



SuAsCo RSC Minutes May 26, 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), Robert Munro (OARS), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Carlene Hempel (Concord), Stephanie Koch (USFWS), Laura Mattei (SVT), Brian Murphy (Bedford), Ross Tucker (Lincoln), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt), Angela Taveira-Dick (Bedford-Alt)

Absent: Vacant (Commonwealth)

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

Welcome and April Meeting Minutes

7:01 pm Ms. Henderson opened the meeting and asked for corrections to the April Minutes. There were none.

7:06 pm Mr. Sciacca moved to accept the Minutes, Mr. Chick seconded, and the motion passed 10-0.

2026-2027 Officer elections

7:07 pm Ms. Henderson moved that she continue as Chair for another year. Mr. Chick seconded her motion and it passed unanimously.

7:13 pm Ms. Henderson nominated Ross Tucker as Vice-Chair. Mr. Tucker said that while he was willing to serve in this role, he did not view it as an automatic step toward becoming Chair at the next election. Mr. Chick seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7:15 pm Ms. Henderson nominated Mr. Chick as Treasurer, Mr. Sciacca seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7:16 pm Mr. Sciacca nominated Ms. Dugan as Secretary, Mr. Chick seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

River Ambassador Report

7:17 pm Ms. Brown said that our region is at Level 3 drought conditions. Billerica's Conservation Commission postponed its Hearing on the Talbot Mill Dam until June 8th. Billerica's Select Board named town counsel in CRT Development's complaint against the Historical Districts Commission but voted not to expend town funds for defense attorneys. Ms. Henderson is organizing a water chestnut pull near Bartlett's Landing in Billerica on May 30th. Jonathan DeKock is organizing a water chestnut pull on June 13 at the Bedford Boat Ramp. Ms. Brown and Mr. Cook represented the RSC at Carlisle's Route to Sustainability Day on May 3rd.

7:23 pm Ms. Brown said that a preliminary plan for the MCI-Concord site shows walking trails along the river and a 200 foot setback. Ms. Hempel will represent the RSC at the Reimagine MCI-Concord Master Plan Design Charrette in June. There will be no development of the site until 2028. MassDOT is reworking their plans for the Route 2 rotary. It looks like there will be a bridge over the rotary. Their website shows a bridge over the Assabet River between the rotary and Baker Avenue. Ms. Brown resigned from the Warner's Pond Management Committee after a state ethics review determined that her paid RSC role created a conflict of

interest. The Committee is developing a Gantt chart with preliminary treatment and monitoring of Warner's Pond planned for this summer.

7:27 pm Ms. Brown recently sent a letter, signed by Ms. Henderson and Mr. Tucker, to the Lincoln property owner of the dock at Fairhaven Bay asking them not to install the dock this summer as power boats are not allowed to be launched from it and it would be easier to launch a canoe directly into the river. Another Lincoln homeowner has been notified that they violated Conservation Commission rules by putting down bog boards along Route 117. The Conservation Commission is determining its next steps. A Notice of Intent has been filed for the Sherman's Bridge work with the Wayland and Sudbury Conservation Commissions. The full plans can be found on the Sudbury Conservation Commission website. Ms. Brown created a shared spreadsheet of all SuAsCo road crossing signs. Representatives were asked to check signs in their areas, note the condition of the signs, and whether any were missing. She attended a meeting of the MCI-Concord Land Use Working Group. She and Ms. Henderson attended a Mass Rivers Alliance Section 7 training. She created the RSC's new Zoom account. MOU's have been sent out for Partner grants. Ms. Brown removed trash and restocked river maps at various sites. She noted that few water chestnut rosettes have been seen on the Sudbury or Assabet rivers so far.

Website Update

7:38 pm Ms. Sablak reported that the RSC section of our website now includes the agenda, River Ambassador report, and approved Minutes for each meeting. The events page has been updated to include three upcoming water chestnut pulls plus a cranberry bog talk. She added Mr. Cook's fact sheet on Warner's Pond to the dam removal sub-page. An interpretive panel section is in progress and includes a photo from the Katie Durand Memorial Park. The Carlisle Conservation Foundation was added to the Watershed Partners. The Contact form now routes to Andrew Petit de Mange. The spam issue is still being investigated by Monty. Mr. Sciacca thought RSC business cards should include our website address.

7:50 pm Rob Munro, the new Executive Director for OARS, joined the Meeting. Mr. Petit de Mange introduced him. Mr. Munro said that he would officially be starting at OARS on July 6th but had already attended some meetings and gatherings.

Financial Status

7:59 pm Mr. Petit de Mange presented an overview of the RSC's financial position, stating that our cooperative agreement will begin its fifth and final year on October 1. He thanked Michelle Soares Vanslette from SVT for compiling the necessary financial records. He reported that the current unobligated balance is approximately \$82,000, roughly half of which is already set aside for the River Ambassador and website contractor. Year 5 funding of \$235,000 begins October 1, but the bulk is already committed through major Partner grants, SVT fiscal agent fees, and \$15,000 for invasive plant treatments at the Carroll Getchel Trail. Approximately \$278,000 must be obligated and spent down within the next year. He said that in previous years we did not spend all the money set aside for Ms. Brown, Ms. Sablak, RSC led science projects, and small grants. He suggested forming a subcommittee to consider how to allocate the unspent funds.

8:04 pm Mr. Chick offered two ideas for the remaining funds. He thought that each of the RSC's eight municipalities could be allotted \$10,000 to create a proposal for their own locality. The proposals would need to be submitted by September 1, 2026. He also proposed that the RSC could offer Billerica a grant for about \$50,000 as mitigation for removing the dam. One use for that money could be that the Billerica Historical Commission or the Middlesex Canal Association would create a kiosk in the vicinity of the dam which would celebrate the history of the canal and the Mills in anticipation of the dam removal. Ms. Henderson expressed enthusiasm for the kiosk concept. She thought that the town's historical committees might be reluctant to pursue mitigation funding due to their opposition to the dam removal but she committed to continuing her outreach efforts. She also expressed strong interest in engaging the Nipmuc Nation as a watershed partner.

8:11 pm Mr. Petit de Mange proposed forming a small subcommittee to identify spending priorities and to develop a simple RFP to solicit project proposals in priority categories from member towns and Partner organizations. Projects could include river access improvements, dam removal support, or other initiatives

consistent with the RSC Management Plan and watershed goals. Mr. Sciacca, Mr. Chick, Ms. Hempel, and Mr. DeKock volunteered for this subcommittee.

Program Updates

8:13 pm Mr. Chick said that he has found two more small patches of knotweed plus one 60' x 50' patch on the Carol Getchell Trail. He will submit a 2026 grant to treat those three areas.

8:14 pm Mr. Petit de Mange said that recently he has been in touch with an undersecretary at Mass EEA who has been assigned to designate representatives from an appropriate agency to each of the Massachusetts Wild & Scenic Rivers (WSR). Currently there is a debate about whether that will be one DER or DCR representative per river or a single state representative who will attend meetings at all four of the rivers.

8:15 pm Ms. Henderson noted that the RSC has previously published articles in *River Currents*, the semiannual NPS publication for WSRs, and suggested that the RSC consider submitting a new one. Mr. Petit de Mange said he would look into the next submission deadline. Mr. Chick offered to submit a future article on the Carroll Getchell Trail.

8:18 pm The Council discussed holding a half-day retreat in September or October. Mr. Petit de Mange said that it would be a way to reaffirm the work we are doing together, to set priorities and review our successes. People can identify their priority project and what they will take responsibility for in the coming year. He thought it could involve a potluck meal and possibly a river paddle. Mr. Chick suggested the Carol Getchell Trail as a possible site for this meeting.

8:22 pm Ms. Henderson brought up the idea of establishing a rotating series of paddles covering different segments of the SuAsCo WSR, with members taking turns leading. A discussion followed about offering these events to the public or limiting them to RSC representatives.

Community Update

8:29 pm Mr. Sciacca said that the Route 20 boat ramp is supposed to be maintained by Mass DOT, but the agency does not provide that maintenance. There are trash and pothole issues. He thought that perhaps the RSC could contract with a private company if we cannot convince the state to maintain that area. Mr. Chick offered to contact the legislative delegation about this.

8:33 pm Mr. Cook said that there is a meeting with a fluvial geomorphologist on June 8th in Carlisle who will talk about removal options for a dam at a Carlisle cranberry bog.

8:34 pm Mr. DeKock reported that a recently installed trash can at the Bedford Boat Launch on Route 225 in Bedford has a weekly pickup service that is working well. The area around the trash can appears to have been cleared by visitors.

8:36 pm Ms. Henderson attended a FERC relicensing meeting in Lawrence concerning the Essex Dam and its hydroelectric equipment, both of which require relicensing every 50 years. She learned that over the years many studies have been conducted there to support fish passage. Research at the dam has included tagging and counting fish, monitoring whether they swim upstream, whether they use the fish elevator, and tracking whether they return to the area. On June 1st and 2nd she will attend her 11th annual Middlesex Canal Towpath Stewardship Day, which is a community work program of the Middlesex Correctional Facility.

8:40 pm Mr. Murphy spoke about OARS' successful, second annual Concord River Race on May 9th. He is trying to learn more about the deteriorating Route 225 bridge.

8:44 pm Mr. Chick motioned to adjourn, Mr. Cook seconded and the motion passed unanimously.