

CRJC Headwaters Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 11, 2020
7:00PM
Conference Call

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

Ron Rhodes (CRC)
Ben Copans (VT DEC)

Jillian Kilborn (NH Fish & Game)
Olivia Uyizeye (Staff, UVLSRPC)

1. Welcome, Introductions & Review of Conference Call Tools and Public Meeting Guidelines

Chair Mellett called the meeting, conducted via conference call, to order at 7:11 PM under the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A, New Hampshire's Right-to-Know law, as allowed by Emergency Order 11 under Executive Order 2020-04 in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Uyizeye conducted a roll call of LRS members, invited any guests to introduce themselves, and welcomed all present. Uyizeye reviews zoom conference call features and how to reach her for technical assistance.

3. Lyman Falls and Wyoming dam removals from Ron Rhodes

Rhodes thanks the LRS for the letters of support in regards to grant proposals submitted for the removal of the Lyman Falls and Wyoming dams. Funding has been received from NHCF MEF. A third dam is under consideration in North Stratford that is a priority for MEF. Rhodes indicates he is working with Mellett and Macdonald for this next dam removal proposal. Rhodes has shared draft details of the North Stratford proposal. Rhodes has met with Guildhall to discuss the project. Mellett indicates that there was good support for the removal. The Connecticut River paddlers have been doing much of the local work in Stratford.

On the Lyman falls dam, Rhodes indicates that there is concern for removing all remnants of as it could impact the habitat of the pool. It is likely that some portion will be kept in the river to maintain the habitat. Rhodes notes that he is presently waiting to hear from the state on this plan. Rhodes notes that the state may require everything to be removed, in which case could the installation of rock as a rock vein could be used to help stabilize the pool habitat. Verizon's Engineer is working on this project. Rhodes has met with the Town of Columbia, who signed off. Hastings thanks Rhodes for working on these removals.

Covey asks if there is a timeline for use of funds. Rhodes indicates that these are one year grants and expect to apply at the end of 2020. MEF has 8 million dollars and it is not going away any time soon. CRC (specifically Rhodes) sits on the committee and is amazed they don't get more proposals.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes from January

Covey moves to accept the minutes. Hastings seconds. The motion passes unanimously by roll call vote.

5. Permit Reviews

a. Division of Pesticide Control Special Permit App# 20-229

Mellett summarizes the work outlined in the permit application – to remove invasive species at the same locations as the previous year, using glyphosate. Jillian Kilborn of NH Fish & Game had asked for a letter of recommendation. Mellett says that it was asked to stay 50ft away from the water body, which was not incorporated into the applications.

Hastings notes there have been disagreements in the past. Covey asks what precautions have been noted in the application. Uyizeye references the application where it reads “Risk minimization measure: low volume foliar treatments sprayed away from water to minimize risk of contamination. No treatment will be applied to target plants standing in water.”

Mellett says he can send a comment letter. Hastings responds with support and add that he does not think we will win the invasives battle, maybe phragmites, but not the others. Hastings recommends writing a letter stating a position on glyphosate to not be used within 50 ft of the Connecticut River and its tributaries. Caron says it is important to continue to comment and reiterating the LRS position.

Jillian Kilborn joins the call and offers to answer questions.

Hastings says that any glyphosate that ends up on the river bottom will have a significant impact, which is likely due to the difficulty of maintaining perfect conditions to avoid spread. Jillian asks the representatives what alternative methods they would recommend. Hastings suggests manual and mechanical means. Kilborn agrees that this is one approach. It takes at least 7 years and is very labor intensive. Kilborn also discusses newer alternatives that are seeing some positive results – wire mesh and the heatweed method (<https://heatweed.com/invasive-species/>). Kilborn notes that the chemical application is used for large swaths of invasives, while mechanical removal is used for smaller locations.

Hastings expresses concern for the aquatic plant impacts, trout habitat and nursery habitat. Kilborn responds that she has visited sites that were treated last year and felt it was very effective. She expects to see reductions this year and thus less chemicals needed. Hastings asks if follow up surveys are done around. Kilborn says no. Kilborn adds that it takes about 2-3 years for terrestrial non-invasives to come back in. Kilborn acknowledges that impact to the neighboring terrestrial non-invasives has been seen. There is no assessment or noted observations on potential impacts to the aquatic habitat. Hastings asks about using mechanical within 50 ft buffers. Kilborn says she is looking for grants to use alternative methods and initiate with demonstration projects.

Covey asks whether the glyphosate certified applicator is certified. Kilborn responds that that they will be contracting out to Vegetative Control services this year that has a lot of experience and long history in this area.

Hastings reiterates his motion to submit a comment letter indicating that glyphosate not be used within the 50 ft buffer. Hastings adds that he has seen the mapping of plants within the river that provide habitat, especially important as nursery habitat for aquatic species. Caron seconds the motions. The motion passes by roll call both with 3 in favor (Hastings, Mellett, Caron) and one against (Covey). Uyizeye will draft the letter and circulate for review.

6. Updates & Other Business

a. West Stewartstown campground

In regards to a new campground being observed in West Stewartstown NH, Caron and his brother-in-law Jon Howe are making inquiries into whether the proper permits have been received. Caron shares that How called NHDES, who told him that the landowner did not have any permits for the campground and they will be looking into it further, indicating that Bethany McCarthy will be doing this. Caron has not heard anything. Caron shares that about 20 sites have been cleared right along the river. Vegetation is cleared and portable toilets set up in the field. Caron will follow up as information comes in.

Covey asks if this is done by the owner. Caron says yes. The landowner typically runs it for hay. Mellett notes that the permit process is quite extensive and can be expensive. Mellett shares that he heard the landowner on WMUR, as a call in listener, asking when campgrounds will be able to reopen. Hastings notes a trailer is down in the cleared location and is unsure if it belongs to the landowner or someone else. Hastings also share that a concrete platform has been put up, probably about 25-30 yards from the river, directly across from the Canaan ball field. Members express concern that this might be a shoreland protection act problem. It is unclear if West Stewartstown is aware, received anything, or done anything. There is no zoning in the municipality, thus no zoning board.

Mellett suggests writing a comment letter to NHDES. Hastings adds that the LRS might need to be persistent to get a response. Caron says him or Howe will be following up. Hastings says the campground needs to follow the same rules and suggests 10 tent sites might be ok, although any campers would be more of an issue. Covey asks what is being cleared. Caron responds that is vegetation. No trees or earth moving activities have been observed.

Caron makes a motion to write a letter to NHDES. Hastings seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously by roll call vote. Caron will draft the letter to be circulated.

b. Updates on VT basin plan

Copans reports to the LRS about a couple meetings he has had to discuss wetlands and floodplain restoration along the river. Copans has been in conversation with agricultural partner like conservation districts and NRCS. They spoke especially about Nitrogen and e-coli and developed draft strategies, with a focus on landowners and targeted riparian buffer work. Copans invites the LRS to comment on the draft strategy documents shared. September 2020 is the timing for the public review process. At the time of the next LRS meeting a draft basin plan will be ready for review.

Hastings indicates support for the riparian buffer work. Copans adds there are economic benefits to farmers being more efficient with Nitrogen application. Copans notes that there is a lot of transition happening with farms right now, which is an opportunity right for conservation and restoration efforts. Copans is also gauging interest for more wetland restoration along the Upper Connecticut, which can be effective for habitat and Nitrogen reductions. He is trying to assess why these have not occurred more often. Copans shares that other meetings are being planned to discuss forestry and Maidstone Lake. Covey would like to plug into the forestry item for Northeast Kingdom. Copans indicates he is pulling this group together now and will include Covey.

c. Glyphosate Policies

Uyizeye summarizes research on local glyphosate policies in the USA. Hastings indicates frustration with CRJC commissioners and some disagreement about how to address glyphosate across the two states. Hastings indicates concern about the half-life of glyphosate and its bio-accumulation in invertebrates. Mellett says his sources say that it does not bio-accumulate, but it will be taken up by plants that might be killed.

7. Other Business

8. Adjourn

Mellett makes a motion to adjourn. Covey seconds the motion. The Motion passes unanimously by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.