

**Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee Meeting  
February 19, 2009**

**Worthington Town Hall**

**Attendance:** Carrie Banks, Coordinator; Karin Vorwerk, Huntington; Carl Lafreniere, Middlefield; Jim Dodge, Worthington; Tom Wisnauckas, ACOE; Mercedes Gallagher, Becket; Bill Babcock, Becket; Robert Thompson, Chester; Steve Hamlin, Huntington.

1. **Review of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Meeting Minutes:** M. G. motioned to accept; seconded by C.L. Minutes accepted.
2. **Treasurer's Report:** The balance of the WRWSAC account is \$1857.55. Partnership Rivers funds expended as of January 1, 2009 is \$13, 452.44. M.G. will review the financial records for the Partnership Rivers funds on a quarterly basis and will sign a form to place in the folder to certify that she as Treasurer has reviewed and approved the accounting records. C.L. motioned to accept Treasurer's Report, seconded by J.D. Report accepted.
3. **Operations Update:**
  - a. **Partnership Rivers:** Matt B. was unable to attend the Partnership Rivers Mtg in D.C. due to a prior conflict. However, the reports from the other Partnership Rivers have been quite favorable and there is good support for the FY10 ask letter which will be circulated around shortly. The Taunton River Wild & Scenic designation is pending and will likely occur in the next couple of weeks. R.T. signed a letter of support on behalf of the Committee in support of passage of the Lands Bill which includes the Taunton River designation.
  - b. **Community Grants:** C.B. passed around a copy of the Chicopee River Watershed Rural Roads Assessment conducted by the Berkshire Regional Planning Agency. The assessment included roads in Hawley and Savoy and made recommendations for both maintenance improvements and best management practices. The Town Reps interested in conducting a road drainage assessment for their town will meet and discuss a scope for the project.
  - c. **River Rally Conference:** The National River Rally is coming in May. Several Partnership Rivers are attending and/or presenting and there will likely be an informal meeting. The Committee has set aside \$2,500 in conference and meeting expenses and since they will not be another formal Partnership Rivers meeting to likely occur until next Fall, these funds need to be expended. The Committee discussed sending C.B. and R.T. Both will need to confirm calendars and will let the Committee know. In addition, Joan Kimball is being nominated for a National River Hero Award to be presented at the Rally. The Committee will write a letter of support for this nomination.
4. **Stewardship Update:**
  - a. **Stream Team Projects:** Michael Wolski ([www.michaelwolski.com](http://www.michaelwolski.com)) has graciously offered to donate another painting to be used on a postcard highlighting Stream Team projects and Trainings. Postcards will be placed around towns and distributed at upcoming events. A Walkin the Watershed Training will be held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> (in conjunction with Earth Day), volunteer workday at Glendale Falls will be held on May 9<sup>th</sup>, and an interactive Stream Team Training will be held on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Events are being posted on the website.
  - b. **Riparian Conservation Grants:** In follow-up to sending our Annual Report around to our conservation partners, Franklin Land Trust inquired about two potential projects which might be able to benefit from some funding. They include two properties in Cummington adjacent to Tower Brook – a high-quality coldwater stream to the East Branch – and

encompass 131 and 82 acres. C.B. has forwarded on the initial inquiry to the Resource Stewardship Sub-Committee to get feedback and any questions that should be addressed before FLT submits a proposal.

- c. **Section 7 Reviews and MassHighway Meeting:** The meeting with Boston-based MassHighway officials and the NPS has been scheduled for Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> in Worcester. C.B., Liz Lacy and Jim McCartney will be attending. B.T. also spoke with Mark Moore about scheduling a District 1 meeting with the Committee and Mark would like to wait until after the March meeting once he is provided some direction from the Boston contingent in attendance. M.G. wanted to make sure that MassHighway is aware the Committee is concerned that the word is out that NPS is being unreasonable, although in reality many of the delays have been because of combination of factors including MassHighway's reluctance to address NPS and Committee concerns.

## 5. Outreach Update:

- a. **Website:** Steve Hamlin attended to get feedback from the Committee about the newly launched website, navigability, ideas for the interactive map and to answer questions about the capability of handling different applications. The Committee discussed how to highlight the outstanding resource values like recreation by providing useful information without recreating the wheel. C.B. suggested creating a section for each resource category, e.g. geological, recreational, historical, and ecological and then providing links to other organizations or pertinent information. Ideas to further highlight the website, include article in Springfield Republican make sure to mention, printed materials including letterhead, and to cultivate links to other sites.
- b. **Kiosk:** C.B. drafted a general information sheet regarding the kiosk update to be passed around to potential graphic designers. The Committee discussed getting a few representatives on the Outreach Sub-Committee to commit to providing feedback and comments on draft mock-ups and content. The kiosk updated a few years ago on Rte 20 in Huntington was done by Shaun Hayes from PVPC; however, he has since retired. Another suggestion was seeing if the Committee could pay for the TTOR graphic designers to update the kiosks since two of the signs are on TTOR properties. C.B. will talk with Wendy Sweetser and Jim Caffrey to see what might be possible. In addition, efforts would need to be coordinated with MassHighway, DCR and TTOR since these are the land managers for where the signs are located.
- c. **Annual Meeting Displays:** With upcoming Town Annual Meetings, C.B. and Meredyth Babcock thought it would be an opportunity to have information out about wild & scenic and to invite volunteer participation. The display and/banner as well as handouts, e.g. Committee's Annual Report, volunteer post cards, brochures, etc. could be on a table for residents to pick up information when they attend the annual meeting. B.T. will look into getting another banner printed as some town meetings are on the same day. The Town Representatives are also reminded to submit a report from the Committee for the Town Annual Reports; C.B. will send to Savoy and Washington since there are no town representatives at this time. In addition, copies of the Committee's Annual Report were made available to the Town Representatives to bring to meet with their respective Selectboards.

## 6. Local Updates:

- a. **Invasives Workshops:** The Highlands Communities Initiative will be sponsoring a series of workshops on invasive species management. They sought co-sponsors to help advertise the events, including the Committee. The workshops are posted on our website under events and will be highlighted in the blog. In addition, Stream Team volunteers were encouraged to attend. Below is the first two workshops which will be followed by an

additional field course on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month in June and July. To pre-register contact HCI at 413/268-8219.

**Invasive Plant species: Why should I care and what should I do?**

**Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> | 9AM–12PM**

**Cummington Community House, Cummington 413.268.8219**

**Members: FREE. Nonmembers: \$10. Please pre-register.**

Join invasive species control experts to learn how the *Highland's Least Wanted* invasive plants are threatening our natural communities—and what you can do to stop them. No previous experience necessary.

**The Highlands Least Wanted Field Course: Garlic Mustard**

**Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> | 1PM–4PM**

**Cummington 413.268.8219**

Learn how to properly identify and remove a specific invasive plant at this hands-on field course taught by professional land managers. The April 18, *Invasive Plant Species* is suggested by not required. FREE. Please pre-register.

- b. **Geothermal Permit, Middlefield:** C.L. contacted the owner and DEP to see if he could get more information on whether the thermal discharge was to a surface waterbody. It is still unclear on exactly where the discharge will occur, but sounds like it will not be to a stream.
- c. **FERC Hydropower Application for Littleville & Knightville Dams:** The Community Hydro, LLC out of Vermont recently submitted an application for a preliminary permit to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to study the feasibility of hydropower at the Littleville and Knightville dams. From general understanding, the permit would confer an exclusive right to the holder to investigate a particular site for hydropower for a 3-year period. The application has sparse information and did not include any mention of the National Wild & Scenic designation immediately upstream or downstream of these projects. Although some immediate concerns arise from what is proposed, including a 38' foot pool elevation behind Knightville would put the roads under water and cut off recreational access, installation of transmission lines and other appurtenants in proximity to ecologically sensitive habitat, reduction in flood storage capacity, and seasonal flow variations and changes (e.g. 10 cfs is the typical low flow condition below Littleville Dam during the summer, though the application calls for utilizing flows of 25-150 cfs). Under these types of applications, the ACOE needs to review the pros and cons before making recommendations to FERC. The Committee will write a letter to FERC, ACOE, and the proponent to highlight the key concerns, questions and issues at this time. B.T. will also notify Springfield Water and Sewer Commission since they have a stake in the use of Littleville Lake as a back-up Public Drinking Water Supply.

Next meeting, **Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** from 6:30-8:30 pm at a location to be determined.