



HEADWATERS SUBCOMMITTEE Minutes (Amended) -September 9, 2009

PRESENT: Bill Schomburg and Ken Hastings, Columbia; Tom Caron, Canaan; April Hyde, Colebrook; Gary Paquette, Stratford; Brendan Whittaker and Adair Mulligan, CRJC

ABSENT: members from Northumberland, Pittsburg, Lemington, Stewartstown, Maidstone, Bloomfield

1. Housekeeping - Minutes of the meeting of May 13 were approved. Headwaters' Water Resources Plan will be published later this week, in full color. CRJC has just published a major atlas of the Upper Connecticut River; members were provided with a code number providing for a 30% discount. CRJC's office manager, Barbara Harris, passed away in July and a new office manager will come on staff in September. DES has assisted CRJC in asking the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to accept the Subcommittee's Connecticut River Recreation Management and Water Resources Plans as comprehensive plans for the river, which it has. DES has proposed new rules for stream crossings that will result in safer structures with less impact on aquatic habitat. Their intent is not to affect farming or forestry uses. Public meetings will be held to get public comment.
2. Columbia Sand & Gravel - Ken reported that he had floated by this gravel washing operation several times in the last month and seen a plume of silt going downriver, some 10-15 feet wide, even during dry weather in August. He believes that the many ARRA -funded road projects have created a large demand for gravel. He stopped to visit with Lloyd Drew and observed that the northernmost settling pond was full with silty water flowing over the road to the second pond. A pump was moving water from the first pond to the second. He also observed a 6" diameter overflow pipe carrying water and sediment from the first pond to the mouth of Beaver Brook a few feet upstream from its confluence with the Connecticut River. The pipe has been there all summer long, but was not part of the original design for the settling ponds. In the past, Ken said that Eric Stohl has collected samples of turbid discharge from these ponds that did not clear after many weeks due to the agents used in the settling process. April offered to do water quality testing for suspended solids, and asked Ken to collect samples upstream and downstream of the discharge. Adair reminded that CRJC and the subcommittee have no regulatory authority, but can alert those who have this authority. She will contact NH DES and ask for a site visit. Ken will supply photographs.
3. Possible tour of the region - CRJC is working with Councilor Ray Burton and the two state tourism agency directors on a tour of the region by Governors Lynch and Douglas that will include the Colebrook business park, Conte Refuge, and Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Adair will update members as plans proceed. Brendan pointed out that local concern for loss of jobs is an overriding issue, and that how these jobs will be restored in the future is not yet known, the region's natural resources will most certainly play a part. Bill said that he had helped the Northern Forest Canoe Trail staff lead a tour of the river for Canadian tourism writers and photographers.
4. Permit issues - none presently, although members asked about the status of plans for a Hydro Quebec line through the region and hydro development proposals at Murphy Dam.
5. Mohawk River/Colebrook Business Park - still waiting for approval of funding from Economic Development Administration. This federal agency has had the application since April.
6. Tri-State Connecticut River Targeted Watershed Initiative - Adair passed out copies of the home page of the website for this project (www.cesd.umass.edu/twi/index.html) and noted that there were only two bacteria violations in the NH/VT section of the river this year, while they occurred repeatedly in Massachusetts.
7. Public presentation - the scheduled and advertised presentation on the Connecticut River Water Resources Management Plan was not given because no members of the public were in attendance. Members agreed that the lack of interest is likely due to pre-occupation with the recent closing of several businesses that were important employers.