



SuAsCo RSC Minutes June 30, 2026

RSC Representatives present: Marlies Henderson, Chair (Billerica), Andrew Petit de Mange (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham), Dan Cook (Carlisle), Jonathan DeKock (Carlisle-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Carlene Hempel (Concord), Laura Mattei (SVT), Brian Murphy (Bedford), Ross Tucker (Lincoln), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Angela Taveira-Dick (Bedford-Alt)

Absent: Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Stephanie Koch (USFWS), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt), Vacant (Commonwealth), Vacant (Sudbury)

Also attending: Elissa Brown (Lead River Ambassador), Ellie Sablak

Welcome and May Meeting Minutes

7:02 pm Mr. Tucker opened the meeting and called for comments on the May Minutes; Mr. Sciacca had one correction.

7:04 pm Ms. Henderson moved to accept the Minutes as corrected, Mr. Cook seconded, and the minutes passed 9–0.

River Ambassador Report

7:06 pm Ms. Brown reported that the state received only a few inches of rain in May, which is below normal, and the region remains in Level 3 drought. A drought-management amendment to the Water Management Act passed the Senate but has not advanced further. Several water chestnut pulls took place in late May, including one at Great Meadows and one organized by Jonathan DeKoch in the Bedford/Carlisle area.

7:08 pm Concord's Conservation Committee will solicit applications to replace Ms. Brown on the Warner's Pond Management Committee and is preparing an RFP for a consultant to help develop an adaptive management plan for the pond. Ms. Hempel co-led a related stakeholder meeting with Peter Alden and representatives from OARS, Friends of Warner's Pond, the MCI Farm, the West Concord Advisory Committee, and the Girl Scouts (Scout Island owners). Mr. Cook recommended fluvial geomorphologist Nick Nelson, who recently presented on cranberry bog dam removal in Carlisle, as a possible consultant. Ms. Hempel said she would send an RFP to Mr. Nelson.

7:10 pm In early June a Concord DPW crew that was clearing a blockage in a sewer siphon beneath the river near Elm Street pumped its waste into a truck for transport back to Concord's DPW facility. A valve failed to close completely, and nearly 200 gallons of septic waste leaked onto town roads and into catch basins. The town responded quickly, flushing the area with 8,000 gallons of water and issuing a 48-hour no-contact order. The situation has been resolved.

7:12 pm On June 11, the MA Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance presented a preliminary redevelopment plan for the former MCI Concord site. The plan includes up to 1,000 residential units and a renovated, expanded wastewater treatment plant. Concord would eventually like that plant to service areas in town that are not currently being serviced in addition to the future redeveloped areas. Design concepts for the site include two river access points and a trail connection. Concord hopes to relocate its DPW facility to the site. A public survey about the redevelopment plan is open through July 1, with a revised master plan expected by early September and another public meeting anticipated on September 9.

7:15 pm A large public meeting was held concerning the MassDOT Route 2 Rotary/Baker Avenue redesign, which includes a proposed bridge over Route 2 and replacement of the deteriorating Route 2 bridge near the

Concord River. Design is expected to be completed by 2030, with construction finishing by 2035; the Council will have opportunities to comment as the design progresses.

7:17 pm A Park Lane homeowner on the Assabet River in Concord has filed a Notice of Intent for cut bank stabilization. Mr. Petit de Mange said the project is small, above the high-water line, and will not require a full Army Corps review.

7:19 pm Permitting for Sherman's Bridge is nearing completion. Orders of Conditions are expected from Wayland and Sudbury. The Conservation Commissions rejected chromated copper arsenate preservative in favor of DCOI, which is not an EPA-restricted pesticide and contains no heavy metals. In-water work will be limited to Sudbury-side piling and possibly a sandbag cofferdam and floating silt fence. Roughly 500 square feet of floodplain storage will be lost.

7:22 pm The AMC's 150th-anniversary relay included stops at the RSC-funded wooden kayak rack at Brewster Woods on the Concord River and a well-attended paddling event at the Route 117 canoe launch in Lincoln where Mr. Tucker greeted the paddlers and provided coffee and doughnuts. Ms. Brown said that the RSC partially funded solstice events by Art for All and Musketaquid Arts at the Old Manse and the North Bridge on June 21st. There was music, arts and crafts and a picnic. Over 100 people attended the celebration.

Framingham Invasive Plant Control funding request.

7:29 pm Mr. Tucker opened a discussion on two funding requests submitted by Mr. Chick for invasive plant removal work on the Carol Getchell Trail in Framingham: \$9,000 to train volunteer Trail Tenders to help maintain the trail, including invasive species removal, and \$15,000 for invasive plant removal through the Framingham Conservation Commission. Mr. Tucker questioned whether the Council's current process allowed these requests to be considered at this meeting. After some discussion it was decided that neither request fit clearly into an existing process: the Council's small-grant application window had already closed, while the newly formed Carryover Funds Working Group was still determining how to allocate the Council's surplus funds. Mr. Chick explained that he had believed that the two grants would be considered under an expedited process discussed at a prior meeting. While members agreed the proposals were in keeping with RSC goals, the Council concluded that these or any similar requests should not be approved before reopening the application process to all eligible communities. The Council agreed to table formal action on Mr. Chick's proposals and to consider reopening the small-grant application window.

Carryover Funds Working Group Report

7:44 pm Mr. DeKock reported that the RSC's five-member working group has been examining how to allocate the estimated \$191,000–\$287,000 in surplus funds that must be committed within about a year. Rather than issuing an open RFP, the working group proposed having RSC members generate project ideas which focus on increasing public access to, and awareness of, the rivers. Suggested projects included: ADA-accessible canoe and kayak launches; river viewing platforms or boardwalks; a historical tribute project related to the Talbot Mills Dam in Billerica that could be funded at about \$50,000, and a literary project involving lesser-known Transcendentalists with a connection to our river as the RSC has never funded a project relating to our literary ORV. The group had identified the Bedford boat ramp as the most feasible choice for an ADA-accessible launch but later learned that the project likely could not be executed within the RSC's funding deadline. The working group is now considering commissioning engineering studies and design diagrams that could be given to towns for later use. The group would also like to create a list of shovel ready projects that do not need permitting and that the RSC could execute when surplus money next becomes available. Ms. Brown had concerns about funding future engineering plans because the timing required for both Conservation Commission Orders of Conditions and Chapter 91 permitting could take longer than the RSC's grant cycle allows. Mr. Petit de Mange said the working group intends to follow the RSC's procurement process by developing descriptions of 5-10 potential projects, then either bundle them into a single RFP or solicit quotes directly from several qualified engineering firms. The working group received consensus from the Council to move forward with this approach. Council members were invited to submit additional project ideas by July 12. Mr. Cook suggested that the RSC also consider a simple study identifying upstream dams whose removal would open more of the watershed to migratory fish.

Commonwealth Representation

8:13 pm The Council has two Commonwealth-designated seats that have gone unfilled for several years. Over

the past nine months Mr. Petit de Mange has repeatedly reached out to high-level officials at state environmental agencies for help in filling these positions. He has been referred to specific colleagues who should be able find an RSC representative but so far none of these efforts have produced a candidate. Mr. Tucker suggested that the RSC could consider asking elected officials, or their aides or proxies, to fill the Council's second state vacancy. This suggestion was widely supported. The Council will continue to search for qualified candidates. Mr. Sciacca suggested that at least one have ties to the watershed.

Website Update

8:18 pm Ms. Sablak said that new June entries to the website include water chestnut pulls with the Concord Land Conservation Trust, the AMC 150th anniversary relay paddle, and Concord's solstice event. The SVT ice cream social on July 15 will also be posted. Council members were asked to send her any other upcoming events.

Other Items

8:21 pm Ms. Henderson said that the discussion on River Stewardship Awards should be tabled to the next meeting.

8:22 pm Mr. Petit de Mange said that we could move the discussion about a Fall retreat to the next meeting.

Community Updates

8:23 pm Mr. Sciacca reported recurring trash and pothole issues at the Wayland boat ramp, which Wayland's Highway Department addresses when contacted even though the ramp lies within a state highway right-of-way and may be MassDOT's responsibility. After learning that Rep. Gentile represents this area of Wayland, Mr. Chick offered to speak with the representative, whom he knows well.

8:25 pm Mr. Tucker said that Lincoln's Conservation Commission is hosting a river cleanup on July 17. He also noted that there is an unpermitted boardwalk on South Great Road that is within 200 feet of the Sudbury River. It is not visible from the road. The property owner still has time to file a Notice of Intent if he wants to keep it.

8:26 pm Mr. Murphy said that Bedford's DPW has been in contact with Rent.Fun about setting up a self-service kayak rental service at Bedford's boat ramp.

8:29 pm Mr. DeKock reported that the Carlisle-Bedford water chestnut pull at the Bedford boat ramp drew 59 volunteers, including 15 children, making it a successful community-building and river stewardship event.

8:30 pm Ms. Henderson reported that three consecutive years of volunteer water chestnut removal near the Route 3A Bridge have significantly reduced the infestation in that area. She noted that additional infestations remain near Two Brothers Rocks and Route 3 in Billerica and plans to organize another volunteer pull at the Route 3 site.

8:31 pm Mr. Murphy said that he will meet with Rob Munro to discuss the possibility of expanding OARS' annual Concord River Race to include a new multisport event featuring a swim, paddle, and a third leg consisting of cycling, running, or another activity.

8:35 pm Mr. Petit de Mange said that the **RSC's July 28 meeting** will focus on the Treasurer's report, carryover funds and small grant decisions.

8:36 pm Mr. Murphy suggested standardizing a monthly Treasurer's report as a regular agenda item.

Adjournment

8:40 pm A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Henderson and seconded by Ms. Hempel. The motion passed unanimously.