



## RIVERBEND SUBCOMMITTEE

### Minutes - March 26, 2009

PRESENT: Rick Walling, Bath; Stretch Martin, Guildhall; Bill Graves, Barnet; Bob Elwell, Lancaster; Jan Edick, Littleton; Glenn English and Adair Mulligan, CRJC; Tara Bamford, North Country Council  
ABSENT: Ryegate, Waterford, Newbury, Monroe, Lunenburg, Concord, Dalton

1. Housekeeping - Minutes of the meeting of January 29 were approved.
  - a. CRJC is moving ahead with publication of the subcommittees' editions of the Water Resources Management Plan, thanks to a VT conservation license plate grant for the Headwaters and Riverbend sections, and a DES Water Quality Planning grant for the Upper Valley and two southern regions from federal economic stimulus funding. Plans will be published this summer. Unfortunately, there are no similar funds to publish the local recreation plan, although it is up on the web.
  - b. Announcements and local issues/concerns: Stretch expressed concern about antibiotics going into surface waters and groundwater. Bill is concerned about lack of enforcement by VT ANR. The Stevens River flooded after two unpermitted ponds let go and caused extensive erosion and a headcut that washed out Bill's road. The river elevation is now 8 feet lower than before. The state was unable to handle enforcement and asked Bill to bring a civil action against his neighbor, which he was unwilling to do. Bob asked about how to handle a situation where a neighbor rerouted drainage onto Bob's land, which is now growing alders. Stretch recommended that he contact the county conservation district.
2. US Army Corps of Engineers project: The Corps is preparing a hydrologic model for the entire river, and is working with The Nature Conservancy to model the floodplain in areas of valuable habitat. Members were asked to identify landowners along several measurement areas in the Haverhill and Lancaster areas so that the Corps could ask landowner permission to take measurements. CRJC has asked the Corps to revisit the idea of protecting natural valley flood storage. Members asked if Corps funding for this could be given to land trusts to conserve the land where landowners are willing. Bill noted that the Corps has authority over upland wetlands. Stretch said that all farmland is recorded as to its erodibility.
3. Permit Issues - Chamberlin project in Bath has been approved. DES has requested more information on Haney project on Monroe Road in Bath.
4. Local historic preservation and conservation needs along the Connecticut River Byway - CRJC has hosted the Byway, an economic development initiative, for a number of years. Mission is to balance the promotion, preservation, and enjoyment of the valley. Roads on both sides of the river were designated by the states in 1998 and by the Federal Highway Administration in 2007 as a National Scenic Byway. The hope is draw attention of residents to remaining historic buildings, beautiful views, rail history, and farming heritage of the valley, among other "assets," and give an economic reason to protect and preserve these features. Scenic Byway grants are available for land protection and historic building preservation.
  - a. Current CRJC activities: 15 heritage itineraries will be created, 10 for driving and 5 for bicycling, with printed guides and guides that can be downloaded from the web. Adair will check with members as they are being designed, and asked for comments on the byway web site, which will be substantially upgraded. Rick referred to similar websites where people can create their own itineraries. CRJC is preparing information for visitor center staff to help them answer traveler questions; Adair is drawing much material from the subcommittee's recreation plan, such how to avoid spreading invasives.
  - b. Viewed scenic inventory done for Lyme, Orford, Piermont, and Haverhill by Tara when she was at Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC, with a CRJC grant. Tara estimated that it cost about \$10,000 to do this project. Stretch thought it would be useful to do elsewhere but that parameters should be set.
  - c. The regional planning commissions conducted an extensive study in 1998 of each byway town, inventorying tourism-related features and each town's capacity for protecting byway assets. It was suggested that the GIS inventory from this study be put on the byway website. Discussion ensued with reports from each town's representative about current historic preservation and land protection needs.
5. Reports from the tributaries
  - a. Ammonoosuc Local Advisory Committee - Rick said that HB 452, designating the headwaters, passed with no opposition and that a similar bill is coming up in the Senate.
  - b. Wells/Stevens River Watershed Council - basin plan is now published.