

CRJC Headwaters Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
 Thursday, August 22, 2019
 7:00PM
 Colebrook Town Office

Pittsburg			Northumberland	Edwin Mellett	X
Pittsburg	Alan R Williams		Northumberland	Dale Covey	
Colebrook	Kevin McKinnon	X	Bloomfield		
Colebrook			Bloomfield		
Stratford	Jamie Sayen	X	Lemington		
Stratford	Clayton Macdonald	X	Lemington		
Clarksville			Maidstone		
Clarksville			Maidstone		
Clarksville (alt)	Alan Karg		Canaan	Tom Caron	X
Stewartstown			Canaan		
Stewartstown			Brunswick		
Columbia	Kenneth Hastings	X	Brunswick		
Columbia	Lucas Deblois				

Tracie Sales (Rivers Management and Protection Program, NHDES)
 Jim Gallagher (Dam Safety Program, NHDES)
 Olivia Uyizeye (Staff, UVLSRPC)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mellett opens the meeting at 7:05pm. The attendees introduce themselves.

2. Speaker – Jim Gallagher, Murphy Dam.

See PowerPoint slides. Supplementary comments have been recorded below.

Gallagher presents to the representatives on the current status of inspection and repair at the Murphy Dam, around 80 years old. The facility has been doing a thorough review of the penstock and spillway to determine what repairs are needed. Any repairs would need to be coordinated with needs of instream flow in relation of fish spawning and erosion concerns.

Divers have performed an initial inspection on the penstock. The results concluded that the broom gate is in great condition, however, there are broken sheaves. These sheaves will be replaced for concern they will cut into the cable and make it unworkable. The cable will be replaced at the same time rather than performing a full inspection of the cable, as it is covered in grease and is the same age as the dam. A ladder going into the penstock is severely rusted and at risk of falling in to the butterfly valves, which could cause serious damage, and will therefore be replaced. These needs have been put into a proposal for repair work while an assessment continues, including a closer look at the butterfly valves in the penstock. The proposal is still on hold due to the state budget not passing and currently running on the 2019 budget, which does not include this proposed work. Ideally the work will be done this Fall. Gallagher shares that there is some attempt to receive authorization from the legislative fiscal committee outside of the full state budget, but there are also politics in this process.

The timing of any work on Murphy dam needs to be done carefully in relation to natural flow levels, hydroelectric storage needs, fish spawning and other aquatic habitat impacts. Gallagher would like to continue discussing the best timing for any work and inspections to be done in the future to ensure the best case scenario for river health.

Representatives ask about the lifetime of dams? Gallagher responds that sedimentation is not a big issue in this part of the river. The maintenance and replacement of dam components are the main issue. Right now there is \$3million in a trust fund, but an approved budget is required to access these funds for repairs.

3. Approve Minutes – April 2019

Hastings clarified that his motion on the culvert replacement did not include the pesticide application, as he has concerns on the impact of glyphosate to fish habitat, spawning and other ecologic health impacts. Sales notes that the pesticide application would be a separate permit application from the Department of Agriculture.

Sayen shares his concerns about pesticides as a result of his studies on their carcinogenic and ecological impacts of both the pesticides and the surfactants that go along with them. Sayen recognizes the short-term economic benefits, but does not agree that these out weigh other concerns. Sayen feels that the Department of Agriculture is determined to continue to approve pesticides since his experience discussing the issues with them since the 1990's.

Macdonald adds that he has seen the use of pesticides for circumstances where there is no end in sight.

Hastings makes a motion is made to amend the minutes to clarify the original motion by Hastings in April.

Macdonald seconds the motion.

The motion passes unanimous. Uyizeye added the following note to the April minutes.

Edit – A motion was passed at the August 22, 2019 meeting to add the following comment in relation to the above motion. Hastings' motion did not support the pesticide application piece of the permit application. Hastings expressed concern in regards to the impact of glyphosate on fish nursery habitat especially, but also other human and ecological health impacts. Hastings, Sayen and Macdonald expressed concern for the use of pesticides, preferring manual or mechanical methods.

4. Permit Reviews

a) Shoreland Permit, 1407 Cedar Stream Rd in Clarksville, NH

The permits is for the removal of an existing camp, building of a new log home and installation of a state approved septic system. This is leased state owned land. Representatives review the site plans for the work. Mellett asks for any comments. None are given.

b) Special Permit, Pesticide Application in Pittsburg, NH

A rip rap area along a flood control dam of the Connecticut River between Deer Mountain and Third Lake, 30ft wide by 500ft long. The permit application is for the application of herbicide to remove nuisance brush and vegetation. Hastings and Sayen discuss concerns on the use of these chemicals, not the goal of the work itself. Caron comments that there are a lot of Brook Trout in that river and the timing

of application may impact spawning. Sayen explains that the chemicals can end up in the sediment and also bioaccumulate within the food chain. Representatives discuss the history of the application of pesticides over the decades in ways that were not wary enough of the impact. This includes the continuing impact of DDT in areas such as Squam Lake and the application of pesticides without appropriate protective wear for workers, referenced by Mellett and Hastings.

Hastings makes a motion to write a comment letter reflecting the subcommittees request to use mechanical or manual methods rather than pesticide application.

Caron seconds the application.

The motion passes unanimous.

c) Drainage work at Perras Rd in Northumberland, NH

The parcel is modifying their drainage system for runoff from a rail yard. Mellett notes that the cemetery, where there has been concern, is further upstream and does not relate to this project. Representatives review the site plan for the work. The pipe will be extended out over the bank so to protect from further erosion. There is a question raised on whether there will be any filtration methods used.

Representatives agree that the work looks acceptable, given their understanding is correct on the location of the outlet pipe and the presence of a filtration system.

Caron makes a motion to support the permit.

Hastings seconds the motion.

The motion passes unanimous.

d) Expedited Culvert and Stream work in Colebrook, NH

Discussed previously.

5. Updates and Other Business

a) CRJC Commissioner Focus on Water Quality.

Uyizeye explains that the Commissioners have decided to spend 6 months focusing on water quality in the region. They are interested to learn what activities the subcommittees might be performing in relation to this topic and/or if subcommittees might consider exploring a new initiative.

Hastings shares that herbicide, pesticide and creosote use are a major issues. This is where the LRS may start. Hastings mentions the Christmas tree nurseries growing along the river where many chemicals are used, including the previously discussed glyphosate.

Mellett notes that the NH Coop uses herbicide to maintain their power line corridors, whereas Eversource uses mechanical equipment.

Sayen shares that there is not enough time left in the meeting to develop this fully. He asks that others consider a model proposed by a Vermont forester. Sayen proposed that instead of wrangling over forest practices regulations, we should defend water quality. Any activity (whether forestry related or not) cannot degrade the public's right to water quality. Cut trees however you want, but if that practice degrades water quality, it must be shut down. Water quality, air quality, wildlife, climate are public commons, not private property. No private landowner has a right to degrade the public commons. Sayen explains that the beauty of such an approach is that it builds on existing rights (i.e., water quality is part of the public commons and is a right of all), and it sidesteps the never-ending controversy over the right to regulate forestry and the debates over what are effective regulations.

Hastings shares that pictures have been the most impactful method, not reports, in communicating on areas of concern in the past.

b) Sales Updates

Sales reports to representatives that a boat washing station will be available at the boat ramp on Lake Francis over Labor Day weekend. No water goes into the river and boats are urged to wash their boats before and after going into the lake. The legislature recently considered a law requiring people to use a boat wash, where available; however this was likely vetoed by the Governor).

Sales reports to the group on the changes to the NH wetland permit review process that will go into effect around the New Year. Sales is currently developing details on the new process to share with advisory committees. The new process will require some review by the LRS before the permit is sent to NHDES. Expedited work will require approval to be expedited; otherwise the permit will pass through the standard process. Sales share one way the LRS might handle permit reviews that require a faster turn around. When not able to gather a special meeting to review a permit, the subcommittee may (from a previous meeting) have an appointed subgroup discuss the permit and respond with comments. This subgroup may use criteria established by the LRS.

6. Adjourn

Sayen makes a motion to adjourn.
Hastings seconds the motion.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00PM.

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 21, 2019
Colebrook Town Offices
7:00 PM