**Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee** Meeting Minutes Monday, March 25, 2019 5-7pm, Lyme Town Hall

Committee and Staff members present:

Anthony Irving (Town of Lyme, ERWSCC Chair)

Pat Young (ERWSCC Program Director)

Mary Augustiny (Town of East Haddam )

Kim Barber-Bradley (Town of Salem)

David Bingham (Salem Land Trust)

Bernie Gillis (Town of East Haddam)

Marilyn Gleeson (East Haddam Land Trust-guest)

Anthony Griggs (Town of Salem)

David Gumbart (The Nature Conservancy)

Sue Merrow (Town of East Haddam)

Ed Natoli (Town of Salem)

Rob Smith (East Haddam Land Trust)

Melvin Woody (Lyme Land Conservation Trust)

Call to order:

Chairman Anthony Irving called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Pat Young distributed copies of the budget, meeting agenda and minutes from the January 28 meeting.

Minutes, January 28, 2019:

Rob Smith motioned to approve the minutes. One correction was noted: on page 3, the term “is abuts” should be changed to “it abuts.” Sue Merrow seconded. Motion passed.

National Park Service Updates:

Young reported there was a push to get contracting work done earlier as there had been uncertainty if a second government shut down would occur. The ability to carry over unspent funds from previous years, results in the availability of $120,000 for grants and projects. Young will be working with Jamie Fosburgh of NPS to complete budget paperwork.

Staffing Discussion:

Current budget allows for potential to hire a part time assistant for ERWSCC. Riley Dougherty is the likely candidate, and she would work for an average of 8 - 10 hours a week, working on monitoring, education and administrative assistance. This would be a great help, without Liz Robinson available from The Nature Conservancy to assist, as she had in the past. Several options for employment/payment were discussed. Potentially could hire Riley as an employee through the CT RC&D Inc. or Lyme Land Conservation Trust at $18/hour (which will be $22 per hour including employer costs of social security, Medicare, workmen’s comp. etc.). If an employee option is not feasible, then Young suggested a rate of $22 an hour as a contractor since contractors need to cover the additional social security, Medicare, etc. Smith supports the idea of a paid assistant. Melvin Woody made a motion to approve $12,000 to engage a part-time employee at the rate discussed. Seconded by Tony Griggs. Motion passed.

Grant Updates:

*Interactive map*: map is complete, but can be updated. It would be helpful to get more information from land trusts/preserve owners. Placards will be developed to go out trail heads - will include a QR code. Could place them at businesses, as well. QR code will not pull up a specific map, but the Wander Our Watershed site. Discussion ensued on the QR code appearance and web site design layout.

*Conductivity logger*: these units are in streams and will be pulled in April or May.

*ADA trail section (Goodwin Trail)*: Smith stated wet weather and tree mortality has otherwise kept Town of East Haddam Public Works staff busy on other projects. Work on ADA trail may require overtime work rate. Smith spoke with one private landowner at a conference recently, and the individual was not excited about a trail on his land. Short trail relocation onto Town road may be viable. Discussions continue with other owners. Young stated a Master Gardener will be helping coordinate planting project and invasives removal work day (date TBD). Native plants will be used. This section would be the only ADA access to the Eightmile River. Bernie Gillis asked if there might be money for a boardwalk where it is wet; Young stated a town or land trust could apply to the Wild & Scenic committee, if the work is in support of ERWSCC grant guidelines. Kim Barber-Bradley said that the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) has some funds available for trail work, and can offer volunteer labor.

*Other grants*: Young stated that UConn may be interested in applying for funds to use remote imagery to assess tree die off (oaks, specifically) following recent gypsy moth outbreaks. There may be management implications for the information gathered. These outcomes should be further explained. David Bingham stated that areas where oaks are lost could be sites for chestnut tree plantings. Irving stated any proposal should clarify how deliverables can benefit ERWSCC. Young requests input from Committee members to shape a response back to UConn. Bingham wondered if money would be better off being used for data loggers that track bird movement/migration. Ed Natoli stated that funding to pay for an ADA trail in Salem, or for educational material, would be useful to show the benefits of the Eightmile’s Wild & Scenic designation to Salem residents.

Partner Updates:

- David Gumbart provided an update on Nature Conservancy staffing, with multiple positions being allocated time in the Eightmile watershed.

- Smith and Marilyn Gleeson reported on the closing of the Miller Farm parcel by the East Haddam Land Trust (87 acres on Tater Hill Road), which is right on the border of the watershed. The State DEEP closed on the 246-acre Hand property on Hopyard Road, which will be an addition to Devil’s Hopyard State Park. Other state funds may be available for use in protecting other nearby lands along Muddy Brook.

- Bingham stated the Salem Land Trust is working on a 235-acre project on West Road. Money is in hand, and closing details are being worked out.

- Irving reported the Lyme Land Conservation Trust is working on developing trails on its new Johnson parcel.

- Merrow said that April 13 is a work day at Roaring Brook (East Haddam) to mark trails and boundaries.

- Young stated there would be a trail race at the Walden Preserve (Salem) in early June, as part of the Salem Bicentennial celebration. Unique clay symbols will be placed in hidden spots in the woods.

Subcommittee Updates:

*Outreach & Education*: Merrow reported on the Eightmile 10 year map and online map projects. Young announced a date with Moodus Moms club for April 9. A volunteer water monitoring conference will be held on April 5, and ERWSCC use of its water data will be featured. A vernal pools walk at Pleasant Valley (Lyme) will be held. Lyme will have an Earth Day event on April 28. Celebrate East Haddam is on April 27. Irving suggested Young send out an email with a listing of calendar events. A stormwater session for 8th graders is pending in East Haddam. Mystic Aquarium will partner with ERWSCC to host community events about amphibians. Family programs will take place on the last 3 Saturdays in July. Merrow stated the March 9 conference on water as a public trust was a good conference.

*- Protection & Management*: Goodwin Trail was discussed earlier. Young will set up a sub-committee meeting date. Barber-Bradley reported on a planned March 30 trail re-route work day with the Southeast CT chapter of NEMBA. A proposal for a multi-use trail at Nehantic State Forest has been submitted to the DEEP.

*- Science & Monitoring*: Young stated the Moulson Pond Fishway will be open soon, and it is expected good video will be available of fisheries movement. Bingham stated there is a need for breeding bird survey volunteers; a small amount of funding could attract qualified surveyors. Young said temperature loggers will be set out, and she is seeking cold water stream sites for some of the loggers. Natoli asked if phosphorus was being measured; Young stated this is possible, and the two will discuss further. Young asked committee members to bring funding specifics for projects they are interested in to the next ERWSCC meeting.

*- Project Review*: Young stated that the Route 82 bridge replacement comments are submitted to the DOT. Irving said state buy-in would be needed to have Eightmile information posted on a kiosk at Devil’s Hopyard, at the Chapman Falls park location.

- *Executive Committee/Finance*: Young asked if there were questions about the budget. The annual report was budgeted for $8000, but will be completed for less. Everyone loves the Eightmile 10-year map. It is being distributed far and wide (including to State and U.S. representatives). There is a large print over-run of the map. Gleeson suggested sending copies to local schools as a discussion topic.

Old/New Business:

Bingham reported that there may not be enough support at the state legislature for HB5254, a bill seeking to establish a conveyance fee for buyers of real estate, with proceeds to support municipal open space acquisition and management. He urged people to contact their state senators and representatives.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted, David Gumbart, ERWSCC Secretary 