

WPWA
Executive Director Report
11/15/2012

At the request of the board, ongoing tasks showing “no progress” since the last ED report will be excluded from the written ED report and the ED will substitute brevity for details. Any board members seeking clarification on any topic may do so under the ED Report agenda item during the following open board meeting.

Construction Project Updates

Lower Shannock Falls Project

Anticipate total project completion, contractor invoicing by close of November. WPWA will seek \$20K USFWS reimbursement in November. Anticipate total project close out, including receipt of reimbursements, by Dec 31st 2012

Horseshoe Falls Project

Monument dedication occurred on 10/20. “Substantial Completion” meeting to occur 11/14 at 9:30am with the contractor and all partners. Landowner (Marlowe) is non-responsive to repeated WPWA requests to finalize the long term maintenance access and ownership Easement with the State. Notified again by email on 11/12 that Easement must be signed in order to achieve Final Completion at the close of November. Project is slightly over budget, but is within the \$100K contingency allotment.

Kenyon Mill Dam Project

This fish passage (rock ramp) project is now a full year behind schedule. Bid & Project manual partner review and finalization will occur on 11/14. Prequalified contractors to be invited to submit cost proposals in late November. Funding agreements (NOAA TNC Partnership=\$450k and Save the Bay Restore America’s Estuaries \$310K) still under negotiation but total anticipated shortfall has been earmarked with the funding agencies. Funding agreements will be finalized when lowest bidder’s cost is determined.

Permit approval is pending the finalization of Section 106 consultation and FEMA project approval. Expectation is that all permits, approvals and funding will be finalized and secured by March 2013 for anticipated June 2013 start of construction.

Campus Renovation Project

WPWA met onsite with RIDEM officials regarding the proposed RIDEM portage repair across from our campus. WPWA and RIDEM management team provided feedback on the 10% design to RIDEM Planners at the meeting. A boardwalk is now being proposed to traverse the site. Extras like a bridge and outdoor classroom will likely not be included in the portage path repair.

Browning Mill Pond in Exeter

The Browning Mill Pond Trail project was completed on Oct. 20 by Ben Nadeau, an Eagle Scout candidate from Troop 1 Charlestown. Fencing was replaced and the trail was cleared and repaired in spots. WPWA will be reimbursed for materials costs via a grant from the Trail Advisory Committee. The scouts’ volunteer hours will serve as the required match.

Wood River Foot Bridge

Fox and Poyer attended a meeting with AMC members and RIDEM to discuss assisting AMC with a Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) grant. The project they propose is to install a pedestrian bridge over the

Wood River just below the Rte. 165 road bridge and has the support of RIDEM management. AMC would be applying for a \$100,000 grant to cover the costs of engineering, permitting and construction of a prefabricated fiberglass bridge. The Narragansett AMC Chapter lacks the financial capacity to support a reimbursable TAC grant. They requested that WPWA partner with them on the grant and to utilize WPWA's Capital Revolving Fund to support project expenses. The request was apologetically rejected by Fox for a host of reasons. The conclusion was that AMC would continue to pursue the grant independently and try to get the regional AMC to front the money. WPWA will remain involved in whatever assistance we can give them.

Public Outreach, Education & Access

Water Quality Monitoring

Efforts are underway to develop a fundraising strategy to support annual \$9,000+ cost to WPWA for sample analysis. Met with Salt Ponds Coalition to strategize for a long and short term grant approach to fund both the sampling expenses and the cost to continually update Google based database.

Kayaking Programs

2013 event schedule has been developed and is available on our website. Staff is working to develop a new suite of recreational events for 2013 with a new approach. WPWA will conduct "spur-of-the-moment" events in 2013 that will be exclusively advertised through digital media based on 72 hour weather forecasts. Most will occur at night or on Saturday's. Concepts under development for program expansion include After Dark Paddling (full moons, owl paddles), Movies Under the Stars at WPWA, Haunted Paddles, Paddle Birthday Parties and Water Fires. In tandem, our rates are being redeveloped with the intention of creating a Program Menu that increases program profits, attracts more nonmembers to WPWA and its campus while still providing a program discount to WPWA members.

Hiking Programs

Roger Masse has agreed to lead a series of birding walks for the winter & spring 2013 schedule and Danielle Aube has volunteered facilitate these walks for WPWA.

Project Wet

In coordination with the RIDEM Aquatic Ed Program, staff conducted a Project Wild, Aquatic Wild, and Growing Up Wild Facilitators Workshop on Oct. 3 & 4; and a Project WET Facilitators Workshop on Oct. 17 & 18. Eighteen environmental educators took part in the free workshop. Poyer's time was paid for by the RI Rivers Council grant. Poyer and Hamilton will put on a program based on Growing Up Wild for families in December.

Teacher Training Workshops

Next year, instead of the bi-annual Watershed Science for Educators Course, based on the Active Watershed Education (AWESome!) curriculum, Poyer has submitted a grant request to the RI Rivers Council on behalf of WPWA and the Narrow River Preservation Association to instead conduct 4 professional development workshops for teachers. This program change is due to a 50% reduction in the amount of grant funding available from the RIRC in 2013, reducing the maximum grant request from \$4K to \$2K. Partnering with NRPA allows us to double the amount of our grant request. In previous years this partnership technique provided the \$8K needed to sponsor the Watershed Science for Educators Course.

Poyer believes that teachers may be more willing to commit to a one-day workshop as opposed to a 12 week course. The 4 workshops will complement each other, but will be independent of each other. Teachers can take one or all four at no cost. The first will be based on the Growing Up Wild curriculum; the next two will be based on the AWESome! curriculum, and the last will be based on Project WET

curriculum. We anticipate up to 50 educators will benefit from these workshops. If they incorporate what they learn into their individual classes this should translate to 1250 students that will be educated on watershed science in 2013.

Website

The website was recently updated with descriptions of WPWA events planned for 2013.

Merchandise

The Summer 2012 WATERSHED newsletter includes a description of all the retail merchandise WPWA offers for purchase and an order form, anticipating some ordering for the holiday season.

Facebook

If you are on Facebook, please "like" us and share the page with your "friends". Millions of people take part in this form of social media, therefore this is an opportunity to get our logo out there, gain members, and share what we do with the public. If you have anything that you think we should share with our "fans", please send it to heather@wpwa.org.

Land Acquisition

RIDEM is in the final stages of acquiring a parcel that abuts the Potter Hill Mill. RIDEM plans to develop public access at this site which is a prime fishing location on the lower Pawcatuck River.

Partnerships

Wild & Scenic

The National Parks Service recently contacted WPWA to offer \$20,000 in residual funds from another project. These funds would be utilized in 2013 to support NPS and WPWA staff expenses to initiate the yet-to-be-approved Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers designation. NPS requires a letter from our congressman requesting the funding for this purpose. Poyer will request Congressman Langevin's office to submit this letter on our behalf in the post-election climate. Once appropriated, WPWA will develop a Memorandum of Understanding with NPS to define a scope of work for the funding and proposed studies. It is unclear exactly how the funds will be divided between NPS and WPWA.

URI NEMO

WPWA continues to collaborate with this URI Coop Ext. project through the inclusion of content in our quarterly newsletter. NEMO submitted an article for the Summer 2012 newsletter.

Save the Bay

WPWA has been sub-awarded \$30K in 2012 Restore America's Estuaries funds originally granted to STB that will be applied WPWA's Kenyon Mill Dam Fish Restoration Project. An additional \$281,393 will come to WPWA through this same conduit in 2013. WPWA is in negotiations with STB to carry out the logistics of the 2014 ribbon cutting ceremony for the Shannock fish passage projects.

Routine Business

Membership

Hamilton is currently working on updating all membership applications, renewal letters, etc. to include the new 2013 rates.

Annual Appeal

WPWA typically generates between \$8 & \$12K in appeal revenue annually. We saw an increase in appeal revenue when the format was changed in 2009 from a standard letter to a bulleted graphic. The 2012 Annual Appeal letter was sent to print on October 26, 2012 with the expectation that the letters would be printed & mailed within a week. Due to "super storm" Sandy, mailing did not occur until Friday 10/09/12. The content and format of this year's letter was slightly changed. D. Ionata provided comments to the draft letter based on the information he gathered from a direct mail fundraising workshop and a meeting with fundraising professional, Jim Amspacher. Some recommendations were incorporated in the final version of the letter.

Watershed Concerns

Renewable Resources Inc. (Potter Hill) Hydro Project

The request for a third (3 year) preliminary determination application by RRI has been denied by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). In essence FERC's determination was that the applicant has not demonstrated "good faith progress" through the first two application processes (totaling 6 years) and that the applicant is attempting to "bank" the site for the future development. The determination letter quoted *"Thus, because Renewable Resources did not demonstrate due diligence and good faith during the term of its previous preliminary permit, the application for a third preliminary permit is denied."*

It is unclear how and if this rejection might preclude the owner from applying in the future. It is assumed that if another entity purchased the dam, that that "new" owner could then apply to FERC for a Hydro Exemption under a preliminary determination application or an actual application for a hydro license. In response to this development, expectation is that WPWA's federal partners will urge our organization to reconnect with the owner to gauge his interest in improving fish passage in the absence of hydro. This must be done carefully and tactfully. Potter Mill Dam is the first major impediment to migratory fish passage on the Pawcatuck and the long term success of our passage efforts upstream in Shannock are dependent upon maximizing passage at Potter Hill Mill Dam. Potter currently has an aging fish ladder that performs marginally. To read the full rejection letter from FERC visit http://elibrary.FERC.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20121107-3011