

Meeting Minutes Thursday, March 4th, 2021: via Zoom

Attendees: Cynthia Scott, Paul Stanley, John Little, Wendy Scott, Brian Jerosse, Craig Cimmons, Tom Bryce, Ari Lattanzi, Lindsey Wight, and John Sandvil

- 1) Meeting was called to order at **7:04pm. Welcome to our guest, John Sandvil. John is an engineer and self-proclaimed “1-minute manager” with a wealth of connections and concerns about our fisheries.**
- 2) Review of February meeting minutes – **CS motions to accept with noted correction; JL seconds; all in favor.**
- 3) Public Meeting overview – **Kudos to Lindsey, Ellen and Ari for a job well done. The webinar format was a bit odd – if we do again in the future, we should tell participants that they can neither be seen nor heard. Lindsey asked if we might want to host other video presentations? Brian suggested having a fundraiser/presentation – interesting topics with fundraising moments. Watershed Bingo? Wendy described a webinar she participated in with presentations and a lot of people – could do a presentation with breakout sessions for more engagement.**

4) Administrative business

Town Appropriations – **let Lindsey know if your town passed our appropriation request. Westfield and Bakersfield did.**

Website updates – **Ari shared some wording and asked for feedback, particularly for the About Us language. She will send the google doc around as Board homework.**

Logowear – **Lindsey suggested that we choose our own clothing – things you’ll actually wear – and she can get the MRBA logo embroidered onto it. Just the logo (not the words spelled out) – but make sure that the letters are visible and readable. Discussion about hats, paddling shirts, long-sleeved tshirts. JS suggested a jacket/shirt with big logo so we are recognizable at event – something lightweight, quick to put on, and recognizable (Like the Lions folks do at June Dairy Days) – performance vest? Send Lindsey your desired items (actual items, or where she can purchase them) and she will work with a local embroiderer.**

Lawn signs for tree-plantings. **Corrugated plastic, like political signs? Or real-estate signs? Might last better. Jay Peak may be able to inform about lasting signage.**

- 5) Tactical Basin Plan – Public survey: **Ari reviewed the survey and asked for feedback and if anyone has questions. BJ asked if soil health was touched on; Ari said she can add that to the survey. We will be publishing this shortly – please help spread the word that it is important to get public feedback about our TBP, and that now is the time for residents to make their voices heard.**

Other ways to engage people: **there are engineering program lists that shows frontage and landowner information. Get drone footage of stream banks? Provide test kits to landowners – they send back to us? Make people be proactive and engaged. Provide Bugworks kits for loan.**

- 6) 2021 Grants update – **Received Woody Buffer funds to plant ~2 acres at Randall’s in Lowell. Sourcing materials may be our hurdle with this.**

Also received Project Development Funds from WUV – these are for outreach related to the Newport Center Dam, riparian buffers (esp in Enosburg behind Spears, at the Dairy Center, and near Bismark St – areas called out in the stormwater master plan), continuing to work with the Wright’s along the Tyler Branch and exploring other projects in this area, and continuing to work with landowners along Sampsonville Brook.

Upcoming: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, New England Forest and Rivers Fund. There is a webinar about this grant opportunity this week; Lindsey and Ellen will listen in and consider applying – possible for funds to address the Newport Center dam (restore connectivity).

7) Events/Projects

- **Amphibian Road Crossings – partner with North Branch Nature Center to set up citizen science**

monitoring locations in our region? Maybe better to support other groups in this work: MVU's field studies? Conservation Commissions? Wendy will ask the ECC about interest/locations. Possible locations may include Rt 36 near Fairfield swamp – put a call out to Conservation Commissions to suggest locations – VCE may know some, from their vernal pool monitoring program. Joan Hildreth, or Jeff Parsons may also know of some. MRBA's role could be to get the word out – PSAs about nights not to drive. Other spring/roadway concerns – beavers in Mar/Apr? Male skunks in March. Series of PSAs?

- Knotweed surveys and installation – pair installation with tree planting at Chaz Salmon's land in early May? JL suggested having signs by this date, tell people about the projects as they're happening.
- LEAPS intern – drafting a position description to hire two high schoolers from within the watershed.
- Rain Garden installation at another school. Any location thoughts? RES or RHS? Lindsey will check in with people there.
- Connecting with Field Studies for stewardship projects. Ari is creating a relationship; we'll do some stream-naming and erosion control efforts, as well as encourage overall stewardship practices.
- Art projects – Plein air painting is in the works with Montgomery Center for the Arts and UMATR. Making clay pots using clay from the river banks and basket weaving will be featured later this summer.

8) Newsletter – released digitally, will do a limited print run.

9) Other business: Tyler Branch – still need to connect with DEC folks about stabilizing the bank. Longley Bridge design work - VT trans-funded section will not likely not be implemented until 2022. MRBA will begin seeking additional implementation funds for the downstream bank – another ~500' of the Trout River.

10) Next meeting – April 1, via Zoom

BJ motions to adjourn; JL seconds; all in favor and meeting adjourns at 8:48pm

HOMEWORK:

1. Help edit the About Us website page (Ari will send link)
2. Send Lindsey specs/item for branding; also hats?
3. Check out the Public Survey – send Ari any comments/suggested edits.
4. Consider potential amphibian crossing locations.