

Wantastiquet Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions
Thursday, November 1st, 2018
Windham Region Commission Office, Brattleboro, VT
Minutes

Attendees

Walpole			Westminster	Paul Harlow	
Walpole			Westminster	Jim Calchera	X
Westmoreland	Perry Sawyer		Putney	Joe Grutta	X
Westmoreland			Putney		
Chesterfield	Roland Volbeh		Dummerston	Daniel Marx	
Chesterfield			Dummerston		
Hinsdale	Joe Conroy		Brattleboro	Kathy Urffer	
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Michael Fairchild	X
Vernon	Andy White	X			
Vernon					

Lionel Chute (CRJC Commissioner)

Erin Rodgers (Western New England Project Coordinator, Trout Unlimited)

Emily Davis (Planner, Windham Regional Commission)

Olivia Uyizeye (Staff, UVLSRPC)

Minutes

1. Olivia opened the meeting at 4:15 PM. Introductions were made.
2. Presentation on Stream Restoration by Dr. Erin Rodgers.
See attached slideshow for further details.
In New England, Trout Unlimited (TU) focuses on their Cold Water Restoration Program. This program works with towns and residents to prioritize restoration projects through an ecosystem approach. Diverse streams are able to meet the diverse needs of species through the provision of varied habitat types within the stream structure. These restoration efforts help downstream communities with floodplain access and the dissipation of flow, showing that “headwaters matter”. One large emphasis of this program is culverts, impacting how streams are disconnected to begin with where many are undersized, causing scour. Poorly functioning culverts are difficult to scale for fish due to high velocity and low water depth. One main restoration technique used by TU is the reintroduction of wood, which has been removed in the past to protect local infrastructure. This wood helps to slow water and create varied habitats in the stream. It is most common in old forests where studies by the

US Forest Service have found a significant amount of large woody debris throughout the stream channel. This method could be used on large streams like the Connecticut River. A local example of restoration using this method is the Nash River. The reintroduction of woody debris showed an increase of nutrient cycling. This method is now being done around Lake Champlain, the Great bay, and Long Island Sound.

Benefits of this reintroduction include: increased nutrient cycling; sediment transport and stream hydraulics (can structure wood different to foster varied impacts, creating a mosaic of stream bed sedimentation); slow the flow (lengthen and dampen flood peak by increasing floodplain connection and more interaction with biotic material); hyporheic flow (ground water flow that keeps streams colder and filters water through natural methods). The techniques used for this restoration practice can be generalized into three strategies. Hand placing of woody debris can be done with a large team (at least 10), often volunteers. Chop and drop takes advantage of knowledge and professional told to use the wood in an area and then relocate it on site. Chop and drop is limited by the growth in the area and the shape/ledge of the stream.

Erin opens up for comments and questions. Concerns are raised about the wood acting as a hazard in the stream to recreational users. Erin responds that these projects work to include all stakeholders and balance these various needs. A conversation is initiated about a Brownfield site in Brattleboro that is planned for redevelopment as a flood plain and green space. Questions are raised about how to make this floodplain effective, accessible to the public, maintain safety from the contaminants on site, and maintain access to the gravel materials on site. A question is raised about the replacement of culverts using FEMA funding that must be in kind structures. Erin notes that new requirements have been made in the past month that allow for culverts to be upgraded in size when deemed appropriate. The last question broaches the subject of climate change and how it will impact the work of Trout Unlimited and the species diversity within the streams. Erin shares that frank conversations have been had and that modeling helps the group to identify stronghold for Brook Trout that are a main target for safe guarding optimal stream health.

3. Meeting Minutes from May 2, 2018.

Conversation is opened up to any edits on the meeting minutes

Calchera makes a motion to accept the minutes as presented.

White seconds the motion.

Vote unanimous.

4. Chair Election.

Conversation is opened up to any updates on determining a chair, no changes are noted.

5. Permit Reviews.

Olivia noted that there are no permits for the subcommittee to review at this time.

6. Updates.

Brief discussion is had on the relicensing process for the CT River dams. It is requested to have more time to discuss this issue and update new members as to what is going on. Members agree that this would be acceptable. Olivia will share some documentation on the process and place the item in the next meeting's agenda.

An update on the mitigation funds for the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge 12210C is given. Funds are being placed in the NH ARM Fund that can be requested through a competitive grant process. The question is raised on whether these funds are redistributed to the same area where the impact is made. Members show an interest in these funds, especially in relation to a bike path that connects the NH and VT trail systems.

White references an article in the Greenfield Recorder that discusses a pump station working in reverse, causing poor impacts on the rivers. White will share the article and Uyizeye will share with the subcommittee.

7. Other Business.

Uyizeye distributed pamphlets to attendees for distribution to all towns in the Wantastiquet region. This included the Homeowner's Guide for Water Quality Protection and the Shoreline Buffer Fact Sheet.

8. Next meeting.

Members agreed to continue using the Doodle poll strategy for scheduling meetings. Olivia will coordinate with the Windham Regional Commission for available times in early February and reflect this in the options.

9. Meeting was adjourned at 5:40 PM by motion of Grutta/Calchera.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.