

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Herring River Executive Council (HREC)**  
**Thursday, March 16, 2023 3:00 pm**

**Virtual meeting via Zoom**

HREC members present: Deborah Freeman, Geoff Sanders, Helen Miranda Wilson, Janet Reinhart, Brian Carlstrom; Coordinator: Carole Ridley; Others present: Christine Odiaga, Tim Smith, Bill Biewenga, Dale Rheault, Christa Drew, David Koonce, Jude Ahern, Sam Pollock, Katie Castagno, Kathleen (iPad).

**Minutes**

Following the meeting welcome and introductions, the minutes of December 15, 2022 were approved by unanimous consent.

**Herring River Restoration Project Update**

Carole Ridley provided the following project updates. [Meeting slides are attached.]

Construction is underway for the Chequessett Neck Road Bridge and Water Access Facility. The Town selected MIG Corp of Acton as the contractor through a competitive bid process. Construction management support is being provided by grant-funded Owners Project Representative position held by Environmental Partners. Fuss & O'Neill will serve as the Design Engineer.

Construction activity to date has included clearing and preparation of the staging area, installation of erosion control measures, and equipment mobilization. Delivery of steel sheeting for installation of upstream stone armor is anticipated in the coming weeks.

Design of the temporary bypass bridge is also underway and must undergo rigorous review by Mass Department of Transportation as well as funders. The signalized bypass will provide continuous vehicular and pedestrian access throughout construction. If members of the public have questions about construction activity they can email [herringriver@EnvPartners.com](mailto:herringriver@EnvPartners.com).

Helen Miranda Wilson asked about the status of stairs on the south side of the bridge that would allow access to shellfishing areas. That detail was not available at the meeting.

Ms Ridley reported that final design is underway for other phase 1 project elements. Bid advertisements for these elements are anticipated in late 2023 for construction start in 2023 or 2024. These elements include:

- Mill Creek Water Control Structure (on federal NPS land)
- Low road elevation and culverts replacements
- High Toss Road causeway removal and elevation of a portion of High Toss Road
- Property impact prevention

Geoff Sanders reported that the Mill Creek Water Control Structure is in the final design phase. This work is being managed by the Denver Service Center, and Fuss & O'Neill is the design engineer. Funding from USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service is looking favorable. Under the current schedule, NPS would have a contract for construction in place by September 30, 2023, and construction starting in November or December. The first construction task would be the construction of the access road.

Ms. Ridley noted that the 2023 Annual Town Meeting warrant will include authorization for the Town to accept an easement from Wellfleet Conservation Trust which is needed for the access road.

Fundraising and grant management updates include that \$49,870,000 grant agreements have been approved and executed by Town, including \$27,200,000 from US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service and \$22,670,000 from MA Division of Ecological Restoration. A grant from NOAA in the amount of \$14,690,000 has been requested from the Transformational Habitat Restoration Grant Program. The NOAA grant is the final funding needed for Phase 1 infrastructure on Town property.

Funding for marsh/vegetation management has come from the National Park foundation and a \$2,000,000 grant from US Fish and Wildlife Service National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Act grant program through Ducks Unlimited.

Ms. Ridley noted that detailed grant management, accounting and reporting procedures were being put in place by the Town in concert with granting agencies. The Town has contracted with municipal accounting support for this effort.

Mr. Carlstrom noted that the NPS also has robust systems in place to manage grant funds used by the project.

Tim Smith provided an update on vegetation clearing in Duck Harbor. The clearing is needed to remove dead vegetation that has been salt killed by the Duck Harbor overwash. Falling trees would become more problematic if not removed. Also, clearing provides more opportunity for salt marsh to recolonize. Approximately 20 acres have been cleared in the bayside portion of Duck Harbor. Spoil berms on the eastern edge of Duck harbor are also to be cleared in the coming weeks under the same contract. The eastern-most third of Duck Harbor also will be cleared this spring, and the middle third will likely be cleared next year. Funding is from the National Park Foundation, and from a US Fish and Wildlife Service National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Act grant through Ducks Unlimited. Mr. Smith also mentioned important on-going monitoring work being undertaken by Dr Katie Castagno and Center for Coastal Studies.

Ms. Ridley welcomed Christa Drew, new Executive Director of Friends of Herring River.

**HREC Member Announcements:**

Geoff Sanders mentioned that the demolition of the former Feil and Rosenberg properties on Way 672 is imminent. He also announced that the Seashore has obtained funding through the Inflation Reduction Act to fund a new Ecologist position, which is likely to be a four-year position. This position will assist with data collection and assessment for the restoration.

**Public Comment**

Bill Biewenga asked the HREC to consider adding a position on the Stakeholders Group to address financial management issues. He also welcomed Christa Drew and looks forward to working with her.

**Next Meeting Dates**

The following meeting dates were accepted by the HREC, and it was agreed that meetings would remain virtual via Zoom as long as this format is permitted under Open Meeting Law requirements:

- Thursday, June 15, 2023, 3:00 pm
- Thursday, September 14, 2023, 3:00 pm
- Thursday, December 14, 2023, 3:00 pm

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm.

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Submitted by Carole Ridley, June 15, 2023

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