
III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Taunton River Stewardship Council

Purpose

The purpose of the Taunton River Stewardship Council (Council) is to promote the long-term protection of the river by 1) bringing together on a regular basis various parties responsible for river management; 2) facilitating agreements and coordination among them; 3) providing a focus and a forum for all river interests to discuss and make recommendations regarding issues of concern; and 4) coordinating implementation of the Taunton River Stewardship Plan.

The Council will continue the efforts of the Study Committee to create a participatory and cooperative management framework. The Council will ensure that there is communication among all partners in the protection of the Taunton River, and will provide a forum for discussion of river issues, priorities and proposed actions.

The Council will be the principal entity devoted to the implementation of the Taunton River Stewardship Plan, and will establish priorities, workplans, action plans and similar strategies to advance implementation of the Plan.

Advisory Function

The Council will work to complement and support the roles and activities of partners working in the Taunton River Watershed. It will not have a regulatory role, but will act on an advisory basis to existing entities that have management or regulatory authority on the river, including the individual member entities of the Council.

The Council may undertake projects directly or sponsor projects in partnership with its individual member entities & partners.

Responsibilities

The Taunton River Stewardship Council will have the following responsibilities:

- Meet on a regular basis with all meetings open to the public.

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- Develop annual action plans/workplans based on the Taunton River Stewardship Plan and priorities set by the Council.
 - Report annually to the member institutions of the Council on Council activities, accomplishments, plans, etc.
 - Advise the National Park Service, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, communities and other entities on issues and concerns related to the Taunton River.
 - Periodically review the plan and consider revisions and updates as appropriate.

Membership

Core membership: The following entities will constitute the core membership of the Stewardship Council.

- Town of Bridgewater
- Town of Halifax
- Town of Middleborough
- Town of Raynham
- City of Taunton
- Town of Berkley
- Town of Freetown
- Town of Dighton
- Town of Somerset
- City of Fall River
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- National Park Service
- SRPEDD
- Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater
- Taunton River Watershed Alliance (TRWA)
- Save the Bay
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Council Oak Wampanoags, Massachusetts

Appointments

Each member entity will be encouraged to appoint one representative and one alternate. Appointments shall be made by each institution as appropriate, expected to be as follows, Boards of Selectmen (Towns); City Council (Taunton, Fall River); Regional Director or designee (National Park Service); Governor or designee (Commonwealth); Boards of Directors or designee(non-profits). In the case of a *designee* making an appointment, the authority under which the designee has acted shall be reported to the Council.

Suggested Appointees

Suggested appointees would include members of local government boards, riverfront landowners, local experts about a specific outstanding resource, and those who would provide active committee representation.

Additional members:

Membership may be changed to include other interests based on the following provisions:

- Interested parties may be added to the Council if they request membership and are approved by a 2/3 majority of the existing members.
- Representatives of any new member institutions will be appointed by the governing body of that institution or an appropriate designee.

Procedures

Decision Making

The Council will endeavor to act by consensus whenever possible and will be governed by the open meeting laws of Massachusetts. Formal votes may be taken from time to time at the discretion of the Chair or by request of any member. A formal vote will require a 2/3 majority of Council members to be approved.

Officers

The Council shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair. Other officers may be elected by vote of the Council, such as Treasurer and Secretary.

Bylaws

The Council may choose to develop detailed by-laws that expand upon the administrative provisions of this Plan. Such expanded by-laws shall be consistent with the intent and provisions of this Plan.

Revision of the Plan

The Council shall conduct a thorough review of the Plan and its recommendations at least every five years. If and when the Council determines that meaningful annual action plans cannot be developed consistent with the parameters of the existing plan, the Council should undertake a formal, public revision.

Funding/Staff

National Park Service Support



Historic Photo of the Taunton Green

It is anticipated that the National Park Service will provide a basic level of staff support and funding to the Council and its operations through the National Wild and Scenic River Designation, dependant upon congressional appropriations. This support may be directly from the NPS, or the NPS may enter into Cooperative

Agreements with members of the Council, as was done during the Study through SRPEDD, to provide such funding and staff support. (note: it is not anticipated that the NPS could enter into Cooperative Agreements with the Council as an entity, as it lacks the sufficient legal foundation)

There will be no annual dues or other financial contribution required of Council members. Members appointed by communities will not be expected to contribute financially, nor will any member receive funding from the Council for travel or time reimbursement.