



UPPER VALLEY RIVER SUBCOMMITTEE Minutes - March 23, 2009

PRESENT: David Minsk, Hanover; Lynn Bohi, Hartford; Carl Schmidt and Marc White, Orford; Linda Matteson, Thetford; Lou-Anne Conroy, Lyme; David Jorgensen, Lebanon; Christine Walker, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission; Commissioner John Lawe, Norwich, Adair Mulligan, CRJC

ABSENT: Fairlee, Piermont, Bradford

PUBLIC: Philip Rentz and Gene Vigneault, New England Transportation Museum, Lebanon

1. Housekeeping

- a. Introduced new member, Lou-Anne Conroy of Lyme. Minutes of the meeting of January 26 were approved. 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. Three public presentations will be given in each subcommittee region, beginning with Upper Valley's at the March 30 CRJC meeting.
- b. Announcements and local issues/concerns
 - i. Thetford: Linda announced that there will be a presentation on the fluvial geomorphology of the Ompompanoosuc River on April 2. Environmental Court decision found in favor of a couple that want to build a second home on ag land in the flood hazard area. Neighbors are asking the state to revoke the wastewater permit that was based on false information.
 - ii. Norwich: asked about a large new house under construction close to the river, John Lawe reported that it was an existing lot and met the zoning standards.
 - iii. Discussion ensued about enforcement; agreed that education, including by town conservation commissions, is essential, although the state will respond to complaints, especially in NH. UVLSRPC will work on a landowners' guide to low impact development, especially close to waters.
 - iv. Orford: Carl reported that the DOT drainage project did go in last fall; he will follow up to be sure that the mound of riprap left near river will be planted and guidance given to landowner and farmer/lessee.
 - v. Lebanon: David reported that the plans for the Bailey Brothers property on the river is in the presentation stage with the city. New owners are requesting change in zoning; discussing cartop boat access to the river, possible trail connections, and open space along the shore.
 - vi. Nighthawk migration: Lou-Anne said that the migration will begin soon. She and other volunteers are putting nest patches on buildings near the river, and offered more information.

2. Permit issues: DES has received complaint about someone cutting the riparian buffer in Lebanon with intentions to build a junkyard; Adair will follow through with Lebanon members when more information is available.

3. Tri-State Connecticut River Targeted Watershed Initiative: water quality monitoring will take place from Memorial Day through September. Volunteers needed; mileage is compensated. Lou-Anne volunteered. Adair will send out more information. Training session at Sumner Falls on May 20.

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. 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 UVLSRPC with CRJC grant.
- 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. Discussion ensued with reports from each town's representative about current historic preservation and land protection needs.