

Meeting Minutes - Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI)

Meeting Date: June 4th, 2012

Location/time: Long Horn Streak House, Leominster; 6pm

Attendance

Members who attended: Martha Morgan (Nashua River WA), Rob Provost (TU), Piotr Parasiewicz (RRI), Joe Rogers (RRI), Kathleen Ryan (RRI)

Representatives of members who attended: Dick O'Brian (Leominster Trail Stewards) filled in for Joanne Dinardo; Jay Billings (Northeast Geoscienc, Inc.) filled in for Joel Frisch

Guest observer: Carolina from Nestle Waters

Members who did not attend: Barbara Roberti, Christopher McGown, Jody Murray, Matt Marrow, Mike Ward, Peter Farmer, Phil Truesdell, Phill Duffy, Scott Michalak, Nick Comeau, Terri Ackerman, Tom Christopher, Russ Cohen, Deborah Fillis Ryba, Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell

Topics covered

- 1) Introductions; recap of WWRI's mission
- 2) Discussion on the low attendance numbers in recent meetings; drew up plans for improving attendance:
 - a. start asking for RSVPs for all meetings
 - b. request agenda topics from all members prior to meetings
 - c. email agenda prior to meetings
 - d. encourage all members to attend or send a representative from their organization to the meetings
 - e. more phone conversations
 - f. Ensure that all meetings have a purpose
- 3) Grants
 - a. (Rob) TU's "Embrace-a-Stream" grant – deadline is Nov. or Dec. 2012; \$10,000; Supports projects that would improve stream continuity, stream crossings, brook trout habitat. Could be used for dam removal or stream culvert replacements. Requires a grant writer.
 - b. (Martha) American Heritage grant
 - c. Grants could be applied for on-the-ground improvement from community members (i.e. high schoolers, scouts) in the first year, and post dam removal stream stabilization in the second year.
- 4) Awareness event
 - a. The idea is to provide more education and awareness of the Wekepeke Watershed to gain the support of the communities in restoring impairments to the watershed.
 - b. An "exploration day" for community members
 - c. Creates exposure and press coverage of WWRI
 - d. Allow for more community involvement and volunteerism in the near future (i.e. clean up days, reconnaissance training, community support with dam removal)
- 5) Removal of structures

- a. 2 pump houses can be removed initially. Others after verifying the status of the pipes and valves that they house
- b. Start summer 2012
- 6) Reconnaissance training
 - a. (Dick) High school students need to fulfill community service hours; Dick could create a weekly program where high schoolers utilize their time through working with WWRI.
 - b. (Piotr) RRI can train high school volunteers with reconnaissance monitoring of the Watershed in the fall
 - c. (Joe) Long term projects for students could involve invasive species removal on conservation and public lands.

Decisions

- 1) Wekepeke walk-around
 - a. Purpose: for those who could not make it last time; to scout out a new area of the watershed, visualize and plan the “Exploration Day”
 - b. Date: TBA, late June?
- 2) Exploration Day
 - a. Set up along the Wekepeke Brook, people can learn first-hand about river ecology and other natural sciences through multiple learning stations hosted by committee members and their guests.
 - b. Stations tentatively include: RRI’s macroinvertebrate and fish ecology; Edible plants/nature walk (Russ Cohen? Pete Lanzer?), NRWA’s outdoor education (Martha), trail education (Dick), tying flies (Rob), geologist station w/ Northeast Geosciences (Jay), others?
 - c. Other WWRI members can form another station or help with promoting, coordinating the event, helping with set-up at the event, chaperoning, etc.
 - d. Date: TBA, late August?
- 3) Grants
 - a. Embrace-a-Stream grant proposal drafts begin in June or July (writer?)
- 4) Training for community volunteers
 - a. High school students needing to complete volunteer hours
 - b. Date: September-November
- 5) Removal of Structures – consult with Tom Christopher and Town of Clinton.

Actions agreed Upon

- 1) A community can apply for the Embrace-a-Stream grant with RRI’s help or RRI can write the proposal if no community members are able to do so.
- 2) Martha will look into American Heritage grant and talk with an educator from NRWA about “Exploration Day”.
- 3) Rob, Jay, and Dick will brainstorm station ideas for “Exploration Day”.
- 4) Dick will coordinate with high school on a Wekepeke program for the fall.

Next meeting

The next WWRI meeting will be in September at the Doyle Center (exact date, to be voted upon). The lateness of this date was decided because WWRI members will be conducting two events during the summer: The walk-around day (June) and "Exploration Day" (August)*.

*Dates/times for the Walk-around and Exploration Day also need to be decided.