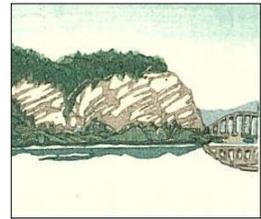


Upper Valley River Subcommittee

New Hampshire - Piermont, Orford, Lyme, Hanover, Lebanon
Vermont - Bradford, Fairlee, Thetford, Norwich, Hartford



Upper Valley Subcommittee of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions Monday – March 21, 2016 Latham Library, Thetford Vermont

Draft Minutes

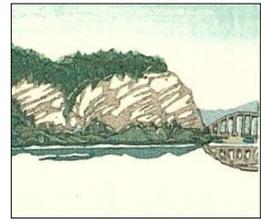
Present

Melissa Horwitz, Norwich
Alice Creagh, Hanover
Carl Schmidt, Orford
Christine Balch, Orford
Linda Matteson, Thetford
Katie Little, Lyme
Sue Mackenzie, Lyme
John Mudge, Lyme
Larry Scott, landowner
Tara Bamford, staff

1. Carl Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM and introductions were made.
2. The minutes of February 15, 2016 were approved as presented by motion of Mackenzie/Mudge.
3. Several members had a chance to go look for speed limit signs at their local boat landings to assist the CRJC in identifying the need for additional signs. No signs were found at the N. Thetford, Ompompanoosuc, Hanover, or Orford launches. Chris will try to find Bradford's again. Tara will follow up with those not here.
4. Permit Reviews
 - a. Report on activity between meetings - Tara and Carl gave an update on Jim's activity between meetings.
 - b. New applications - The notice was passed around for the Lebanon airport project so members could email Tara with comments for the Mascoma LAC if they have any. Tara will also send the link out.

It was agreed that draft letters should be circulated to the Subcommittee members

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individually for comment before sending when there isn't time to discuss at a meeting, and suggested that copies of comment letters be sent to conservation commissions so they can benefit from and be aware of the Subcommittee's thoughts as well.

5. TransCanada's FERC relicensing for Wilder Dam

John gave an update from the CRJC FERC workgroup meeting. He said it was mainly an organization meeting. TransCanada is selling their hydropower assets in New England to pay for a pipeline. They are a \$65 billion company. The question was raised whether they own any other dams in New England other than on the Connecticut. CRWC has put out RFPs for review of the studies. Tara added that Jim Kennedy wants to see an engineer on board as soon as possible to begin looking at the erosion issue, not just to respond to the studies. John reported that CRWC is looking for \$50,000 for this work and has several commitments.

Tara reported on the meeting of the Mt Ascutney Subcommittee - they recommended a mitigation fund with private landowner eligibility, revenue sharing and management of the water releases/levels to minimize erosion. Susan said that there are UMass studies that show the dams can still be profitable as run of the river.

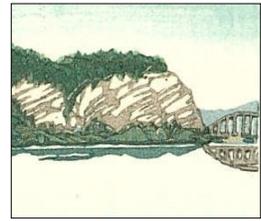
Larry Scott reported that he owns farmland north of the Bedell Bridge and that of 4 farm fabric/rip rap projects NRCS did in 1982, the bankings are now all eroded again. He said in the 1970s the ACOE tested different kinds of bank armour.

John showed numerous photos he has of bank erosion. He said that the buffer used to be vegetated but was cut in '48/'49 where there were flowage rights associated with the dam being built. The flowage rights go to 385' above sea level. Surveys show he has lost 40 feet of land along a 3/4 mile strip. Several people expressed surprise to hear that the current permit only allows 2.5 foot fluctuations on a daily basis as the changes look like more than that. John noted that if they changed the maximum from 385 ft to 380 ft, i.e., if they did not permit the whole flowage right area to be utilized, the fluctuations would do less damage. Larry added that the 385 vs 390 was to save the Newbury Meadows. The railroad increased the elevation of their rail bed by 2 feet in 1948 to get ready for the dam. Carl added that flood control was used as a justification for the dams.

Larry has lost acres of land from his farm since moving there in 1980. He said with the flowage rights TransCanada can flood the field anytime. The previous owner had managed

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the water levels and timing in a manner than enabled the farmers to get on their fields by the end of May. In 2013 they could not plant for 21 days because water sat on the fields. He is hoping to be able to get farmers together to convey these concerns. There is a feeling that people aren't thinking about how Wilder Dam affects Newbury fields. The Subcommittee advised Larry to write to FERC and to CRJC with his recommendations. Tara suggested in addition one way to help with this issue would be for the Subcommittee to make some specific recommendations for permit conditions.

Larry also reported that in a separate but related issue TransCanada took Newbury to court over the appraised value of flowage rights- TC said 25 acres at \$250/acre - town engineer said 2,100 acres at \$1,500/acre. TransCanada lost and appealed. The state helped the town pay for the case.

Tara was asked to try to draft a comment letter based on this discussion and circulate it for comments from members prior to submitting to FERC.

John has been wondering if the study reports are edited by or at the direction of TransCanada. The consensus was that this is probably the case, as it is different than the EIS process that will come later.

Meeting dates were penciled in for May 16 and June 20 depending on the timing of the next erosion study reports and permit applications to review. Tara will arrange for the library.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Bamford.