

Niantic River Watershed Working Group Meeting

Date: February 9th 2010

Time: 4-6 pm

Place: Waterford Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Present: Sarah Lamagna, Kim Barber, Laura Rotchford, Marcia Benvenuti, Joe Mingo, Marvin Schutt, Fred Grimsey, Bob DeSanto, Dave Turner, Don Landers, John Jasper, Don Danila, Richard Mason, Frank Bohlen, Rosemarie Balcom, and Syma Ebbin

Absent: Katherine Burton, Denise Swiatek, Lynn Tytla, Stuart Mattison, Cliff Kramm, and Daniel Soda

Regrets: Al Burchsted, Eric Thomas, Richard Conway, Chris Tomicheck, and Franca Parra

1. Introductions

- i. Frank Bohlen, a physical oceanographer from UConn Avery Point, speaking to us about the Niantic River Amtrak Bridge construction.

2. Frank Bohlen

- i. Frank Bohlen works on fine grain sediment transport and has done work with tidal “choking.” He’s done a little work on the Niantic River as a consultant for Amtrak. Bob DeSanto has also done some work with this and both of them can give you contacts to help with questions that neither of them can answer.
- ii. New bridge will be 60-80’ from the old bridge. A groin will be put in to stabilize the beach. Frank sees no negative effect on the interior of the bay and it will provide recreation and will stabilize the channel. The flow won’t change with the new groin. As a physical oceanographer, he feels there will be no long term change in flow and will not create any tidal “choking.”
- iii. There will be some changes to the sedimentation patterns, but in turn, it would make it more stable. Frank also doesn’t know the extent of the dredging that will happen in the channel. With the new bridge, there will be less eddying and still plenty of flow. The key is to keep an eye on the progress of the construction since there always seems to be a difference between the ideal plan and what is actually implemented on the ground.
- iv. Frank seems to think that the old bridge will probably be removed and there will be a new walkway in place.
- v. The complete plans for the tracks are at: www.publictrustfoundation.org.

3. Presentation: Bob DeSanto

- i.** Bob has been in contact with the Town of East Lyme. He's looking in to putting together a Niantic River Certification Program that homeowners can apply for. He will put together the materials/criteria of water quality indicators that will be used to determine if homeowners meet the requirements to have this certification. More details to come in the near future.

4. Presentation: John Jasper

- i.** John did a presentation: A Preliminary Biogeochemical Assessment of the Niantic River Estuary. His presentation can be found on the Niantic River Watershed website.

5. Website Updates

- i.** Sarah is working diligently on updating the website and making minutes/agendas/presentations available on the website. She insists that the group go on the website to comment and suggest changes. Also, the group was featured in the Montville and Waterford Times weeklies. The article can be read on the Niantic River website.

6. Monitoring Group Updates

- i.** Sarah met with Roslyn Rubenstein (director at the Waterford Library) on February 9, 2010. Ros would like most of the data to be electronic (on CDs, etc) and would like only one person to be bringing in the data. Sarah has no problem being that person but she'll need all of the data compiled so far as soon as possible. Ros suggested we have one of our NR meetings at the library so you can see where the information would be filed.

7. Education and Outreach Group Updates

- i.** There was a movie last week that East Lyme High School (and Laura Rotchford) set up called "Flow." Several members of the group went and we were able to speak to some high school students about the Niantic River. Also, Sarah has sent out a questionnaire to the superintendents of the four school districts and all of them have responded and are very eager to participate with the questionnaire. They seemed very positive about our group and are excited to hear more!

8. Other issues?

- i.** The group wants to seek funding opportunities for monitoring research. Sarah will try to put together a list by the next meeting.

9. Next meeting: March 9, 2010. Location → to be announced.