



HEADWATERS SUBCOMMITTEE Minutes -February 3, 2010

PRESENT: Ed Mellett, Northumberland; Bill Schomburg and Ken Hastings, Columbia; Lisa Savard, Pittsburg; Kevin McKinnon, Colebrook; Gary Paquette, Stratford; Louie Lamoureux, Maidstone; Tom Caron, Canaan; Denault Routhier, Bloomfield; Brendan Whittaker and Adair Mulligan, CRJC

GUESTS: Rebecca Brown, Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust; Tracy Zschau, Vermont Land Trust

ABSENT: members from Lemington, Stewartstown.

1. Housekeeping : Members noted with regret the passing of active Bloomfield member Bob Postier. Minutes of October 28 were approved on a motion by Gary seconded by Denault. Staff changes at CRJC include new office manager Theresa Darling and resignation of Communications Director Rebecca Brown..
2. Farm and floodplain conservation in the lower Headwaters region - Rebecca Brown, Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, and Tracy Zschau, Vermont Land Trust, described their project to look at conservation opportunities on floodplain farmland in the area from Stratford/Maidstone down to Dalton/Lunenburg, and also on the Upper Ammonoosuc, Israel's, and John's Rivers, with funding from the Upper CT River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund. The project grows partly from CRJC's Water Resources Plan, that recommends floodplain and farmland conservation. Goal would be finding lands where purchase of a farm-friendly conservation easement would fit into a farmer's business plan. Viewed new maps of valley highlighted where farmland and floodplain overlap. Louie asked what restrictions would be sought. This would depend on what the landowner and the land trust agreed upon, but would definitely include restriction on a building subdivision. Denault asked why this would be bought, because no one could build in the floodplain anyway. Kevin pointed out that unless a town has voted not to allow construction in the floodplain, it can be allowed if the building is built a certain way to "flood-proof" it. Adair reported that a large house is currently under construction in Thetford on farmland, deep in the floodplain, despite the town's efforts to stop it. That town has since voted not to allow any more construction in the floodplain. Rebecca invited all to attend workshops in Lancaster on April 22 and 29. Panel will include farmers whose land is already under a conservation easement.
3. Connecticut River Byway Paddlers' Trail of canoe campsites- Vermont River Conservancy is spearheading effort to better organize this trail and called planning session of various groups, including Bill and CRJC. At next meeting will discuss potential canoe campsite locations in the Headwaters region. Asked Adair to write to those schools who lead regular trips on the river to ensure proper sanitary measures.
4. Connecticut River Byway
 - a. Adair updated the group on the purpose of the byway (economic development through heritage tourism) and recent projects, including new exhibit, map/guide, inventory of byway "assets" and new posting of National Register nomination information on the CRJC web site, such as for Garland Mill in Lancaster. There are not many listings for North Country sites, because few (except covered bridges) are on the National Register of Historic Places. Adair invited information to post. Historical societies can use it to create local tours. Bill reported that Columbia has just published a major town history. Louie suggested looking for a book entitled "Railroads Along the Connecticut River" which has historical photos. Denault said that Bob Postier had historic photos of Lyman Dam and other local scenes.
 - b. Viewed short slide show on recent winter hiking/skiing trip to the Connecticut Lakes region, an example of how the byway can deliver income to the region. Adair gave copies of the photos to Lisa and Tom to use in their marketing.
 - c. CRJC has a scenic byway grant to create 12 new history-related itineraries, 8 for auto touring and 4 for bicycle touring. She asked for ideas. Members advised avoiding Route 3, due to high speed heavy traffic, and focus on Routes 102 and 145. Destinations could include the Poore Farm, Canaan village, Conte visitor center, Bunnell Preserve, Nash Stream, Washburn Forest (for mountain biking), Dixville Notch (for half day of hiking to Table Rock, Gorge, trails above Balsams), Old church in Stratford Hollow. Ed noted that while Lancaster already has a Heritage Trail, Groveton doesn't. Should encourage visitors to buy supplies in town. Tom reported that bicycle groups staying at his lodge have a route that includes going up 102 to the border, crossing to 145, to 26, 16, 110, and back through Groveton. Colebrook welcome center has suggested driving tours. Maidstone Road and side roads such as Paul Stream are scenic. A drive through East Colebrook including Coleman State Park is very scenic. Agreed that a tour involving covered bridges from Groveton and Stark up to Pittsburg would be a good idea. Colebrook recreation center is a good spot

for a rainy day. The project includes an effort to educate visitors about visitor etiquette, such as not coming up quickly behind someone on slow-moving farm equipment. Adair will bring draft itineraries to the subcommittee.

5. CT River Water Resources Management Plan - CRJC has applied to VT Conservation License Plate Program for Watershed Grant to print the subcommittees' recreation plans, create portable exhibits on riparian buffers, purchase a laptop to free another for use by members and commissioners to give presentations, and print more copies of the water resources plan. Adair encouraged members to give presentations to town boards and citizens in their own communities using the CDs that have been provided. Each member should to identify recommendations in the plan that are appropriate for their town to consider, and follow through.
6. Mohawk River/Colebrook Business Park river restoration - have not yet received signed paperwork from Economic Development Administration, six months after getting word that it had been approved, although Kevin received a 116-page request for further information on Colebrook's match.
7. Permit issues -
 - a. Columbia River Transportation project - DES has asked for more info (C&D chip transfer station)
 - b. Columbia Sand and Gravel discharge - nothing new to report; EPA is investigating at DES request
 - c. hydro proposal at Murphy Dam - nothing new to report
 - d. Hydro Quebec power line - will discuss next time. Want to know if they plan to use the existing right of way.
8. Announcements -
 - a. Adair reported that 18 bald eagles were counted along the river in the mid-winter survey. Ken said that birds have been hanging around his place, and Denault has observed an adult and an immature. Members agreed that more eagles have been wintering in this area in the last 2-3 years.
 - b. Louie reported that someone had dumped a truckload of tires with rims in his field, and after he reported it, it was carried on the local TV and newspapers. He moved the tires to the edge of the road, and according to Denault they were later picked up by the state.