

York River Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2019, Grant House, York

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

Voting Members Absent: Stefan Claesson, Jean Demetracopoulos, Cindy Donnell, Jack Murphy

Other Committee Members Present: Jennifer Hunter, Jim MacCartney

5:30 p.m. meeting called to order by Chuck Ott

- 1. Minutes of the May meeting:** On a motion made by Mike and seconded by Joan to approve the minutes, all voted in favor to accept the minutes as written.
- 2. NPS Study Report Status:** Jim indicated the report has been finalized by NPS and the regional director has been briefed on the report. Staff are arranging a briefing for the NPS Deputy Director and Assistant Secretary, hopefully before the July 4 holiday time. Once they sign off, it will be posted to PEPC for the 90-day comment period; anticipated mid-July. Comments on the NPS Study Report can be submitted in writing or online during the comment period.
- 3. Designation Bill Update:** No updates since last meeting. Senator King is awaiting the completion of the NPS Study Report to introduce a Senate companion bill for designation.
- 4. Summer and Fall Meeting Plans:** It's uncertain if in-person meetings are needed for the summer. For now, July 23 and August 27 meetings are tentative and will be noted as such on the website and online calendar. Chuck and Jenn will review status and possible agenda items and aim to decide on holding meetings 10 days prior to each tentative meeting date.
- 5. Other Discussion/Updates**

Jenn announced that Kittery Land Trust will have a new director on board soon, with long-time director Christine Bennett leaving. She will aim to meet with the new director some time in the next several months.

In follow-up to questions from last month's meeting on status of York River monitoring and assessments, Jenn provided some updates:

- DEP is not planning any water quality monitoring in 2019 or 2020. DEP had hoped to conduct biomonitoring in 2020 in three southern Maine estuary sites, including York River, but there is not currently funding in the state budget.
- DMR continues its second year of statewide saltmarsh elevation monitoring, including a York River site. They hope to add water level monitoring and vegetation profiles to the monitoring program this year. A separate project by MNAP might be initiated to look at marsh ecological integrity at the DMR saltmarsh elevation sites.

- DMR Shellfish Program is conducting its regular fecal coliform testing in York River in 2019 and 2020; no additional plans for shoreline surveys or other monitoring.
- WNERR is submitting a grant proposal in July to conduct feasibility studies at two culverts on Smelt Brook, and in 2020 will monitor Wheeler Marsh with York High School students.

Joan asked about providing input on the upcoming Harbor Study. Jenn said the YRSC would likely be contacted by the consultant at some point for data and information from the Wild and Scenic Study. The group decided to proactively put together information from our study and Stewardship Plan that is most relevant to the Harbor Study, including scope for a thorough river use study and issues of overuse, public access, and competing uses. Jenn will work with Joan to develop the letter and share with the full group before sending it to the consultant.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Hunter