

Minutes
Herring River Restoration Committee (HRRC)
Cape Cod National Seashore Headquarters
Wellfleet, MA
September 18, 2014
9:00 am-5:00 pm

Members Present: Tim Smith, Steve Spear, Steve Block, Eric Derleth, Charleen Greenhalgh, Hillary Greenberg, Hunt Durey

Others Present: Margo Fenn, Martha Rheinhardt, Don Palladino

Administration/Coordination:

Communications/Coordination with Friends of Herring River (FHR): Don Palladino updated the Committee on FHR activities. He noted that there has been good feedback from the Annual Meeting and distribution of the brochure. He described a proposal to the Antioch University Collaborative Service Initiative to engage graduate students to develop school educational programs associated with the Restoration Project. He also noted that FHR would provide a presentation prior to the Wellfleet Special Town Meeting on October 6, 2014.

FHR has completed the deliverables and closed out the 2013 MET grant. A new MET grant round will be available this fall; pre-applications are due October 24, 2014. The Committee discussed seeking a grant to fund continued rare species monitoring, in consultation with the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

The Committee also discussed possible year-end funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). These funds could possibly be used to develop a computer interface for use of the hydrodynamic model developed by the Woods Hole Group (WHG).

Don Palladino also reported that the Coastal America Foundation (CAF) had provided FHR with \$5,000 to cover the costs of publishing and distributing its latest brochure on the Restoration Project.

Approval of Minutes: The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2014 and August 20, 2014 meetings.

Meeting Schedule: The Committee agreed to the following schedule for upcoming meetings:

October 7, 2014	USGS Adaptive Mgt. Team & Stakeholders
October 8, 2014	MOU Working Group
October 9, 2014	HRRC regular meeting
November 13, 2014	HRRC regular meeting

Discussion:

Budget and Work Plan for FY 2015: The Committee reviewed the tasks outlined in the 2015 draft work plan as follows:

-Chequessett Neck Road (CNR) Bridge and Tide Gate Design: MA DOT is reviewing the 25% design plans recently completed by Fuss & O'Neill. This process is expected to take several months. Tim Smith and Nils Wiberg will meet with DOT staff next week. Fuss & O'Neill has provided a cost estimate to prepare 75% design plans, but the HRRC needs to clarify what work is needed in order to submit regulatory permit applications.

Tim Smith is the HRRC liaison for the CNR work. He will coordinate with Fuss & O'Neill and request that they develop a detailed proposal and cost estimate for the next phase of work. The goal is for FHR to sign a new contract with Fuss & O'Neill for the next phase of the CNR bridge design by December 2014 depending on the receipt of DOT comments.

-Professional Facilitation for Low-lying Properties: FHR and HRRC representatives have conferred with officials at the Chequessett Yacht and Country Club (CYCC) and a professional facilitator/mediator to set up a process to address issues related to the raising low-lying portions of the CYCC golf course and construction of the Mill Creek dike. The Consensus Building Institute (CBI) will provide FHR with a proposal to interview the parties and do an initial assessment of the situation. The Committee discussed how to proceed with this effort.

Margo Fenn agreed to be the initial point of contact with CBI. Hunt Durey is the HRRC liaison for the CYCC facilitation.

-Mill Creek Dike and Tide Gate Design: Since the Mill Creek dike would primarily be constructed on National Park Service (NPS) property, NPS must review the proposed design options and decide what type of structure to design. Superintendent George Price needs to consult with NPS officials on this matter.

Tim Smith is the HRRC liaison for the Mill Creek work. He will coordinate with Fuss & O'Neill to seek an engineering proposal in order to bring the Mill Creek dike design to a permit-ready level. This work will proceed once NPS reviews and selects a design option.

-High Toss Road Removal: DER funding will be used to develop conceptual design plans for High Toss Road. The Committee has not made any firm decision about the disposition of the road and river crossing but discussed options to remove the High Toss Road causeway across the marsh plain and elevate/regrade remaining road segments necessary to maintain access to adjacent private residential properties. Part of this task is to develop and evaluate design options and conceptual plans for providing pedestrian access across the marsh to Griffin Island. The Committee discussed whether to combine this contract with the other low-lying road design work, but decided to keep this contract separate. The timing of this work might need to be coordinated with whatever action is needed at the Wellfleet 2015 Town Meeting.

The Committee agreed to hire a consultant through a competitive bidding process to develop and evaluate design options and conceptual plans for improving the hydraulic crossing and providing pedestrian access across the marsh to Griffin Island.

Steve Spear is the HRRC liaison for this project. He and Martha Rheinhardt will develop a draft scope of work and Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek a qualified engineering firm to bid on this work.

-Low-lying Road Design/Pole Dike Creek Tide Gate Design: Martha Rheinhardt is preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for bids to develop permit level design plans for elevating and re-grading low-lying segments of Old County Road, Bound Brook Island Road, and Pole Dike Road, and for installing a culvert with tide control structure at Pole Dike Creek. The Committee discussed what road crossings should be included in the scope of work. Steve Block is the HRRC liaison for this project.

Chequessett Yacht and Country Club (CYCC) Golf Course Mitigation Plans: Steve Spear contacted a golf course designer regarding what plans are needed to get to the permit-ready design level for elevation and re-grading of low-lying sections of the CYCC golf course. Initiation of this task is predicated on completion of successful agreement between CYCC and the project proponents, facilitated as described above, to reach a non-binding written agreement between CYCC and HRRC regarding impact mitigation measures for this property. A golf course design expert might be needed during the facilitation process.

Steve Spear is the HRRC liaison for this task. He will seek a proposal and cost estimate from a golf course architect to outline the steps needed to get to permit-ready design for the golf course work.

-Low-lying Property Survey and Mitigation Plans: The Committee discussed ongoing work to provide ground surveys, engineering and design studies, and plan development for impact prevention measures for affected private properties. Before meeting with property owners to review survey plans, the HRRC needs to review policy issues regarding what types of mitigation are appropriate in different situations. The Committee agreed to have a webinar to discuss this further. Martha Rheinhardt is the liaison and coordinator for this work.

-Permitting: The Committee discussed preparation of a Development of Regional Impact application to the Cape Cod Commission. The DRI review process will begin within 45 days after the MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs signs a MEPA Certificate on the Final Environmental Impact Report. Margo Fenn is the liaison and coordinator for this work. FHR will solicit proposals from qualified legal/environmental consultants to undertake this work.

-Cultural Resource Assessments: Phase 1B investigations will be needed in identified areas of construction disturbance in and around the Chequessett Neck Road bridge and Mill Creek dike. The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared a draft scope of work for

the Phase 1B work. Deliverables from this task will include an assessment report and, as applicable, modified engineering design plans reflecting cultural resource avoidance and minimization measures. Work cannot begin until the Programmatic Agreement between NPS and the MA Historical Commission is signed.

Tim Smith and Eric Derleth are the HRRC liaisons for this project. FHR will seek a cost proposal from the Public Archaeology Lab (PAL) to perform the work.

-Rare Species Monitoring: The Committee discussed rare species monitoring in the Herring River estuary. FHR will recruit qualified wildlife biologists with backgrounds and training in ornithology (bird survey), herpetology (turtle survey), and entomology (stem borer moth survey) to do this work.

Tim Smith is the HRRC liaison for this work. Tim Smith and Eric Derleth will consult with officials at the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) to design the monitoring protocols and finalize the scope of work.

-Administration and Overhead: FHR will contract with a Senior Project Manager to oversee, review and approve technical work and deliverables, and contract with a Grant/Fiscal Manager to provide grant management and project administration. Other administrative costs include office lease expenses, equipment, supplies, and other operational expenses required to support implementation of the above-described tasks. Don Palladino reported that an office lease has been signed and FHR is in the process of furnishing the office. Draft job descriptions for the two new contract positions have been prepared. Over the next few months, FHR also needs to develop a job description for an Executive Director, with the goal of hiring someone for that position by next summer.

Herring River Adaptive Management Next Steps: Due to time constraints, the Committee did not discuss adaptive management, but agreed that preparation is needed to make the October adaptive management meetings productive.

Project Fundraising Strategy: Don Palladino and Hunt Durey reported on recent phone consultations with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC may be able to assist the FHR in developing a fundraising strategy for the Restoration Project and help build contacts with other individuals and organizations that might be able to help with fundraising. A meeting is also planned in October with representatives of Ducks Unlimited. The Committee needs to explore further how the costs of infrastructure and management elements might be allocated among the federal and state agencies.

Sea-level Rise and Hydrodynamic Modeling: The Committee discussed again the issue of whether additional modeling is needed to anticipate the effects of storm surges and sea level rise. After lengthy discussion, the group agreed that it might be useful to have a model run that evaluates the effects of an extreme storm surge combined with estimated future SLR.

FEIS/EIR: The Herring River Technical Working Group (TWG) met on September 17, 2014 and discussed, among other things, the draft Concern/Response report for the Final

Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/EIR). There appear to be some differences between the MEPA and NEPA processes regarding how to structure the Final EIS/EIR, respond to public and agency comments, and incorporate new information and analysis that has been completed since the Draft EIS/EIR was released. The group discussed how to modify the text and appendices of the final document to ensure that the MEPA scope is fully addressed.

Restore America's Estuaries (RAE): Blue Carbon: Steve Crooks and Steve Emmett-Mattox of RAE joined the HRRC meeting to give a presentation on blue carbon. Coastal blue carbon refers to the role of coastal wetlands (tidal marshes, seagrass meadows and mangroves) in contributing to the global carbon cycle. Coastal wetlands sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in the form of biomass and soil carbon. Though only representing 2% of the world's surface area they sequester 50% of the carbon that is transferred to marine soils and sediments.

Restoration of coastal ecosystems brings benefits that support the livelihood of local communities, improve fisheries, reduce risk of flooding, provide future climate change adaptation benefits, and reverse ongoing greenhouse gas emissions from converted wetlands.

Crooks and Emmett-Mattox presented information on blue carbon, including:

- Coastal blue carbon as an important ecosystem service
- Using coastal blue carbon to advance wetlands protection, restoration, and management goals, as well as climate change policies and plans
- Brainstorming discussion on opportunities for coastal blue carbon projects in Massachusetts
- Ongoing coastal blue carbon research, tools, and resources available to help agencies maximize the value of coastal blue carbon in the state

The Committee noted that blue carbon credits could be a source of ongoing funding for the Herring River Restoration Project. Among many questions is who would own the carbon credits that might be generated. Steve Emmett-Mattox suggested that this issue needs to be explored further. Other next steps could include an estimate of potential methane benefits from the Project and some preliminary calculations regarding feasibility of selling credits. Tim Smith noted that he is participating in a blue carbon-focused special session at the RAE National Conference in November, using the Herring River as a case study.

HRRC members also commented that it would be helpful to have RAE's support in fundraising efforts for the Restoration Project.

Documents Referred to in the Meeting:

- Minutes of the August 19, 2014 and August 20, 2014 HRRC Meetings