



UPPER VALLEY RIVER SUBCOMMITTEE Minutes - July 22, 2009

PRESENT: David Minsk and Caryl Collier, Hanover; Linda Wilson, Hartford; Carl Schmidt and Marc White, Orford; Linda Matteson and Cy Severance, Thetford; Charles Grant, Piermont; David Kotz, Lyme; David Jorgensen, Lebanon; Adair Mulligan, CRJC

ABSENT: Fairlee, Bradford, Norwich

PUBLIC: Nancy Carter, Blair Brooks, Julie Stevenson, Ernie Chicatelli, Peter Kermond, and Nick Fiore, Friends of Hanover Crew

The Subcommittee met at Fullington Farm in Hanover for a preliminary site visit and meeting with the Friends of Hanover Crew regarding their draft plans to establish a rowing training facility at the Farm on the Connecticut River. In preparing for the site meeting with the Subcommittee, all Friends board members reviewed the Connecticut River Recreation Management Plan for the Upper Valley. Key points of the meeting are as follows:

Background

- 2.3 acre parcel was purchased by Friends, a private non-profit organization, from Dartmouth College
- Initial plans are just to host Hanover High School crew team/students, could eventually also host Upper Valley Rowing Foundation, a separate organization with many board members in common
- Friends will apply to NH DES for wetlands/shoreland permits as private club, even though it serves the public high school, and with the town of Hanover as co-applicant.
- Friends will seek select board approval on September 15 for permission to use Wilson's Landing. Have been working with town planning staff.
- Dartmouth has told Hanover's crew program that it may no longer use the college docks after Spring 2010, due to conflicts with NCAA rules and liability concerns.
- Emergency communications are in place, and there is good cell phone reception on the water.
- Reviewed CRJC river width map, and determined that the area served by the property is over 351 feet wide as shown on GIS map prepared by Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, except for small area just upstream of mouth of Storrs Brook. Boat wake-induced erosion was discussed.

Team activities

- Crew is Hanover High School's largest single team; school rules confine it to a spring sport only (March-May). Training activities occur between 5-7:30 am. One or two regattas are held on a Wednesday or weekend. Upper Valley rowing lessons are held in summer and into the fall.
- Intent is to take river activities already taking place at Dartmouth dock and move them to Fullington Farm. This part of the river is already being used for training and racing.
- For large regattas, the race course might be arranged so that it ends at the Chieftain Inn docks, where spectators can be easily accommodated.
- Spectators would park at the Richmond School and be bussed to Fullington Farm.
- Boats, riggers, and oars are cleaned with bleach before traveling to another waterway to avoid transporting invasives such as Didymo. This cleaning currently takes place in the Dartmouth boat house parking lot and would occur in front of the Fullington barn before the boats are loaded on trailers, away from the water.

Upland area

- A drive will be built around the back of the barn, oriented so car headlights will not disturb neighbors to the N.
- A parking area of 50 spaces constructed of "grasspave" plastic honeycombed pavers filled with sand will be built in front of/next to the barn. Drive will be gravel. A gravel path for foot traffic only, with reinforced surface will be built from back of barn to new boat storage structure and then to lower end of drive to landing.
- No plans to alter drive to Wilson's Landing, or to use this driveway other than to walk rowing shells along the lower end of it to and from the dock.
- Barn will remain as a winter storage area for shells.
- Farmhouse will remain, with apartment for year-round caretaker above and coaches' quarters and meeting room below. Septic system is adequate for house.
- No plans for locker rooms. Portable toilet to be placed behind barn in active season.
- New open-sided boat storage structure will be built downslope, out of view of road. Students will carry boats from this building to the dock. Dartmouth's terms of sale included right to store up to 20 kayaks or canoes here, for which a small cage would be added on the south side if necessary. Building will have means of receiving and handling stormwater runoff.
- New gasoline storage facility with concrete spill-retaining foundation will be built at undetermined location.
- Area between house/barn and the well-vegetated shoreline buffer will remain in mowed grass. This area will be

used by boat trailers from visiting schools during rowing meets.

- Two historic outbuildings remain; one an open shed, and the other possibly a chicken house. The Friends are currently undecided about what to do with them. They may be moved.

Dock and landing area

- A 180 foot long seasonal aluminum/steel floating dock, ADA-accessible, will be connected to the shore by a 75 foot long, 10 foot wide ramp, just downstream from the current landing. The angle of the dock will allow more of the existing vegetation to remain. The current dock is too high for rowers to use.
- The current plan calls for the dock to be placed some 50 feet from shore, over the shelf that drops off, in order to access deeper water when river levels are low behind Wilder Dam. There may be a concrete strip on shore to anchor the dock. Federal license allows Wilder Dam to operate impoundment level between 380 and 385 feet.
- The subcommittee advised that when water levels are low, water will be too shallow on the inboard side of the dock to permit storing coaches' launches. A revised map will be prepared and provided to the subcommittee.
- There may be an opportunity to improve the current small and inadequate sign board. Lebanon has recently upgraded its kiosks at city recreation areas, with a grant from LLBean.
- The dock breaks down into 10' sections and will be stored in the new boat shed in winter.
- The coaches' seven boats will be kept during the season on the inside of the long dock, with gas cans and starters removed to prevent unauthorized use. The Friends are not in a financial position to purchase wake-less boats for the coaches.
- Plans are to alter the riparian buffer as little as necessary. Friends would welcome recommendations on buffer management. Certain areas could be roped off.
- Subcommittee members observed significant growth of invasive honeysuckle and some glossy buckthorn in area of proposed dock and along main shore. Hanover Conservation Commission has recently addressed an infestation of purple loosestrife in the inlet. Healthy growth of poison ivy on lower slope of main property.
- There are no plans to alter the shoreline or vegetation of the shore on the landward side of the small inlet.
- Town has indicated that if plans go ahead, it would probably increase patrols to the area. The Friends may also employ a caretaker who could supervise the area.

Subcommittee discussion

- new dock plan should be expected due to need to move dock beyond shelf.
- should encourage removal of invasive species and address potential spectator trampling of riparian buffer, such as with rustic low fence. Could limb up the trees for better view. Area to south and immediate shore is wet. Should provide recommendations on buffer management.
- encourage the group to seek grant from LLBean or other source to replace kiosk with larger, covered signboard to hold boater education information and maps.
- should find use for the two historic farm outbuildings, possibly as visual screen for new boat storage building when viewed from the drive to the landing or from the neighbor's house.
- should encourage Hanover to open a new public river access at Mink Brook, to replace the one lost when the wastewater treatment plant access was closed.
- should encourage planting of a visual screen to block the view of the boat storage building from the road if necessary.
- enforcement is necessary to avoid unwanted activity during off hours
- 180 foot dock seems large, and may change the appearance and feel of the area; color of dock should be neutral, with reflectors for night visibility.
- concern about accommodating spectators; could use portable bleachers for regattas; Dartmouth College may own or rent them.