

York River Study Committee Meeting Minutes
November 23, 2021, online via Zoom

Voting Members Present: Karen Arsenault, Stefan Claesson, Jean Demetracopoulos, Joan LeBlanc, Mike Masi, Chuck Ott, Judy Spiller

Voting Members Absent: Cindy Donnell, Thom Kearns, Jack Murphy

Other Committee Members Present: Paul Dest, Jennifer Hunter, Jim MacCartney

Guests: Amanda Bouchard

1. Chair Judy Spiller began the meeting and welcomed members.
2. December 2020 meeting minutes – On a motion by Karen and seconded by Jean, members approved the minutes from the last meeting.
3. Public comment – No comments.
4. Status of designation bills – Jenn gave an update on the various bills: HR 803 – introduced and passed in the House in February 2021; HR 1469 and S 491 – re-introduced in March 2021 with a Senate subcommittee hearing in June and a House subcommittee hearing in November. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill on November 18. It will now go to the full Senate. It likely needs to be bundled with other bills to move as part of a package of bills.
5. NPS updates – Jim noted the new administration, with a new Secretary of the Interior, new NPS Director, and new (acting) Wild and Scenic River Science lead. There are two new Northeast WSR staff, so their office is back to full capacity. Jim and Emma Lord continue to support and manage the northern New England WSR programs. Jim noted the FY21 PWSR budget was up about 10% from FY20, and FY22 is the same as FY21, despite a significant increase proposed on the House side by Congresswoman Pingree. FY23 budget is in the works and hopefully will include a line item for York River if it's designated this year. NPS is supporting the York River coordinator position for about 10 months through a River Management Society contract for PWSR support.
6. Additional discussion – Chuck thanked meeting guest Amanda Bouchard for organizing the river clean up through the Harbor Board in the fall. Mike noted that the York Shellfish Commission is hosting its annual river clean up on the second Sunday in December.
7. Informational presentation – Mike Masi described an oyster growing / green crab harvesting initiative to be undertaken by Sam Sewall and him in the York River, across from the golf course using cages on about one acre outside of the main river channel. They will be applying to Department of Marine Resources for an experimental or standard lease.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Hunter