

## **Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI) meeting**

January 18, 2012

Location: Clinton House

Time: 7-9 pm

Minutes

### **1) INTRODUCTION OF PEOPLE:**

- In attendance: Ted Merchant of Central Mass Trout Unlimited, Martha Morgan of Nashua Rivers Watershed Association, Phil Truesdell of MassWildlife, Scott Michalak of Sterling CC, Barbara Roberti of Sterling CC, Debora Fillis Ryba of Nestle Waters North America, Joel Frisch of Northeast Geoscience Inc., and Joe Rogers, Kathleen Ryan, and Piotr Parasiewicz of Rushing Rivers Institute.
- Debora (Sustainability Manager of Nestle) is interested in following the Initiative's progress, especially because of Nestle's investment in the hydrogeology and the habitat study.
- Phil Duffy is the appointed representative of Clinton, but couldn't make tonight's meeting.

### **2) UPDATES SINCE LAST MEETING:**

- TU would be interested in supporting the initiative, as long as its goals are those of sustainability. There are a few TU members in the watershed.
- Martha of NRWA indicates that there are 2 watershed association members from Clinton as well as a recent volunteer. Can the Clinton Land trust be a resource? Mass Outdoor Heritage Foundation has funded work on culvert replacements in the past and could become a potential partner?
- Phil of MassWildlife: culvert replacements can be very helpful in the watershed and the funding may be available because of their current condition.
- Scott of Sterling CC: Feels that there is an even split of opinion on the topic of breaching dams in the watershed.
- Barbara of Sterling CC: Discussions by the Board of Selectmen, they requested clarification on why brook trout was a focus and not other game fish like bass.
- Piotr: Bass are a non-native and aggressive predator fish. Restoration efforts would not remove bass but would emphasize the support of native species like brook trout. Coldwater habitats are rare in eastern MA and worth protecting.
- Phil of MassWildlife adds: Bass are very common in MA lakes and ponds, but good trout habitat is less available.
- Joe of RRI: A clarification on our organization's position, we believe that some dam removal in the watershed is an option, but is not a stated goal of this initiative. There are many scenarios open for debate at this time.
- Piotr: RRI is preparing scientific journal articles about the study, one will be finished soon. The Wekepeke project is a good reference for other studies. The State may assist and utilize the approach since it is a good example of ecological compensation for water withdrawals, a priority of the Sustainable Water Management Initiative.

### **3) FORMALIZING TASK FORCE:**

- The group will be named: Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI) with an emphasis on the whole watershed.

- Joe suggests: To gather information from remaining portion of the watershed and get community input, collect photos, and have each town submit options for restoration in areas outside of original study area.
- Piotr: We can create a field protocol and have volunteers help. Maybe partner with Riverways. What will this Initiative look like and our roles? Should we have officers?
- General consensus indicates that for now, someone should lead the meetings and there should be a secretary. Piotr is nominated serve as a facilitator for the group. The structure can be further defined over time.
- Letters of support for the Initiative are requested from towns and participating organizations. A template will be sent to the initiative's representatives.
- Upcoming press release: Announcing the establishment of WWRI and current information on the Watershed and direction on where residents can find information. Press release would include who is involved and the mission. TU and NRWS offered assistance with media contacts.

#### **4) IDEAS FOR ROLES:**

- Funds/grants searcher: Phil Duffy, Russ Cohen?
- Task coordinator: N/A yet. (Kathleen could assist them)
- Secretary: Kathleen
- Law advisor (should it be needed): a member of each community to ensure the proper people/organization is notified of any activities.

#### **5) Time Table:**

- For now, meet every 2 months until project solidifies.
- Next meeting: Monday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm.
- Meeting location unknown, but Clinton was suggested.
- A site walk for the group will be scheduled for the spring.
- The initiative would like to start on-the-ground actions this spring.

#### **6) Prioritize restoration action items**

- Need to define restoration measures in terms of who can do them, (State, Town, specialists, volunteers, ect.).
- New culverts seem needed for North Row and Heywood Roads.
- The dam's are Clinton's responsibility. Question: Is WWRI getting involved in this process as an advocate for action?
- Eagle scouts project: Interested in working in the watershed.
- TU: Embrace a stream project grant a possibility.
- Could Riverways fund a dam project?
- Its best to start small. A goal to create a low-cost project for next summer; ie: find volunteers and do projects like cleaning up old structures/debris along streams, adding boulders, additional search for impairments.

#### **7) Adjourn**

- Before next meeting, everyone will consider which projects should be prioritized and work on getting letters of support. The next Meeting will include maps of watershed and property maps to aid in planning.
- Rushing Rivers will prepare proposal for project categories and spatial clustering of them.