

Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee

Minutes

October 29, 2014

Windham Regional Planning Commission

139 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT

Members Present: Elizabeth McLoughlin, Chair, *Brattleboro, VT*; Alice Maes, *Putney, VT*; David Deen, *CRJC Commissioner*; Roland Vollbehre, *Chesterfield, NH*; Stephen Skibniowsky, *Vernon, VT*; Rod Francis, *Brattleboro, VT*; Chris Campy, *CRJC Commissioner*; Michael Fairchild, *Brattleboro, VT*; Peter Barrett, *Westmoreland, NH*; Daniel Marx, Ph.D., *Dummerston, VT*; Joe Conroy, *Hinsdale, NH*.

Staff Present: Lisa Murphy, SWRPC, Keene, NH

Guest Presenter: Shane Csiki, NH DES

I. Introductions

Elizabeth McLoughlin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Attendees went around the table and introduced themselves and the towns or affiliation that they represent.

II. Program

Presentation: The Changes in Rivers and Streams after Severe Storm Events, Shane Csiki, PhD, Flood Hazards Program Manager - NH Department of Environmental Services. Shane began the presentation with a PowerPoint showing damages to roads and structures caused by severe rain events with an increase in stream flow and velocity. He also showed slides of erosion left by the effects of Tropical Storm Irene. In many instances, these road wash-outs occur because of undersized culverts. The cost and inconvenience created by road damage can be overwhelming. He has been working on a grant to analyze road-stream crossings and also on the changing patterns of streams.

Sometimes during these severe weather events, a new stream channel will be created to handle the overflow. In some instances, the trend has been identified in areas where streams have been straightened causing an increase in volume and velocity of the flow. Other causes of fluvial erosion are due to bermed and steep terrain. Unfortunately, there are not many funding opportunities in river restoration.

To perform the Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) assessment, New Hampshire has adopted the forms that Vermont has been using. By looking at the river features, it is possible to identify those areas that are likely to fail. The NH DES has taken the information from these assessments and created maps to identify areas of concern and to delineate an FEH zone. This helps to prioritize the sections and to include the information in the local Hazard Mitigation Plan updates. The findings and mitigation strategies are then presented to the towns to raise an awareness of the potential severity of the changing patterns. This helps communities identify where the problems are likely to occur. Working with FEMA to also provide funding for mitigation

projects, such as culvert upsizing, stream bank stabilization, and expanding the potential flood areas to include the FEH areas is also encouraged at the local level.

Shane Csiki shared some of the methods used to gather data such as Light Detection and Ranging to provide data and images.

Roland Vollbehr asked about the damages of beaver dams. He stated that they may be a good way to hold back the speed and volume of flow. Shane Csiki responded that it can be true in some instances, but the effect can also be very damaging and costly if the dam breaks up and a mass of water inundates the reaches downstream. Chris Company share that these areas should be mapped to provide a history and to show what the effects were. You can then look at planning to protect against structural damage in the future. He suggested encouraging communities to include the location of these beaver dams on the past and potential hazard maps that are in the Hazard Mitigation Plans.

III. FY 2014 LRS Annual Reports to the Towns

Lisa Murphy discussed the need for information from members for the activities that the Wantastiquet LRS has done during the period of July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. She will put together a report that the members can distribute to their towns for inclusion in the Town Annual Report's. Vermont towns generally prepare their annual reports at the beginning of November, and New Hampshire towns generally prepare theirs in early December. She will prepare this within the next week and make it available for distribution.

Lisa Murphy also distributed a memo regarding the opportunity to review and comment on proposed changes to the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. It contains some changes in the role of the Local River Subcommittees. Any comments should be referred to Tara Bamford at tebamford@aol.com no later than November 5th.

Lisa Murphy announced that there is a workshop being offered by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on November 13th with many topics of interest related to natural resources. She distributed copies of the announcement to members present. The workshop is called the State Government Municipal Day.

IV. Local Issues and Concerns

A roundtable discussion was shared on the interpretation of the changes to the Vermont Shoreland Protection regulation and its' potential application to the Connecticut River.

V. Next Meeting

Chairman McLoughlin suggested that the committee meet in December and proposed conducting a poll for the dates of December 3rd and 10th. Lisa Murphy stated that she would send out a Doodle Poll to all committee members to determine the best date.

VI. Other

This item was taken up during agenda item III.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Murphy
WLRS Staff