

CRJC Riverbend Subcommittee

Draft Minutes

Thursday, January 26, 2017

Littleton Community Center

Present:

Jan Edick, Littleton

Michael Nocky, Littleton alt.

Ken Hunter, Monroe

Rick Walling, Bath

Pauline Corzilius, Haverhill

Dale Lewis, Haverhill

Stephanie Taylor, Newbury

Jaqie Lewis, Haverhill (guest)

Dianne Timmins, NH Fish & Game

Tara Bamford, CRJC

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 and introductions made. Membership was discussed. Tara will reach out to Ami to see if she plans to stay on.
2. The minutes of October 27, 2016 approved as presented by motion of Edick/Hunter.
3. There were no permit application requiring review.
4. Dianne Timmins, NH Fish & Game, presented information on Tools & Techniques to Assess & Protect Community Infrastructure, focusing on the Ammonoosuc Stream Crossing Assessment Project. She explained that the project grew out of concern that aquatic habitat connectivity has been reduced by culverts and other stream crossings. The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, involving states from Maine to Georgia, collected a lot of data on brook trout habitat using a uniform method for the inventory to provide a snapshot about habitat and a coordinated conservation strategy. A next step is to evaluate habitat and protect what is in good shape and improve what is not. Dianne explained the importance of trout and other aquatic organisms to be able to move around, for different life stages, for repopulating areas, and to avoid stressors like warm water for example. She reported that she has seen a trout migrate 50 miles in one of her telemetry studies. The Ammonoosuc River watershed was chosen for the stream crossing inventory and assessment for a number of reasons. The river is in the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program and has a corridor management plan. There is also a very active land trust – Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) – who has worked with Dianne and PSU as part of the Clean Water Healthy Trout program.

The Ammonoosuc stream crossing project provided an opportunity for NH Fish & Game, NHDOT and NHDES to coordinate their data needs into a single protocol for the first time. NCC assisted with the inventory using NHDOT funds. There were 742 stream crossings identified in the watershed. Using laser levels, 2-3 person teams were able to enter data for up to 16 crossings per day. The data is entered using an ipad and uploaded to the state's online infrastructure database (SADES) at UNH. Modelling is used to characterize them based on aquatic passage, hydraulics (ability to pass flood waters) and geomorphic compatibility. For each town the results will be presented for each of these 3 parameters.

Dianne explained that at the state level, three working groups have organized out of this project to look at various aspects such as the database and outreach. Currently for the outreach they are looking at a three step community process with the first meeting planned as general education on the topic, the second, working with each town to identify culvert priorities, and the third, working groups to develop next steps such as funding to replace priority culverts.

Discussion followed on some lower cost options for improving crossings such as prefab bridges. It was explained that they are not only much lower cost, but also less permitting if they span the brook, shoreline and wetland vs working in it to build a new one.

5. Officer Election – By motion of Edick/Corzilius, Stephanie Taylor was re-elected Chair and Rick Walling was re-elected Vice Chair.

6. Updates

- Rick reported that ACT is working on a new publication on Living with a Trout Stream.
- Rick and Tara reported on a meeting of groups interested in removal of unneeded dams. Wyoming Dam has been suggested as a priority because it is in the Riverbend corridor management plan.
- Rick and Tara reported that CRJC is continuing to participate in the FERC relicensing process for the Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon dams.
- Tara reported that DES has not drafted the pipeline rules yet.

7. The next meeting was scheduled for April 27. Some topics of interest for future presentations include erosion on the mainstem and the Conte Refuge.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Bamford.