



## Connecticut River Joint Commissions

*10 Water St., Lebanon, NH*

*Monday, August 15, 2016*

*Minutes*

**Commissioners Present:** Rick Hopkins, VT; Jason Rasmussen, VT; Steven Lembke, VT; David Deen, VT; Chris Company, VT; Tara Bamford, VT; Dick Sanders, NH; Jim McClammer, NH;; Rick Walling, NH; Mary Sloat, NH; Chris Yurek, NH; Robert Harcke, NH.

**Commissioners Absent:** Ken Niemczyk, Alison Low, Samuel Swope, Chris Thayer, Brendan Prusik, Jennifer Griffin.

**Guests:** Katie Kennedy, Biologist, The Nature Conservancy; Andrew French, USFWS/Conte Wildlife Refuge. **Staff:** Patricia Crocker.

2:00 PM Convene and Welcome

The Nature Conservancy (Katie Kennedy) presented the decision and hydrologic models that are being used to estimate the effect of alternative operations of Connecticut River hydroelectric dams. In order to better understand the Connecticut's flow regime and identify ways to better manage human uses, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and their partners are developing a basin-wide hydrologic model and decision support tool. The modeling tool will help decision makers and other stakeholders comprehensively understand the positive and negative environmental, economic and social consequences of various management options.

Andrew French of the US Fish and Wildlife Service/Conte Refuge provided a presentation on the WOW Program (Watershed on Wheels Express was) on YouTube Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZ1a1dg9DSM> Discussion followed on how CRJC might partner with Conte to support watershed education programs.

Comm. Lembke reported on discussions among the Communications Committee members about the potential for creating its own educational model. He explained that partnering with other organizations might be a more effective model.

Comm. Deen made a motion that the Commissions direct the Executive Committee draft letters to Conte t/ USFWS and to Friends of Conte through Commissioner Campany making an official request to partner with them and bring additional community support for watershed educational programs.

CRJC can bring together a variety of groups and stakeholders to participate in these efforts. Comm. Bamford suggested that this could increase support for Conte. Friends of Conte are comprised of over 70 organizations. Mr. French suggested the CRJC become involved with Friends of Conte. They do quite a lot of marketing and work with congressional delegations. There is a recreation education committee and a science committee. Comm. Sanders would like to see a research component and a curricular component for schools. Deen suggested Eco–AmeriCorps might work with Friends of Conte and their exhibit.

The WOW schedule is not yet established for FFY 2017. They have two mobile units and they also have a third area which includes touch tables, etc. Mr. French said they might want to engage the public in participation in research such as water quality testing, along with the displays.

Comm. Bamford spoke about the application for 604b funding assistance for creation of educational outreach materials.

Comm. Lembke seconded Comm. Deen’s motion and further proposed that Commissioners Bamford, Deen and Campany provide an initial draft letter for the Executive Committee to review before the next executive committee meeting. Vote: Unanimous

Comm. Lembke thanked Andy French for attending the meeting. Mr. French stated that he would like to encourage having someone from CRJC join them on the road to assist with the display events. Where there would be a cost is if you brought on an AmeriCorps volunteer to assist with the out reach The cash contribution is \$3,500 which could be shared. French also suggested the Student Conservation Corps (SCA) as another option and encouraged CRJC to see what their schedule is for next year. SCA is \$11,000 plus housing or an additional \$6,000 if housing is not available for their 10–months on staff.

### **3:15 Business Meeting**

Adopt June Meeting Minutes Commissioner Bamford wanted to clarify her comments in the June minutes by noting that circumstances changed after that meeting and she agreed to

renew her term as Commissioner after all." Comm. McClammer moved and Comm. Walling seconded motion to accept minutes. Vote: Unanimous

Review June 2016 Financials – Comm. Deen moved approval seconded by Comm. Sanders. Unanimous.

Report on Local River Subcommittee Activities. Tara Bamford provided a written report on LRS Activities over the summer. The Littleton Community Center costs have risen, but they have changed their policy to not charge non-profits but they will accept donations. Mary Sloat moved that CRJC make a donation of \$50 annually to the Littleton Community Center Jason seconded motion. Vote: Unanimous.

A brief discussion of the contribution by the Town of Bath to CRJC followed. The donation has to be requested, but is in their annual budget. Staff will draft a letter to the town of Bath requesting their contribution for CRJC.

Upper Valley LRS is having a meeting tonight to discuss the erosion issues and will be discussing the TransCanada studies. She distributed the flyer on Septic System Workshop planned by Mt. Ascutney LRS and reported that Wantastiquet seems to need some reinvigoration. Comm. Deen has a project for the subcommittee and will present that at the next meeting. Discussion followed up on the sign installations at boat launches. Vermont completed the project. NH signs are still not fully installed. The LRS will follow up in their respective areas.

All comment letters will be sent to Commissioners and Tara Bamford for distribution of the LRS. Comm. Walling will send a copy of the final comment letter on the Northern Pass for distribution to all.

The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission is looking for a representative from CRJC to serve on a newly formed Clean Water Advisory Committee. VT Act 64 Clean water Act requires community outreach and project prioritization. The RPC would like to have a representative from the Joint Commissions either Commissioners or a member of the LRS. Bamford will contact the members of the Mt. Ascutney subcommittee to determine if anyone would like to fill that role. Jason will provide a paragraph on the objectives.

## **Other Business/Announcements**

The letter from the CRWC thanking CRJC for the contribution to the Source to Sea Cleanup was presented.

Comm. Deen discussed the conundrum about the meeting that will be held at CRWC on Wednesday, August 17, 2016, at the Windham Regional Commission at 10:00 a.m. in Brattleboro. Some stakeholders are concerned about TransCanada CRJC Commissioner participating in the meeting. Discussion followed and the consensus is that Comm. Griffin is appointed by the Governor to serve on the CRJC as a representative of the industry and that she should be free to attend the meeting.

On August 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am to 4:30 John Field will present on the TransCanada erosion studies at Fairfield Inn in White River Junction. McClammer will send information about this and studies to review for the meeting.

Discussion continued on the modelling scenarios for various operations. Ms. Kennedy hoped to learn more about the interests of the members of the Commissions about their concerns and priorities for future modeling scenarios that could be devised.

Comm. Deen mentioned his concern for conservation of the American eel as one of the species that has not been given priority. Kennedy explained the decision model and how it is used to set priorities given the various alternatives that can be considered so as long as you don't have a negative impact on another priority or species. She explained how these are considered and these are determined by the various sets of metrics. The Water Quality objectives under the 401 are often much broader. The concept is to understand how the various hypotheses determine the effects of those options.

CRJC water resources plan will be the source for directing the CRJC priorities. Commissioners will need to decide how they will measure success. How do you quantify qualitative data? What are the various impacts that differ based on location. For example, erosion on northern end is a problem, but sedimentation is a bigger issue at the southern end of the river.

Commissioners Bamford, Rasmussen and Walling will work on a list based on a review of the local plans compare notes and get in touch with Ms. Kennedy. The first week of September is target date to send a rough draft to TNC and then have a clean draft for the Executive Committee's meeting on September 19.

**Adjourn – meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.**

*Adopted: 12/19/16*