



## Meeting Notes

Wednesday, January 13, 2016 - 9 to 10:30

Cass Gilbert Room, Waterbury City Hall

235 Grand Street, Waterbury

See last page for attendance and a roster of steering committee members.

Co-Chair **Ingrid Manning** opened the meeting and introductions were made.

This meeting was the last that John Monroe will be attending before his retirement from the National Park Service, and the committee expressed their gratitude to John and his support of the NRG and individual town initiatives in the region. Rista Malanca thanked John on behalf of the City of Torrington for his hard work in support of the Torrington Trails Network, and for his work in Winsted. Will Cummings expressed his gratitude for the work that John has done with the Thomaston Greenway Committee. Chuck Berger discussed the work that John has helped undertake in Watertown. Laurie Giannotti and Susan Peterson presented John with a certificate of appreciation from DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee.

On Behalf of the NRGSC, Ingrid presented John with a framed photo of the greenway with the Steering Committee's mission statement on it, and a gift card to Bass Pro Shops that many members contributed to. It was agreed by all that the NRGSC would not be in the strong position it is in today without the support of the NPS, and the knowledge and expertise of John Monroe.

John Monroe thanked everyone, and presented the NRGSC with a National Park Service "Conservation Hero Award". The award reads: The National Park Service Recognizes the Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee as a Conservation Hero. New England is a better place to live, work and play thanks to you. Signed: David Lange, Program Chief, Northeast Region Rivers and Trails Program. John Monroe, Director, Connecticut & Rhode Island Projects, Rivers & Trails Program, January 13, 2016.

John commented that the Rivers and Trails Program will continue and there will be a successor to his position, although the hiring process has not started. He went on to encourage towns that are currently receiving or want to request NPS assistance to contact David Lange, the program director, or make a written request to him.

### **NRG Economic Impact Study:**

Laura Brown gave an update on progress with the field survey data analysis upcoming focus groups. Laura introduced Jessica Powell, an intern working with UConn Extension who is assisting with the analysis and focus group development. Their presentation can be found [HERE](#). Laura and Jessica explained how the surveys were conducted and thanked all of the volunteers and NVCOG staff that were involved. There were a total of around 300 volunteer and staff hours involved with the data collection over 12 sample periods in October. 382 surveys were completed, though there were different rates of completion for each of the questions. A few initial observations were shared. The largest response (42.8) came from users in Derby, which was expected since it is the most heavily used trail section surveyed. The main primary activity among respondents was walking, with only 3.4 % of respondents biking and 9.4% running. 222 respondents were male, and 150 were female. The majority of respondents were regular trail users, with 74% reporting that they use the trail at least weekly. Additional analysis will be conducted over the coming months including an analysis by community.

It was explained that the purpose of the focus groups will be to gather information that will be helpful for towns as they begin to design and build sections of trail. Since only limited sections of trail are open along the NRG, the Farmington Canal Trail (FCT) was selected to serve as a stand in. Since the most of the FCT is open and similar to what

the NRG is envisioned to become, lessons learned there should be directly applicable to the NRG. The plan is to gather “experts” to participate in several themed discussions. For instance, business owners along the trail will discuss how they are or are not capitalizing on trail traffic to improve their business, and what can be done to better capitalize on the trail. Property owners near trails will provide information about how the trail has impacted property values and privacy. Trail administrators will discuss best practices of trail maintenance and lessons learned. Safety officials will discuss trail safety. Health officials and practitioners will discuss health and quality of life impact of trail development, and features that could increase benefits. Focus groups are being planned for March, and contacts are being arranged through the Farmington Valley Trails Council.

Aaron Budris gave a short presentation ([HERE](#)) about the trail counts that were conducted over the summer and fall. Trail use data was collected at 8 locations on 5 trails: on sections of NRG that are open in Beacon Falls, Derby and Naugatuck, as well as on the Middlebury Greenway in Middlebury and Sue Grossman Trail in Torrington. The goal was to collect 4 weeks of data at each sample location, and that was achieved for all sites except the Sue Grossman Trail, where a counter malfunctioned and only collected 9 days of data (counts will resume there in the spring). It was explained that the infrared counters register body heat, and typically undercount since people walking side by side are counted as one. Manual counts were conducted to establish a correction value (a 24% undercount was calculated). The corrected figures were then extrapolated using the National Bike Ped Documentation methods (<http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>) to estimate annual trail uses. The following estimates were calculated. Keep in mind that these figures are adjusted and extrapolated, and that they represent trail USES not Users. A full detailed report is forthcoming.

Trail Section	Annual Use Estimate
Derby North – Division Street	302,391
Derby South – Footbridge over rail	150,369
Naugatuck North – Ped Bridge	58,089
Naugatuck South – Linden Park	45,598
Beacon Falls North – Main Street	25,311
Beacon Falls South – Toby’s Pond	6,928
Middlebury	95,188
Torrington (smaller sample)	64,012

Peter Gunther and Fred Carstensen at the UConn Center of Economic Analysis have been working on the economic impact modelling. It is expected that the original project delivery date of June will be met.

**NRG-Torrington to Thomaston Comprehensive Routing Study:**

Aaron explained that NVCOG and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) have been in discussions to submit a joint application to a grant program to conduct a routing study of the NRG from Bogue Road in Torrington to the trail section being built in Thomaston. The project would establish a preferred route from Bogue Road in Torrington, south potentially through Litchfield or Harwinton (or a combination thereof), through US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) property at Thomaston Dam, through Downtown Thomaston to a section of NRG being designed and constructed at Old Waterbury Road in Thomaston. The grant request is in response to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Responsible Growth and Transit–Oriented Development (TOD) Grant Program.

The project is aimed at closing the routing gap of one of the last un-routed sections of NRG, and was recommended by the NRG Project Priorities document endorsed by the committee in November. USACE staff have expressed concern about potential conflicts on the west side of the river due to hunting, off road vehicle use and flooding from dam operations. Other potential obstacles (on both sides of the river) include cost, geography, rights of way, constructability, permitting, access, conflicting municipal wants/needs among others. The goal of the project would be to establish a single route agreed upon by stakeholders (municipalities, USACE, and the public) and provide

construction cost estimates so that municipalities would be prepared to make viable applications for future funding opportunities for the design and construction of NRG trail sections.

A meeting was held on January 6 at NHCOG with CEOs of Litchfield, Harwinton and Thomaston Present along with representatives of the USACE, Torrington, NVCOG and NHCOG. The project was discussed to make sure all major stakeholders were on board with the grant submission and all parties understood the purpose and scope of the project. It was agreed that all parties would support the project, and that NVCOG would submit as the project lead with support from NHCOG as co-applicant. The grant request will be for \$110,000 for consultant services and project administration and support.

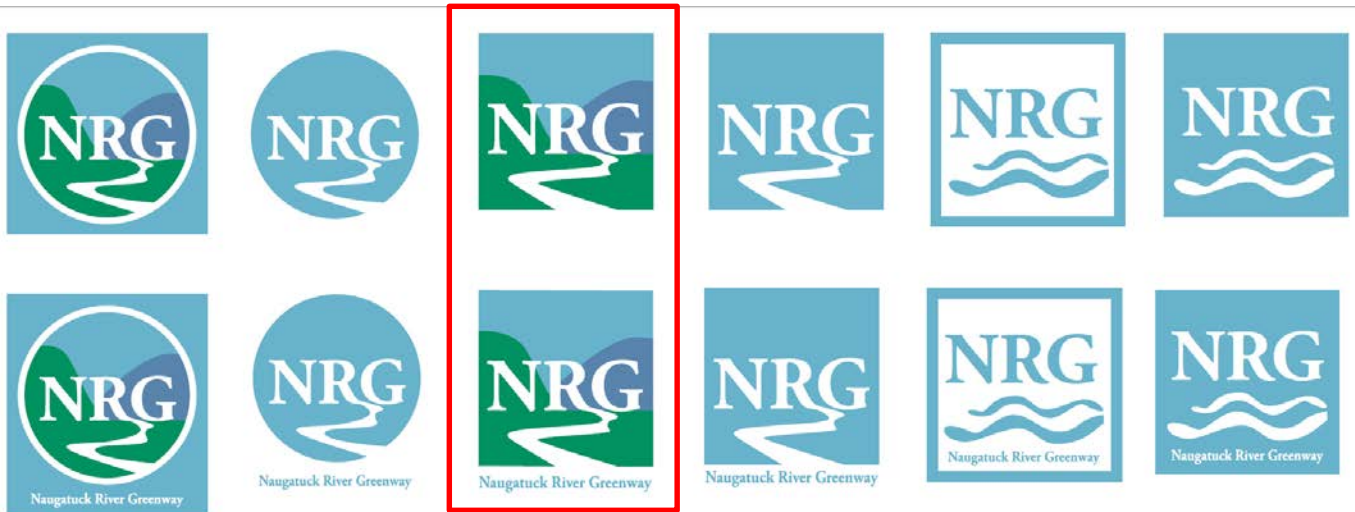
It was unanimously voted that the NRGSC will endorse the project and provide a letter of support for the application. UPDATE: The application was submitted by NVCOG on Feb. 4, and NRGSC provided a letter of support.

**Uniform Signage and Wayfinding Rec Trails Update:**

John Monroe gave an overview of progress. Consultant Milone and MacBroom have been working on developing the unified Trail Signage and Wayfinding Guide.

It was suggested previously that if the NRG wanted to change its logo, now would be the time to do it so that the design can be incorporated into the signage designs being developed. NVCOG Planner Max Tanguay-Colucci developed several alternative logos. A signage project subcommittee comprised of many NRGSC members reviewed the options and made a selection of a preferred logo to present to the entire NRGSC.

**Logo options developed, recommended by the subcommittee and selected in Red:**



John and Max explained that the third logo from the left was selected unanimously by the subcommittee. Rich Minnick explained how the designs were presented and how the design that was selected came to be so. Several Committee members expressed their pleasure with the design, and it was discussed how the selected logo will work in many more contexts than the current one (see the header in this document).

On a motion by Bob Gregorski, Seconded by Rich Minnick, it was voted unanimously to select the recommended logo as the new NRG logo.

Update: Milone and Macbroom made a few minor changes (color and saturation), and developed B/W options:



### **Thomaston/Watertown Recreational Trails Update:**

Chuck Berger discussed progress on consultant selection for the Watertown/Thomaston Recreational trails project. Nine consultants submitted materials to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that NVCOG issued in October. Of those nine, five were selected to interview, and a selection committee (Chuck Berger, Will Cummings, Aaron Budris, Mark Nielsen) interviewed the top 5 consultants on December 16<sup>th</sup>. A preferred consultant was selected, and the selection committee and NVCOG are currently working on negotiations to finalize a scope of work and fee. The consultant should be under contract by the next NRGSC meeting.

The selected consultant will be charged with full design of the short section of trail in Thomaston that will also be constructed with funding from the Rec Trails grant. The consultant will also conduct an analysis of the old trolley bridge to determine if it can be rehabbed to carry NRG trail traffic, and if not, determine the best location and type of a replacement structure. Critical design elements will be designed for the 2.3 mile Watertown Section. Critical elements include drainage crossings and rail separation measures.

### **Website Update:**

Jared Sloan, the [NaugatuckRiver.net](http://NaugatuckRiver.net) administrator gave an overview of work he has done over the past year to improve the site. Jared asked that if anyone wants to post an article or content to the website, or if you see something that you think should be on the site (articles, news, photos, videos, anything...) to please send it to him using the [contact page](#) on the website. He also discussed the opportunity for committee members to develop a blog. This would allow individuals to develop and post content directly to the site. If anyone is interested in being a regular website contributor, please contact Jared or Ingrid. He also encouraged everyone on Facebook to follow and like the NaugatuckRiver.net Facebook page [HERE](#). Twitter users can follow @NaugRivGreenway.

### **Committee Roundtable:**

Rista Malanca discussed the City of Torrington's application to the OPM Responsible Growth and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Grant Program to extend the Sue Grossman Trail. The project would connect the current 3 mile trail north to downtown Winsted, and south to downtown Torrington. The plan calls for the Sue Grossman trail to connect with the NRG in Torrington, and will provide for multiuse access to Winsted from the NRG. Chuck Berger asked if a support letter might be in order, and the Steering Committee voted unanimously to provide such a letter.

UPDATE: Torrington submitted the grant application, and the NRGSC provided a support letter.

Kevin Tedesco discussed the CT DOT's Community Connectivity Program, a grant program that is being designed to help communities pay to address bike and pedestrian safety problem areas. The program will fund road safety audits (RSA) to determine areas of need, and may eventually provide funding to help municipalities address problems. More information [HERE](#).

Mark Nielsen discussed the upcoming conference "NVision 2020" that was held on January 28<sup>th</sup> at the Palace Theater by NVCOG. The NRGSC and all other nonprofit partners were invited to set up information tables. Ingrid and Chuck offered to staff a table with information about the NRG. Proceedings from the conference can be found [HERE](#).

Connecticut Trails Day events will be held on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. There were several NRG related events last year, and we hope that there will be more this year. Events need to be registered [HERE](#) by May 15<sup>th</sup>. More information can be found on the CT Forest & Park Association site [HERE](#).

Sam Dziekan introduced the Housatonic Valley Association's Source to Sound Paddle Trip & Riverside Celebrations coming up April 22-May 1. The event will mark HVA's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and will include events on tributaries including on the Naugatuck River, with an event in Naugatuck. NRGSC involvement was discussed, and will be discussed further at the March meeting. Anyone interested in staffing an information table at this or any upcoming events should contact a co-chair or Aaron. For more information about the event click [HERE](#).

**Next Meeting: March 9<sup>th</sup>, Location "To Be Determined" – Details to Follow**

# Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Present in **bold**.

**Aaron Budris – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments**

Bill Purcell – Valley Chamber

**Bob Gregorski - Naugatuck River Watershed Association & Trout Unlimited**

Christopher Way - US Army Corps of Engineers

**Chuck Berger - Watertown Town Engineer**

**Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway**

Dave Faber - CT Outdoors (outfitter in Watertown)

**Fred Messore - Town of Seymour**

**\*Chair\* Ingrid Manning – formerly of CT Community Foundation**

Jack Walsh - Valley United Way

Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

Jim Stewart - Naugatuck Borough Engineer

**Joan Kirchner - Harwinton Conservation Commission**

**Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW**

**John Monroe – National Park Service: Rivers & Trails Program**

**Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation**

Kathy McNamara - City of Waterbury

**Sal Porzio – City of Waterbury**

**Kevin Tedesco - CT DOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator**

**Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group & Housatonic Valley Association**

Laura Wildman – Princeton Hydro

**Laurie Giannotti - CT DEEP Greenways**

**Mark Nielsen – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments**

**Rich Minnick – Beacon Falls**

**Rista Malanca - Torrington**

**Sam Dziekan - Housatonic Valley Association**

Sheila O'Malley – City of Ansonia

**Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Management Program**

Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Rangers

Vincent Gualtieri - US Army Corps of Engineers

Vinnie Scarlata – Ansonia Economic Development Commission

**Will Cummings – Thomaston Trail Committee**

Also Present:

**Laura Brown - UConn Extension**

**Jessica Powell – UConn Extension**

**Sam Gold – RiverCOG**

**Jean Cronauer- Northwest Conservation District**

**Max Tanguay Colucci – NVCOG**

**Ben Muller – NVCOG**

**Jared Sloan – NaugatuckRiver.net Administrator**

**Tony San Angelo – Beacon Falls**