

York River Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2019, Grant House, York

Voting Members Present: Chuck Ott, Karen Arsenault, Stefan Claesson, Thom Kearns, Joan LeBlanc, Mike Masi, Jack Murphy, Judy Spiller

Voting Members Absent: Jean Demetracopoulos, Cindy Donnell

Committee Members Present: Paul Dest, Jennifer Hunter, Emma Lord, Jim MacCartney

5:30 meeting called to order by Chuck Ott

1. **Minutes of the January meeting** were approved.
2. **Designation bill for York River:** Paul reported on H.R. 1248 that was introduced by Rep. Pingree on February 14 and co-sponsored by Rep. Golden. Senator King's office is still gathering more community input before introducing a companion bill on the Senate side. Supporters of PWSR designation were informed of how to contact the Senator's office. A major public lands bill was recently passed in the Senate and includes designations for PWSRs that had bills introduced previously. Timing and possibilities for the York River bill's passage were discussed.
3. **NPS Study Report:** Jim and Emma gave an update and welcomed feedback. The committee discussed several topics that will be described in the report including designated segments, study area, watershed approach, and harbor area evaluation. The committee has gathered letters of support from local organization and individuals that will be included in the report. It hopes to obtain agency endorsements. Now that new agency commissioners have been confirmed by the state legislature, members of the committee will seek meetings with them. WSRA Section 7 review procedures is likely the topic that agencies will be most interested in discussing. Paul, Jenn, Chuck, and Joan will aim to travel to Augusta in March.

Further comments on the Study Report are welcome through mid-March. Once the final draft is complete, it will go through an internal review at NPS (regional and DC offices), then posted on the PEPC website for 90 days during which time public comments are received.
4. **YRSC role, tasks and time frames:** The group has two major tasks left: (1) provide input and support to NPS for the Study Report and (2) develop a process and plan to work with communities to establish the York River Stewardship Committee once designation is achieved. For the latter, planning will begin, but communication and outreach to the towns will not occur until the river is designated. Timeframe is uncertain. Study funding is nearly exhausted. It's unlikely there would be dedicated funding until the federal FY2021 budget, and any "bridge" funding is uncertain.
5. **Agenda items and dates for next meeting(s):** next meeting is March 26. The group will discuss many of the same topics and start talking about transition process. Additional ideas can be emailed to Chuck.

Adjourned at 7:01.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Hunter, York River Study Coordinator