



Niantic River Watershed Committee

Minutes

Niantic River Watershed Committee Meeting

February 8, 2011

4 - 6 pm

LTA Room, Waterford Town Hall

15 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford, CT

Attendees: Don Danila, East Lyme; Maureen Fitzgerald, Town of Waterford; Fred Grimsey, STR-STH; John Jasper, Nature's Fingerprint; Don Landers, East Lyme Harbor Management; Dick Mason, Waterford; Eric Thomas, CT DEP; Dave Turner, Turner Environmental; Tom Wagner, Town of Waterford; Judy Rondeau, Watershed Coordinator

1. Welcome: Judy Rondeau opened the meeting at 4:09 pm and welcomed participants.
2. Review of December 14, 2010 Meeting Minutes:
Don Landers made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Tom Wagner. All were in favor, minutes were approved. (January 2011 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather).
3. Watershed Coordinator's Report:
Judy distributed a brief report of her activities from December 2010 and January 2011. Judy also explained that she will be wrapping up the Year 2 grant tasks by the end of February, and will begin Year 3 in March.
4. Plan of Work:
Judy created a template for a Plan of Work, which she distributed to committee members for review. The Plan is based on goals identified in the NRWPP and listed on page 25 of the Guided Summary. Within each goal, activities are culled from pages 26-32 of the Guided Summary, and other activities either already underway or planned. Judy asked members to review the draft Plan of Work and make any revisions they feel necessary.
5. Monitoring Data:
 - a. RFP for existing data consolidation, analysis and report. Judy distributed a copy of the draft RFP for committee members to review. Judy explained that we need to decide on the appropriate level of funding so she can look for grants to fund this project. Discussion followed regarding an appropriate level of funding. It was decided that based on the anticipated amount of work and consulting fees, \$15,000 might be an appropriate amount. Judy was directed to seek additional input from Chris Tomichek and John Mullaney. Dick Mason thought it wasn't clear that we have compiled some data that we will provide to the successful applicant, and that that point should be clarified, because it could affect the cost calculations of potential applications. Don Landers

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suggested there should be language regarding a pre-bid conference to answer questions and disseminate information. Tom Wagner will supply sample language. Judy will revise the RFP to reflect these comments.

- b. Collection of existing data. Judy sent out requests last month to the contacts listed on our data spreadsheet. Data is coming in slowly.

6. Outreach:

- a. Teacher Loan Kits – Dave Turner updated the group on the status of the teacher test kits. Judy, Dave and Marcia Benvenuti met on Feb. 7th, to review and discuss the types of kits available, lesson planning needs, and possible monitoring sites, which need to have both easy access to the water and parking for school buses. After Dave’s overview, members suggested several possible sites. Maureen Fitzgerald noted that choosing sites with versatility expands teaching opportunities for the teachers. Fred Grimsey stated that he will be continuing coliform testing this year, and wondered if there would be an opportunity to incorporate that into the school testing. After brief discussion regarding the pros and cons of this, Judy stated that as part of the upcoming year’s activities, she would like the Monitoring subcommittee to consider development of a volunteer water quality monitoring program that would support programs like Fred’s. She shared some information from the CT DEP regarding macroinvertebrate surveys (RBV) conducted by volunteers in 2010. Two groups conducted RBV in the area, the East Lyme Conservation Commission (on Latimer Brook and Cranberry Meadow Brook) and Three Rivers Community Technical College (in Salem). The full report can be found at www.ct.gov/dep/rbv. Dave Turner offered use of testing kits he owns, and Fred offered the use of his equipment as well. Once we have a firm estimate on what the teacher loan kits will cost, Judy will seek funding for the purchase.
- b. Clean Marina Program – Judy reported that after discussion with Rick Huntley, who directs this program for the CT DEP, we will not pursue a program with watershed marinas. DEP is in the process of revising the program. Rick stated that the current approach conducted by Marvin Schutt and Fred Grimsey, maintaining open lines of communication with the marinas and providing updates on changes within the program is effective. Judy also noted that Port Niantic has joined Three Belles in achieving Clean Marina Certification.
- c. Social Marketing Strategy – Judy updated Committee members on the status of this project. She has invited 14 local nurseries and landscapers to a meeting at the Waterford Town Hall on Feb. 15th, from 10 am to 12 pm, to discuss the strategy and gain their input. The purpose of the social marketing strategy is to educate homeowners about the link between landscaping practices and water quality, and to encourage them to adopt water friendly landscaping practices. This includes using native plants which require less water, fertilizer, etc., planting rain gardens and riparian buffers, composting, soil testing, and so forth. Nurseries will be encouraged to promote these techniques, possibly provide educational material, and perhaps offer discounts for native plants, and rain garden and riparian buffer - appropriate plants. Anyone who would like to attend the meeting on the 15th is welcome.
- d. Boat Pump Out Program Outreach – It was suggested at the November meeting that magnets promoting the STR-STH Boat Pumpout Program be distributed with mooring permit applications.

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Judy looked into pricing and found it to be reasonable, and prepared two sample layouts for the group to review. It was suggested that stickers also be made. Due to timing, it is likely the stickers and magnets will go out with mooring permits, and also be distributed to area marinas to be handed out. Members will check with the Waterford and East Lyme Harbor Management Commissions to see if they will assist with the purchase cost.

7. Other Business

- a. 2011 LISFF possible projects – John Jasper stated he wasn't certain if he would resubmit his 2010 LISFF application this year. Fred Grimsey stated that after discussion with members of the 2010 LISFF selection committee, he will be resubmitting a portion of his 2010 application, to support the boat pumpout program.
- b. Coordinator Position Funding – Judy stated that the Year 3 \$319 grant is signed and ready to go, so funding for the coordinator's position is assured for one more year. It is not too early to begin seeking funding for 2012. Brief discussion followed regarding the current level of funding and current coordinator hours.

8. Partner Reports – John Jasper reported that he will be presenting a talk on the causes and effects of nutrient enrichment (Eutrophication) in the Niantic River Estuary and what can be done about it to the Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, on Tuesday, February 15th (See <http://www.thamesvalleytu.org> for more information.)

9. Next Meeting: **March 8th, 2011, 4:00 PM, LTA Room, Waterford Town Hall.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:42 PM.

Action Items:

- **Please review the Plan of Work and submit any additions or comments to Judy prior to the March meeting.**

The Niantic River Watershed Coordinator is funded in part by the CT DEP through a US EPA Clean Water Act §319 NPS program grant.

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