

## **Meeting Minutes Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020: via Zoom**

Attendees: Cynthia Scott, Paul Stanley, John Little, Wendy Scott, Tom Bryce, Ellen Fox, Ari Lattanzi, and Lindsey Wight

- 1) Meeting was called to order at **7:05pm**.
- 2) Review of December meeting minutes – **PS motions; CS seconds; all in favor.**
- 3) Photo contest winners – **The photo contest that Ari set up via facebook was a success. We got 19 great submissions, with permission to use these for our organization, and got new social media followers. There were some lessons learned, but Ari reports that it's a fairly easy way to do a photo contest, and she will provide a write-up so that it's even easier next time! Lindsey screen-shared so the Board could enjoy the submissions. There were 4 categories, and prizes for each were a pint glass and a tote bag; Ari will get these to the winners.**

- 4) Administrative business

**Cynthia went over our 2020 Quarter 4 report.**

**Lindsey 2020 figures/numbers and provided comparisons with previous years for overall costs/income, and broken down into categories. This is always a work in progress, but Lindsey feels like she is honing in on the appropriate way to track our activities, expenses, and income. Still more tracking to do: Lindsey will send out more data – outstanding amounts for expenses vs income so that we can get a better sense of our actual balance (and what of that is already allocated). She also still needs to request and track volunteer hours (the Board were our only volunteers this year) – so watch for that form.**

**Ongoing: Lindsey needs to recommit to researching employee vs contractor. There are several other groups that are or have recently done work in this realm; Lindsey needs to see if any of them can recommend professional guidance for this research.**

**Annual reviews: A practice we should implement. Lindsey and Ellen had a review conversation and Ellen will leave the meeting at the end so Lindsey can discuss with the Board, but would also like that opportunity to discuss a review of Lindsey's performance, as well.**

- 5) LaRosa program updates – **There was a LaRosa meeting on 12/14 to “roll out” the new procedures. Moving forward, the LaRosa people will help us select sites – they'll be providing a form for us to “nominate” sites (in partnership with our Basin Planner). There will be no additional funding to help cover the costs of sampling, but the State will help with transportation of samples. This does mean that only parameters with long hold times can be sampled for (no e. coli and no turbidity).**
- 6) 2020 Successes and Highlights – **Ellen shared information about the three projects that were the major focus of her role this year:**

**For the “Water InSight” program that we piloted this year: she sampled 17 sites on the Wright farm in Enosburg on 7 dates and 9 sites on the Couture farm in Westfield on 6 dates. The benefits of the program included working closely with one landowner, with the added benefit of connecting with other landowners simply due to the nature of water crossing boundaries – enabling Ellen to make great connections and raise overall awareness. Accomplishments included: delineating the subbasin drainages of the focus properties, calculating the area of these drainages, and a colorful map that shows both the data and the area. Landowners are interested in the data so that they can have an idea of where to focus when managing their property and writing nutrient management plans – Paul seconded that this is useful, to integrate the Nutrient Management Plans so that the soil samples of individual fields really connect with the drainage area of those fields. He also called out the nature of this method – working at the kitchen table WITH landowners: much more successful. Also nice that they are not obligated to report these data, but landowners have requested the data to use while meeting with someone about their property. Next steps: scale up the program, hopefully connecting volunteers with landowners.**

For the “Adopt-A-Site” pilot program: 2 pilot locations (Lowell/Westfield Town line, and the headwaters in Lowell (near Randall’s former tree-planting site). These pilot attempts show that this program has potential: families can easily do this. Feedback included: valuable family activity, motivated them to get down to the river (tended to go during high water because it’s interesting), reported wildlife sign – tracks, beaver chew – and litter, as expected. Suggestions for improvement: start at the beginning of the season, participants need more connection (they wonder if they’re “doing it right” – maybe provide a checklist?) – set up ways for them to communicate with each other (zoom/in person meetings a couple times a year?). Discussion of ways to amplify: flyers that go home with kids from schools, public recognition at the sites – let’s continue this discussion in Feb.

For the Japanese knotweed control project: 4 test plots in 2 public parks: didn’t see the metal mesh “choking” the knotweed, but it did create some inhibition. The Enosburg Falls site was shadier and had more diverse plants – some leggy pieces of knotweed, but it didn’t really come back strong after being cut back, even without the mesh. Tentative conclusion: native vegetation can compete with small patches of knotweed in shady locations. The Montgomery site showed different biomass from the mesh sites vs adjacent control sites when weight at the end of the growing season: 5.65 lbs without the mesh; 1.25 lbs with it! We will continue assessing methods. Concern: dispersal is an issue. Dry or burn on site? If burn – PS notes to make sure we have a permit from the local FD. Compost on site – is there a fabric that holds the heat in which could work?

Could some of these programs be merged for volunteers? Will discuss more in Feb.

In the interest of getting to the review discussion, we tabled more 2020 Highlights and Successes – as well as plans and hopes for 2021 – for the February meeting.

- 7) Newsletter – Lindsey will provide this digitally to the Board for approval.
- 8) Next meeting – February 4, 2021 – via zoom. Public meeting would be great; doesn’t need to be during our Board meeting – highlight public opportunities such as these we discussed to night; highlight the knotweed project. We can record it and have it available for those that can’t attend the live session – make it a “short and sweet” meeting; advertise it in the paper, via social media, FPF, and put it in our Newsletter.
- 9) Ellen and Ari left the meeting at 8:52pm; the Board then discussed Ellen’s work as our Project Manager over the last 8 months. Notes from this session are on record.

Lindsey review: Lindsey will provide a checklist/eval form to send to the Board; they will then send their responses to John. John and Lindsey will meet. The Board also requests suggestions for how they can help MRBA staff.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.