

March 12, 2012  
WWRI meeting

1) Letters of Support handed in:

- Signed by president of NRWA (provided by Martha Morgan)
- ?

**Comment [KR1]:** One other person with letter, right?

2) Introduction:

- In attendance: Ted Merchant of Central Mass Trout Unlimited, Peter Farmer of Lancaster CC, Martha Morgan of NRWA, Tom Christopher of Christopher Environmental, Scott Michalak of Sterling CC; Piotr Parasiewicz, Joe Rogers, and Kathleen Ryan of Rushing Rivers Institute (RRI).
- Piotr presents meeting's main points: remediation suggestions (handout), Bartlett Pond, map review, ideas/discussion, letters.

3) Remediation suggestions for the Wekepeke:

- Joe provides hand-outs on Wekepeke remediation suggestions. Suggestions 1 and 2 have zero to low costs in doing, while the other project suggestions may require more costs, fewer groups, and are bigger impact. Projects 1 and 2 can involve boy/girl scouts and big community groups. These projects should begin with awareness in the community and recognition of the Wekepeke's resources.
- Tom: Suggests the removal of Spring Basin Dam because it would be the least complicated. Also, bricks are valuable.
- Joe: could convert some old pump structures into useable structures (bat houses etc.); Should ask landowners/town officials about the potential use of or removal of structures.
- Joe and Tom agree that most structures should be removed due to deterioration. Piotr suggests a reconnaissance tour to view each structure and understand its possibility.
- Pete: If any liability problems exist with the towns, the towns may want to remove structures anyways.
- Tom: Town of Clinton may follow another town's example (ie: Lancaster)
- Joel: Joel knows the Head of Water Dept. of Clinton (Chris) personally and believes he would be a helpful resource with projects (equipment, permitting, in-kind service).
- Joel gives his opinion on the state of the dams: Heywood has value as a possible water resource; Lynde Basin could be removed, but has value to Sterling; Fitch Basin is not valuable (is leaking). Agrees with Tom that Spring Basin would be the least amount of effort to take out.
- Joe reiterates that it would be easiest to start small (i.e. pump houses)
- Piotr calls for interested WWRI members that could begin taking on roles. Asks for suggestions on potential coordinator and volunteers for the Initiative. (People needed in: talking to towns, reconnaissance survey, projects, etc).

4) Overall picture proposed by Piotr:

- 1<sup>st</sup> year, we work on study area of Wekepeke, following years covers additional sections in the watershed.
- Pete brings up possible hurdles from individuals requesting help from towns that are not theirs.
- Tom responds that he feels comfortable speaking with selectmen from other towns. He requests that Joel connects him with Clinton's DPW. Tom will be gone from April 1<sup>st</sup>- June 1<sup>st</sup>, but will be available before and after this time.
- Piotr suggests that NWRA could organize a spring clean-up along trashed areas of the Wekepeke.
- Martha responds that she could organize some phone calls and other tasks of the clean up, but would not be able to make it a NRWA sponsored event. The most ideal volunteers would be local people.
- Tom would like to contact a scout group in Lancaster.
- Joe: cleanups can be anywhere in the Watershed and include all towns.
- Scott suggests cleaning areas that are most heavily accessed via roads which have the highest amount of litter.
- All agree that Heywood Basin is probably the worst and should be the one of the first cleaning sites.
- Tom can work with the Clinton's DPW representative in June.

5) Suggested projects 3 and 4

- Piotr asks Ted about TU's possible involvement with parts 3 & 4.
- Ted would be glad to mention it and gain volunteers from TU.
- Pete: All the towns' CCs should be informed about projects and receive the meetings' minutes.
- Piotr offers that the RRI team to draw up and suggest potential projects. He advises that all WWRI members begin looking for volunteers.
- A few suggest that a project is possible this summer.
- Ted: TU is busy in the summer months.
- Tom: Education/signage along Wekepeke revealing the destruction that ATVs cause would be more effective than barricading ATV-blazed trails.
- Joe: a better understanding of land ownership (public vs. private) would be helpful.
- Piotr: Who will coordinate the signage task?  
--Tom when he walks with DPW person.

6) Other activities

Culverts:

- Joe: some culverts have grading issues, caving in, drops and plunges.
- Scott has already inquired with Sterling about culvert removal. However, all funds under Chapter 91 this year are already taken. Also, other issues in the town overshadow degrading culverts.
- Tom: It may be more effective to wait until the culvert collapses and then address its replacement, because they seem to be degrading quickly.

- Joe: opening 100 ft of river through a culvert replacement could contribute to a greater 800 ft of river connectivity.

#### 7) Bartlett Pond

- Peter: Last week the meeting in Lancaster went well. The warrant is up to remove the dam for the purpose of stream restoration.
- Tom suggests that the dam removal wins the financial argument. If the dam is left intact, it will cost \$35,000/day; to remove it will cost a couple \$100,000.
- Pete: the CC has recommended the removal and now its for the town to decide.
- Tom: Lancaster would own land along the Wekepeke after the removal of the dam.
- Piotr and Joe suggest that WWRI support publically the Bartlett Pond dam removal because it serves to improve the ecological integrity of the Wekepeke Watershed.
- If everyone is still in accordance, Kathleen can write a letter of support from WWRI to the dam removal group in Lancaster. A press release announcing the joint effort can follow.

#### 8) Funding:

- RRI can take lead in writing proposals for WWRI. RRI has a possible grant (Fish America) that could fund a restoration project potentially on the Wekepeke.
- Tom cautions that outreach projects are at times a hindrance in getting ultimate tasks done.
- Joe: RRI can go after and implement something. Or someone else can?
- Joel: Phil Duffy, a grant writer, could apply for the town of Clinton. RRI feeds text. Sterling and Clinton could apply together, which would look good to the public eye.
- Piotr: RRI can work on the scientific design of the grant funded project and apply for the full \$75,000.
- Joel: gives run-down of problem areas. We don't need to do habitat study everywhere, could have photograph projects focus on problem areas.
- Pete suggests working from downstream to upstream with restoration.
- Some folks could work on PSA for volunteering with GIS/photo making of Brook (ie: TU)

#### 10) Adjourn

- On March 27th, 2012 at 3pm there will be a guided walk around Wekepeke Brook for all interested WWRI members who would like to see the problem areas. Meeting location: Sholan Farms.
- Next WWRI meeting: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 @ 6pm. New location: Doyle Center, Leominister.

- Martha: can help with Fish America grant
- Tom: will send out emails.
- RRI: minutes, letters out on Bartlett Pond, press release
- Everyone: Round up interested people, volunteers, past participants, leaders; invite interested selectmen.
- To keep the momentum of restoring the Wekepeke, it would be best to begin the foundation work of a remediation project right away. This summer is an ideal time to take action (training, carrying out first steps of project, etc).

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