

**LMRLAC – December 24, 2013**

**LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**December 12, 2013**

**Members:**

- ✓ = present

**Current:**

- ✓ Kathryn Nelson (Chair) -- Nashua
- Michael Redding (Vice Chair) – Merrimack
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua
- ✓ Jim Barnes (Treasurer) – Hudson
- ✓ Michael Croteau - Litchfield
- ✓ Nelson Disco - Merrimack
- ✓ George May – Merrimack

**Associate Members:**

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

**Also in attendance:**

Gene Porter, Nashua resident and prospective member  
Geoff Daly, Nashua resident  
Ray Whittemore, Wildlife Management Institute

The meeting was called to order at 7pm in the Music/Art/Media room of the Nashua Public Library by Chair Kath Nelson.

**Minutes**

Minutes from the October 24, 2013 meetings were approved.

**New Business**

**New England Cottontail Habitat Restoration Project**

Mr. Whittemore introduced himself and explained he was filling in for Mr. Kierstead, who was unable to attend. He explained that the Wildlife Management Institute is a nonprofit organization which works with other agencies, promoting wildlife public policy and raising money for grants for wildlife habitat work.

Mr. Whittemore explained that the New England cottontail, along with many other species, requires young forest as an ideal habitat. He explained that New Hampshire has a lot of mature forest now, but not much for shrub-scrub young forest. The New England cottontail is being considered for endangered species status. The intent behind the project is to provide habitat so that the species won't become endangered.

He explained that the Eastern cottontail and the New England cottontail look very much alike, but the Eastern cottontail has larger eyes and ears and so is less subject to predation. He stated the New England cottontail needs about 25 acres of uninterrupted habitat to live.

Mr. Whittemore also explained that the habitat restoration project provides financial aid for landowners, as well as technical assistance and advice, if the owners are interested in providing habitat. One example he gave of prospective habitat is land adjacent to power line right-of-ways. He explained that the assistance can consist of forest management plans, or funding for fertilizer and plantings. He explained that the terms are between the landowner and the Natural

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Resources Conservation Service. He explained that at least 5 acres of land is desired for such agreements for at least a 5-10 year period.

Mr. Whittemore gave a hypothetical example of a 30-acre parcel, of which 20 acres were in the program. In such a case, the management plan might require clearing a 5-acre section of the parcel every 5 years. He explained that a young forest remains in that state for up to 20 years, after which the area would transition from a young forest to a more mature forest.

Mr. Whittemore suggested that LMRLAC could help by spreading the word about the program. Members could either approach landowners who may be interested, or pass along contact information to Mr. Whittemore or Mr. Kierstead.

Mr. Whittemore stated that the program was originally intended just for privately owned land, but he speculated that it's possible the program could be expanded to public lands. Implementing the program on public lands could provide demonstration areas to spread the word about the program.

Mr. Whittemore showed a map which included parts of Hudson, Litchfield, and Merrimack in the region of interest for the program. Michael. C. explained that Litchfield was looking into the project in the Moore's Falls area.

Kath suggested contacting NRPC. Jim suggested reaching out to the conservation commissions in the towns within the area of interest.

Committee members brainstormed about potential areas in the member towns.

Mr. Whittemore indicated that the Natural Resources Conservation Service is the prime agency, and that the young forest ([www.youngforest.org](http://www.youngforest.org)) and New England cottontail ([www.newenglandcottontail.org](http://www.newenglandcottontail.org)) Web sites include contact information.

Nelson and George suggested presenting the information to a SoRLAC meeting.

The committee thanked Mr. Whittemore for coming in.

## **January Meeting Agenda Topics**

Kath asked committee members to think about topics for the January meeting. She suggested members think about a presentation to the member towns, and what topics should be covered. She suggested that one focus of the presentation should be the LMRLAC checklist. She also suggested members think about what they might have for photos within the corridor.

## **Hunting from River**

Mr. Daly showed a picture of hunters on the Merrimack River. He explained that he has seen many decoys in the river and hunters shooting from the Hudson side toward Greeley Park. Mr. Daly stated he understands it is illegal to hunt on the Merrimack River. Kath requested that Mr. Daly locate the specific reference in the law.

Mr. Porter suggested signage at launch sites.

Kath mentioned the subject had been brought up at the Nashua Waterways Committee meeting on December 11 for committee members to think about.

## **Membership**

Mr. Porter stated that his application for membership has been approved by the mayor and sent to DES.

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### **Use of LMRLAC Funds**

Kath reminded committee members that there are funds available and suggested thinking about what would be the best use of the funds. Kath stated a brochure had been previously discussed but someone will need to commit to putting it together.

Nelson suggested a display board to take to conferences.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

### **Next LMRLAC Meeting**

The next LMRLAC meeting will be January 23, 2014, at 7:00 pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Archambault  
secretary