

Memo:

December 13, 2009

From: Alison Rau

To: Sue and Joyce

RE: Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Study Results:

This survey was conducted via email and telephone contact with ten land trusts whose geographic borders coincide with the proposed Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic locations. The survey elicited the opinions of land trust leaders on a variety of topics related to potential involvement and management of the water bodies and lands surrounding them. Particular attention was directed to ascertaining the goals of the land trusts, their capacities for future involvement with a possible management plan, and their views on future partnerships and enforcement.

Results were compiled using an Excel format (see Appendix A for the question formats) and key points summarized in the following section.

Results:

Most of the land trusts appeared to be at least moderately familiar with the Wild and Scenic River Study, with some claiming to be very familiar with it. However, in response to the query of how well the land trust understood the W&S objectives and how they related to their own, Avon and Burlington chose “not at all,” as opposed to the more common answer “moderately familiar.”

Funding appeared to be an area of prime concern for many of the land trusts, with some professing to non-existent stewardship funding. Therefore, stewardship concerns also showed up as some of the most significant challenges, along with volunteer and community/member support. Not all of the land trusts reported having a land base, which also complicated responses.

In terms of issues of importance, “preserving scenic beauty, recreational and natural resources” was always ranked as “very important” for all the responses, and it was often listed as one of the top five choices for those that made that distinction. “Protection of rivers and brooks” was also ranked highly, as well as “building capacity of land trust,” and “resources for stewardship functions.” However, responses varied quite widely on ranking assigned to each issue.

Many land trusts provided public access to their land holdings for recreational activities, most often hiking, and some promoted and publicized this option. Most land trusts would like to partner with other land trusts, federal and state agencies, and municipalities, but fewer have actually done so. Technical assistance was the most common greatest need for enforcement against encroachments, but other needs mentioned included monitoring, legal assistance, “manpower,” and financial assistance, although some land trusts reported having no land holdings to require enforcement assistance. In terms of partnering with other land trusts for stewardship responsibilities, most would be willing

(highly or somewhat likely) to do so on baselines, monitoring reports, and GIS mapping support, but much fewer would be willing to do so on legal defense. One trust reported that it would not be willing to partner with other land trusts on any of these issues (Windsor).

Questions concerning stewardship funding and land base acreage were often left blank or reported as zero, but some trusts reported budgets of \$20,000 to \$30,000 (Simsbury), less than \$1,000 (East Granby), and \$6,000 to \$8,000 (Canton). In terms of acreage requiring stewardship, answers ranged from zero to 2,000 acres (Granby). Stewardship activities reported were very diverse and included monitoring, removal of invasive species, dealing with encroachment issues, and trail building, and were most often carried out by volunteers, with a few responses of land trust staff and contractors.

Most of the land trusts would welcome more information about the Study in the form of a presentation and would be willing to write letters of support for the Committee. Several of the trusts had also already spoken with members of the committee previously but were often willing to attend another presentation, while a few declined the opportunity.

In general, it appears that the targeted land trusts are enthusiastic in participating in managerial planning for the Wild and Scenic designation, although some of them may be hindered by lack of land or resources. It is recommended, based on these responses, that the Committee continue in efforts to engage them in formation of the proposed management plan.

Appendix A:

Excel document question guide:

1. Length of time as board member/president:
2. Town
3. Familiarity with Wild and Scenic river study:
4. 3 most significant challenges to achieving LT's objectives:
5. Understanding of WS objectives:
6. importance of each of following to LT:
7. targeting of natural resources and which
8. greatest needs for enforcement against encroachments
9. public access? For what activities?
10. priorities for protection
11. partnering with whom?
12. attending regional meeting
13. likeliness to partner with other land trusts on what stewardship activities?
14. a- stewardship funding
 - a. stewardship funding
 - b. % operating costs to stewardship
 - c. land base requiring stewardship:
15. primary stewardship activities
16. who implements stewardship activities?
17. none
18. Presentation?
19. training if funding was available?
20. letter of support?
21. additional Comments?