Bonfire which allows customers to order the exact number of T-shirts they need and offers a discounted price for nonprofits.

7:58 pm Ms. Field-Juma spoke about the state of Warner's Pond in West Concord. She said that it has become eutrophic, has aquatic weeds including water chestnut, and the water heats up in the impoundment. The town of Concord has looked into dredging it. A consultant has recommended removing the dam on Nashoba Brook. Ms. Field-Juma said that this will be the first dam that fish will encounter when the Talbot Mill

Dam is removed. Mr. Simms said that a meeting was held a week ago in Concord about these issues. Slides from that meeting are available on the Town's website. The town is looking at more hydraulic analysis and would like to put Warner's Pond on the 2024 Town Meeting agenda. There is interest by some residents in saving at least some part of the Pond, such as keeping one area as a skating pond, and keeping Scout island. Mr. Cook asked about the depth. Ms. Brown said the deepest part is 10 feet. She said that one idea is to keep that deeper part as a 4.5 acre pond, adding that the pond is 54 acres now.

Ms. Brown said that Brewster's Woods in Concord, located adjacent to October Farm, belonged at one time to a famous ornithologist. It was bought by Concord residents and gifted to Mass Audubon. Improvements are being made to the property, including an all-purpose trail, parking, and a landing for canoes and kayaks.

8:04 pm Ms. Field-Juma said that the Talbot Mill Dam removal project is entering permit phases, including a MEPA filing and public review. She said that the project could use a letter of support from the RSC and from SuAsCo member towns.

8:21 pm Ms. Field-Juma said that the Eagle Scout who worked with OARS is obtaining permission to post his water chestnut sign at a boat landing in Billerica. Ms. Slugg said that Mr. Reef has resigned as the Council's Billerica Alternate.

8:34 pm Ms. Slugg announced that the next meeting would be June 27th. Several members said that they could not make that date. Ms. Lord said they would discuss the agenda for the next meeting and determine if it could be postponed until July.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan