

## CRJC Headwaters Subcommittee

### Minutes

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Colebrook Town Office

#### Present

Ed Mellett, Northumberland  
Jamie Sayen, Stratford  
Jason Busfield, Pittsburg, DES  
Alan Williams, Pittsburg, DES  
Steve Agius, US Fish & Wildlife  
Tom Caron, Canaan  
Clayton Macdonald, Stratford  
Tara Bamford, Coordinator

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chairman Mellett.
2. Steve Agius, Refuge Manager, Nulhegan Basin Division of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge discussed his background and gave an update on the Nulhegan. Steve oversees the Nulhegan unit in N.H. and Vt. The Nulhegan includes 27,000 acres. Other staff in Brunswick include a forester and a biologist. Steve noted that the Nulhegan is the last lowland suboreal forest.

Steve reported that the CCP was not yet on the Federal Register for approval as they are waiting for top level positions to be filled. The plan calls for mostly status quo at the Nulhegan. Subcommittee members expressed concern about additional land purchases. Steve said he did not know the status of any of the proposed land purchases in the CCP except for an addition to the Nulhegan in Brighton. Jamie noted that the CCP addressed climate change vs. the Nash Stream plan did not.

Steve explained that the main focus on the Nulhegan is going to continue to be management for wildlife. There is not much merchantable timber. Champion cut it before selling it. Most is midsuccessional. He said there have been two confirmed reports of Canada Lynx, only in Vt. The plan is for the forest to be allowed to mature and become late successional. Cutting is used to influence it away from industrial to mature spruce-fir.

The issue of transmission lines was discussed as an issue of common concern. It was noted that both the Northern Pass and National Grid proposals were responses to requirements for an increase in high voltage to Mass. The Velco line through the refuge would increase from

200 ft to 350 ft. National Grid would need to buy land to trade with equal \$ value and some habitat value.

Opportunities to work together were discussed. Steve said he can write letters of support. The refuge biologist can come talk about wildlife and climate change. It was agreed that would make a good joint program. They are available to come to schools when asked and have ongoing programs for school children. Clayton noted that the Refuge is an asset to the towns and he would like to see them working together more. Alan suggested a connection with the scouts. Steve said he can provide flyers for town offices and noted the conference room at the visitors center is available to any environmental meeting. They welcome school groups as well. The visitors center is open 8-4:30 7 days and has rest rooms.

3. The minutes of December 15, 2016 were reviewed and no corrections made.

4. There were no new Permit Reviews.

Ed gave an update on Northern Pass. Currently the applicant is providing testimony and being questioned. Next the intervenors will testify and be questioned. Ed discussed the DES comments on the applications. He noted it is almost all wetlands where it would go through Northumberland. The wetlands had been mapped. The town hired a wetland scientist to comment and those comments will be incorporated in Ed's prefiled testimony. Ed pointed out that the law says the project has to minimize impacts. Initially DES had suggested burying the line down Rte 3, but now they are making no mention of this alternative. Gov. Sununu has come out in favor of Northern Pass and the SEC are mainly his appointees. There is a new representative for the public from Stark.

5. Updates

It was noted that there is no reserve storage at Murphy Dam; it is filling up and spillway was raised from 1383 to 1385. There is still 3 ft of ice and snow on the Conn. Lakes.

6. Other Business

Bill Schomburg's passing was reported. It was agreed by all that the loss of his contributions to the work of the Headwaters Subcommittee will be a challenge to make up for.

7. Next Meeting – June 15 or 22 were suggested depending on Tara's availability. A TNC update was a suggested topic.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Bamford.