

**Muddy River Restoration Project
Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee**

**MMOC Monthly Meeting
June 10, 2026
7-8:30PM**

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 by Chair Kay Mathew.

In attendance: Kay Mathew, Karen Mauney-Brodek, Kelly Brilliant, Alex Cassie, Sean Lynn-Jones, Parker James, Patrice Kish, Lisa Kumpf, Tom Timmons, Arlene Levee, Elton Elperin, Ellen Faszewski, Carol Lasky

Treasurer's Report and FY2027 Budget

Parker James presented the proposed FY2027 budget and reported that MMOC remains in a strong financial position. He noted that reduced expenditures for administrative support and the elimination of rental expenses have contributed to the organization's favorable financial outlook. Parker requested approval of the FY2027 budget in advance of sending invoices to non-federal sponsors in July.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the presentation but noted that the budget had not been circulated in advance and warranted additional review before a vote. Parker will circulate the FY27 budget via email to be reviewed by members ahead of the July meeting. There was interest expressed in restoring regular site inspections, photographic documentation, and on-the-ground reporting formerly provided through weekly park walkthroughs.

DCR Presentation and Discussion of Muddy River Water Levels

Patrice Kish, Chief of Design and Engineering for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), joined the meeting and introduced herself to the committee. Patrice reviewed her longstanding involvement with the Muddy River Restoration Project dating back to the project's planning stages in the 1990s and described her current role overseeing DCR capital project delivery. She emphasized DCR's continued commitment to the goals of the Muddy River Restoration Project, and provided updates on several DCR initiatives affecting the Emerald Necklace and surrounding areas.

She reported on the state budget earmark sponsored by Senator Brownsberger that would provide approximately \$350,000 to enable DCR to fund a study of low water levels and mudflat conditions within the Muddy River system. DCR has begun preliminary internal planning and is assembling a multidisciplinary project team. Patrice indicated that DCR has initiated conversations with the City of Boston and the Town of Brookline regarding development of the study scope.

She communicated DCR's expectation that MMOC will serve as an important project partner with plans to involve MMOC representatives on a technical advisory committee and emphasized the need for public engagement and outreach throughout the study process.

She underscored the importance of examining both low-water conditions and mudflat accumulation.

Committee members emphasized the importance of preserving the historic and visual character of the river corridor while addressing hydrologic and ecological concerns.

Patrice explained that DCR will follow state procurement requirements when selecting a consultant team. The consultant will be expected to assemble appropriate expertise, including hydrology and related technical disciplines.

Discussion addressed:

Availability of Army Corps of Engineers modeling and monitoring data. • Existing low-water-level surveys conducted by CDM Smith. • The need for future consultants to have access to prior hydrologic models and monitoring information. • The importance of building upon existing analyses to avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary expense.

Action Items: MMOC's Mudflats and Water Level Ad Hoc Committee will prepare recommendations regarding study objectives and scope elements. • Tom Timmons will seek clarification and obtain additional Army Corps monitoring and modeling information as available. • MMOC will provide DCR with existing criteria and evaluation materials developed through prior committee work.

Patrice emphasized DCR's commitment to a collaborative process and stated that DCR expects ongoing engagement with MMOC, municipal partners, and the public throughout the project. The committee welcomed this commitment and expressed appreciation for DCR's willingness to work closely with MMOC.

Presentation by Dr. Ellen Faszewski

Carol Lasky introduced Dr. Ellen Faszewski, who described the origins of the symposium and its connection to the Colleges of the Fenway Center for Sustainability and the Environment. She explained that the symposium was created to engage students, faculty, community organizations, and public agencies in examining environmental issues through the lens of the Muddy River ecosystem. Highlights of her presentation included:

- The development of the annual Muddy River Symposium beginning in 2006.
- The role of MMOC members, particularly Fran Gershwin, in helping establish and sustain the program.
- The integration of real-world environmental issues into student learning.
- Opportunities for students to conduct research and participate in civic engagement projects.
- The value of connecting academic institutions with community-based environmental stewardship efforts.

Future Opportunities

Committee members discussed opportunities to expand student involvement, including:

- Photographic documentation of river conditions and infrastructure.
- Environmental monitoring and data collection.
- Historic resource documentation.
- Partnerships with Northeastern University and other institutions.
- Collaborative projects involving students from environmental science, engineering, architecture, and visual arts programs.

Ellen encouraged MMOC members to propose project ideas that could be incorporated into future student coursework and symposium activities.

The committee expressed appreciation for Ellen's longstanding leadership and recognized the continuing importance of the symposium as a vehicle for public education and engagement regarding the Muddy River.

Update from Members and Member Organizations

Tom reported that the transplanted trees in the moonscape are being watered and monitored by Barrett Tree. Park visitors are enjoying the greenspace near the Duck House.

Boston Parks will also be undertaking an infrastructure rehabilitation project throughout the parks, revitalizing the benches that "could use some love."

The Water Quality Subcommittee welcomed Emma Page, Director of Planning and Sustainability at Boston Water & Sewer Commission at its May 27th meeting. Emma reported on ongoing remedial efforts to detect and stem illicit discharges into the Charles River.

Alex noted a significant fish kill in the Muddy River a few weeks back. Boston and Brookline coordinated with the Fish and Wildlife Department, who surmised that it was a seasonal die-off. The 150-200 fish of varied species (carp, golden shiners, white perch, etc.) were removed.

Alex also mentioned a Brookline.News investigative report that the December, 2024 oil spill in the Muddy likely originated at Brook House. Findings are not yet definitive.

Lisa reported on the recent EPA Three Rivers Report Card (co-sponsored by the Charles River Watershed Association) that gave the Muddy River a water quality grade of C (a decrease from last year's C+), due to persistent stormwater runoff and presence of illicit connections discharging into the tributary.

Kay adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.