

Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2019 – 10:00 AM-NOON

I. Welcome / Introductions

Attendance: April Callahan(LRWP), Jeanine Kopec-Zanghy (Middlesex County), Bill Schultz (Raritan Riverkeeper), Doriann Kerber (LRWP), David Tulloch (Rutgers Landscape Architecture), Allan Williams (Highland Park Environmental Commission), Howard Swerdloff (New Brunswick Environmental Commission), Alex Zakrewsky (Middlesex County Planning), Sanja Martic (RULA), Derek Hartwick (Merchant Marine sailing program), Michele Bakacs (Rutgers Cooperative Extension), Peter Lemmish, Denise Nickel (Middlesex County), Tom Boccino (Somerset County); Alex Oross (New Brunswick Parks), Tony Gambiloghni (Middlesex County)

II. Improving Raritan River Access / Regional Greenways

a. Project Updates and Proposals

- i. Status update: New Brunswick Municipal Public Access Plan - NJDEP has approved the plan for adoption by New Brunswick Planning Board into the Municipal Master Plan. The NB Planning Board needs to vote to approve.
- ii. Cornell Dubilier/Raritan River Restoration Survey: "Missing Link Bridge" proposal - LRWP provided additional information to the Trustees about the permitting process for this proposal.
- iii. Crab Island Greenway Proposal

b. Presentations

- i. Sanja Martic: "(Making) Room for the River: Applying Dutch River Management to the Raritan"

New Brunswick is ideally positioned to connect to the D&R Canal AND the East Coast Greenway AND the Appalachian Trail - topology allows for connections through the rivers (Also Delaware Lehigh National Heritage Trail, also Hudson Valley Heritage Trail). Sanja Martic takes a river-centric view of landscape design to make the case for these connections.

- ii. Middlesex County Office of Planning: "Asset Mapping for Greenway Connections"

Goals: "Preserve, enhance, and/or restore an interconnected network of countywide significant environmental features"

With respect to the habitat Map: ranking different habitat based on whether species are endangered at state or federal level. Also farmland preservation map. Different types of natural lands that are preserved or that we should consider preserving.

Also: bike guide for the County, recreational tool - not looking at core habitat, also recreational habitat

c. Group discussion: Improving Regional River Access / Greenway Network Connectivity

Tom Boccino: Somerset County is updating the preservation plan (three core components). Enhanced goals: make connections beyond the County. How to connect parks to other people's parks?

Denise Nickel: Middlesex County is working on their Comprehensive Master Plan, working on transportation component.

III. LRWP Project Updates

a. Water Quality Monitoring / Trash Reduction / Pollution Control

i. Monitoring

1. Working with New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission to develop a QAPP for fecal coliform / enterococcus monitoring of Raritan River sites for Summer 2019. Data analysis will be free, and supplies will be provided. We need volunteers to commit to 16 weeks of monitoring (on Thursdays) and delivering samples to Staten Island.
2. June 1: Visual Habitat Assessment training at Middlesex High School (Green Brook). Registration required.

ii. Planning

1. The LRWP and friends met with Assemblywoman Carter (District 6) and municipal leaders in Plainfield and Green Brook - moving forward with a strategic plan for cleaning up that and addressing the plastics/trash issue.

iii. Outreach / Action / Stewardship

1. NJ American Water - Watershed Sculpture Project: helping hands
2. Raritan River Restoration Survey: "Trash Traps" proposal
3. Researching boat build and boat house options for New Brunswick's Boyd Park. Working with Derek Hartwick of the US Merchant Marine Academy.
4. Floats: County provided transportation, sustainable raritan did coordination, New Brunswick/Somerset County provided Somerset County, New Brunswick police handled the Lower Raritan

b. Resilience / #lookfortheriver updates

- i. NJDEP Coastal Resilience Grant
- ii. Middlesex County Arts Grant - #lookfortheriver: frames
- iii. EPA Environmental Justice Grant - #lookfortheriver: frames (grant app submitted)
- iv. NJDEP Resilience Planning: #lookfortheriver: frames (grant app pending)

IV. Other?

V. Partner Updates / Announcements

Michele Bakacs / Rutgers Cooperative Extension: have been meeting with towns in Lower Raritan about Green Infrastructure projects (Monroe, Metuchen, Edison, Milltown)



www.lowerraritanwatershed.org