



WANTASTIQUET REGION RIVER SUBCOMMITTEE Minutes - February 26, 2009

PRESENT: Gordon Schofield, Hinsdale; Hazel Hunter and Susan Lawson-Kelleher, Chesterfield; Dan Marx, Dummerston; George Watkins, Bill Roberts, and Adair Mulligan, CRJC
ABSENT: Vernon, Westmoreland, Putney, Brattleboro, Westminster

1. Housekeeping - Minutes of the meeting of September 10 were approved. The Recreation Plan has been mailed to the 350 communities, organizations, commissioners, subcommittee members and agencies on the distribution list, and posted on the web. Staff time shortage and budget concerns have precluded CRJC from printing the subcommittee versions, but their summaries are included in the published overview and the full subcommittee plan is posted on the web. The Water Resources Plan is now being designed. CRJC has just won funding to publish the Headwaters and Riverbend Subcommittees' Water Resources Plans, and has learned that federal economic stimulus funding will be available to publish the other three, including the Wantastiquet Region's plan. The next meeting, likely to be held in late spring, will showcase the Water Resources Plan. Adair displayed DES' new handbook for sustainable development: *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques*, and gave the subcommittee's copy to Gordon, along with The Nature Conservancy's new publication about TNC's work with the US Army Corps of Engineers.
2. Permit issues - none current. There was a request for comment from DES about the Cersosimo gravel pit on the Westmoreland/Chesterfield border, but the comment period has expired and the Westmoreland member had indicated that there were no concerns. Susan said that Chesterfield has not been asked for comment. Adair will follow up with DES' Alteration of Terrain program.
3. Middle Connecticut River Important Bird Area -
 - a. CRJC, the NH and VT Audubon societies, The Nature Conservancy, conservation districts, area land trusts, fish and game/wildlife agencies, and regional planning commissions have been looking at habitat conservation possibilities for migrating birds and other wildlife in this area from Weathersfield Bow to the Massachusetts line. There will be a meeting on March 27 in Walpole to explain findings and to ask town representatives and other stakeholders how to proceed. There may be an opportunity to bundle together several conservation projects along the river in a proposal for major funding.
 - b. Col. Ebenezer Hinsdale Farm conservation & historic preservation project - Hinsdale is waiting to hear whether it will receive \$75,000 in funding from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act small grants program. Bill reported that LCHIP staff had visited the property again and were enthusiastic about it. Monkey Island is being surveyed using the old deeds from before the construction of Vernon Dam inundated the property, and a lawyer is drawing up a quitclaim deed. The owner will donate this property to the Historical Society. Bill added that many pledges have been made.
4. Retreat Meadows and Vermont Water Resources Panel - The state has adopted the proposed rule prohibiting waterskiing in Retreat Meadows. While most comments (including from town of Brattleboro) requested that all motorized boating be prohibited in the Meadows, the panel decided it could not go beyond the proposed rule.
5. CRJC and the new Water Resources Management Plan: Adair Mulligan welcomed members of the public and gave a brief presentation to introduce the work of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions and the Subcommittee. Their new Water Resources Management Plan calls upon NH DES to inform citizens about the updated Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, and urges towns and landowners to carefully consider how their shorelands are managed and developed. The Commissions and the Subcommittee recommend that riparian buffers and floodplains be protected, and that Vermont, the only Northeastern state without shoreland protection, adopt such a law.
6. The Updated New Hampshire Shoreland Protection Law - Jay Aube of NH DES's Shoreland Program gave an extensive presentation about the newly updated law, the purpose behind it, the protections that apply, and what requires a shoreland permit and examples of what does not. Jay explained how to handle projects that were underway as the law changed, and offered himself as a source of information. A question and answer session followed. Jay offered to make a presentation for Chesterfield's summer town meeting, in order to reach Spofford Lake property owners and summer residents. The evening's presentation was supported by a grant from NH DES' Clean Water Act section 604(b) funding.