

**CRJC Riverbend Subcommittee
Minutes**

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

5:30PM

Lisbon Regional School

Lisbon, NH

CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership. Five local river subcommittees carry out this work with a corps of over 100 volunteers.

Attendance

Lancaster	Bob Elwell		Monroe	Ken Hunter	X	Guildhall		
Lancaster			Monroe			Guildhall		
Dalton	Michael Crosby		Bath	Rick Walling	X	Lunenburg		
Dalton	Gal Potashnick		Bath			Lunenburg		
Littleton	Jim Sherrard	X	Haverhill	Pauline Corzilius	X	Concord	Deborah Noble	
Littleton	Jan Edick		Haverhill	Dale Lewis		Concord		
Waterford			Barnet	Bill Graves	X	Ryegate	Mary Dole	
Waterford			Barnet			Ryegate		
Newbury	Scott Labun	X						
Newbury	Marteen Smit (alt)							

John Fairchild (Barnet)

Ben Copans (Watershed Coordinator, VT Department of Environmental Conservation)

Tracie Sales (Lakes Management and Protection Program, NH Department of Environmental Services)

Olivia Uyizeye (CRJC Staff)

Minutes

1) Welcome and Introductions

Walling starts the meeting at 5:45pm. Introductions are made all around.

2) Speaker – Ben Copans on Basin Plan Update

Copans gives a presentation to the subcommittee on the status of basin plan updates for relevant watersheds in the Riverbend region. He outlines challenges and priorities for these regions as they have been thus far determined. Copans also provides an overview of water quality monitoring along VT rivers and thoughts on how outreach or monitoring that might be beneficial. Slides from the presentation have been attached at the end of these minutes. Condensed notes on the presentation are outlined below.

- The State of Vermont has 15 designated basins that pass through a planning process every 5 years
- Passumpsic River Tactical Basin – completed
 - Assessed main water quality issues, high quality areas for protection, strategies to address challenges
 - Water quality assessment report based on monitoring through different programs. Data is available online - <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/map/data> or <https://anr.vermont.gov/maps/nr-atlas>
 - Town of Lindon identified for flooding issues
 - Biggest challenges – development along shorelines and high nutrient levels
 - Plan looks at Nitrogen impacts in relation to problems on the Long Island Sound. Vermont contribution is considered relatively small. The majority in the state comes from atmospheric deposition
 - The basin has seen an increase in the use of the following practices by farmers – cover crop, cover crop/hay rotation, and conservation tillage
 - Stormwater runoff mitigation strategies being done in major towns across VT
 - VTDEC is working with lake associations to increase shoreline buffers, raingardens, and other stormwater mitigation techniques
 - Working to increase river connectivity by removing appropriate and strategic dams
 - Online database available of active projects to improve the watershed
- Basin 14 – Expected completion in June 2020. Graves asked how this work relates to that done on Stevens Brook 10 years ago? Copans responds that more data is being collected before the public process to allow for more directed outreach.
- Upper CT River Basin
 - Made up of 4 distinct watersheds with a lot of forested land with some areas in the south that are more developed. No impairments.
 - This planning process is just kicking off
 - Some high Phosphorus levels, including Maidstone, related to development (mostly camps)
 - Water quality data in this region is limited. Copans highlights those that would benefit from water quality data
 - Copans will be speaking with the Headwaters Subcommittee in January
 - Focus on keeping the invasive species out of this basin as it is largely absent
- Water Quality Monitoring
 - Copans provides a list of locations that might benefit from water quality data
 - Shows the spectrum of outreach and substantive data collection. Describes the benefits of these different approaches in short- and long-term stewardship
 - School calendars can be difficult to work with for effective monitoring
 - Sample lab costs can be a challenge – cost, time and location
 - If working with students, potential to “flag” areas for follow up by state

- Walling asks if there is a program similar to the NH Volunteer River Assessment Program? Copans says there is no comparable program. There is one being developed but it will still be some time. The most similar program that is active is the La Rosa program
- Graves indicates his content with receiving a VT presentation and would like to see more in the future, although this is largely due to the different statutory requirements (or lack there of in VT)
- Copans says that the basin plan is a good check in point with the subcommittee and this outreach will continue. Copans asks that if there are specific types of review done by the subcommittee that are especially impactful/beneficial? Copans mentions that the Vermont Environmental Notice Bulletin may be a way to track permits of interest. Anyone is allowed to comment. Copans will discuss with other staff how the subcommittee might be incorporated or informed of these permits in the future.

3) Approve August Meeting Minutes

Walling opens up the discussion for comments.

A motion is made by Graves to approve the minutes as they are. Corzilius seconds the motion. Vote passes unanimously.

4) Water Quality Testing or Training Program

Walling opens up a discussion on the possibility of the subcommittee to support or initiate a water quality monitoring or educational program. Monitoring, in particular, would be more of an undertaking.

Sales indicates that there is no current monitoring on the main stem, except at the dams.

Labun expresses that he would want to know how data collected would be used to ensure that the effort is worthwhile. Sales responds that in NH water quality is made publicly available and incorporated into biannual reports.

Corzilius shares that she can perform the lab tests, but no longer has access to the equipment. Protocol is very important and is very difficult to have confidence when done by students. Students have their own forte. They tend to get more excited about macroinvertebrate sampling, which is more in line with the “flag” idea mentioned by Copans. Samplepalooza, run by the Connecticut River Conservancy as a one-day sampling event, might also be a good way to plug in.

Sales says that the subcommittee could sample at Samplepalooza sites so it is connected and benefits from data take from the same location, but does not have to be performed on the same day as the event.

Fairchild mentions the Source to Sea Cleanup event as another that might allow the subcommittee to amplify its efforts through collaboration.

Labun says that Newbury Conservation Commission members would likely be interested in being involved in this type of program. Graves follows up that these CCs seem to energize support.

Walling asks that members continue to think about this program. Uyizeye says she will formulate a simple survey to see if there are any ideas that are more or less supported among those that have been discussed.

5) Permit Review – Substation rebuild in Monroe, NH

Walling shares materials on a permit. The project has come by the subcommittee before. Graves indicates that the contractor had previously done a satisfactory job. Corzilius reads the proposed narrative. General agreement is that they are seeking to increase the elevation of the substation to deter past flooding issues. Sherrard asks if there are any old PCBs in the old equipment, such as transformers, and how this will be moved and handled in case of a spill? No representatives are able to find content in the permit that answers this question.

Representatives agree that overall the permit looks acceptable, besides clarification on the question of the movement of equipment. Walling agrees to take another look at the material to answer this question and, if need be, will follow up with the question to NHDES.

6) Election of Chair

Walling agrees to continue as chair of the Riverbend Local River Subcommittee of the CRJC.

7) Other Business

a. NH New Wetlands Rules Process

Sales explains a new process to review Wetlands permits and shares guidance (attached) that is expected to see some revision that the subcommittee will be notified of. This new process will begin in a week and will require more sign off from the subcommittee.

Labun makes a motion to allow Walling to sign off on any new minimum impact notification, registration, or expedited wetlands permit applications received before the next scheduled meeting in February. Corzilius seconds the motion. The vote passes unanimous.

Corzilius makes a motion that allows the subcommittee or Walling to identify specific permits requiring full subcommittee review before a signature is allowed. Labun seconds the motion. The vote passes unanimous.

b. Representatives

Sherrard informs the group that he plans to step down from his duties as a Littleton representative as he has not been able to attend meetings regularly. Uyizeye will discuss with Sherrard how to formally resign. The subcommittee thanks Sherrard for the time he has volunteered to this subcommittee.

8) Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Next Meeting:

February 20, 2020 at 5:30PM

Littleton Community Center

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Olivia Uyizeye