



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.

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Full Commissions Meeting

Monday, September 19, 2022 - 2 PM

Hybrid Meeting – Wilder Station, 255 Wilder Dam Rd., Wilder, VT 05088

ATTENDANCE

NH CRVRC COMMISSIONERS			VT CRWAC COMMISSIONERS		
NCC	OPEN		Sec. Nat. Resources	Marie Caduto	P
UVLSRPC	Ted Cooley	V	NVDA	Beth Torpey	V
SWRPC	Jeffrey Miller Harriet Davenport (alt)	P X	TRORC	Pete Fellows	V
CRC	Ken Hastings	V	MARC	Jason Rasmussen	P
CRFCC	OPEN		WRC	Chris Campany	X
Hydro-Electric	Jen Griffin	P	RPC#5	OPEN	
Conservation	OPEN		At Large	Steve Lembke	P
Tourism	OPEN		At Large	Beth Kennett	X
Agricultural	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
Forest Products	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	Jim McClammer	P	At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	

Note: P = present in person; V = present over remote virtual platform; X = not present

Additional attendance

In Person: John Ragonese, FERC License Manager, Great River Hydro; Olivia Uyizeye, Staff Consultant; Chet Clem, Norwich LRS Rep; Kate Buckman, NH River Steward, CRC; David Barrell, Hartland LRS Rep.

Virtual: Jim Bennett, Windsor LRS Rep.

AGENDA

2:00 PM Convene

1. Welcome

Griffin calls the meeting to order and welcomes all in attendance.

2. Speaker – John Ragonese, FERC License Manager, Great River Hydro

A full recording of the update as provided by John Ragonese and conversation attendees can be found on the CRJC YouTube. The following is a condensed summary of the conversation.

Ragonese provides an overview of the full FERC process as it has been and is applied to three Great River Hydro dams on the Connecticut River, specifically the Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon dams. The process initiates with a series of studies and consultation with stakeholders. The dam owner then presents a draft application to the FERC agency. Comment and negotiation can then be had before the dam owner presents its final application. At this point FERC will undergo an environmental review of the application and make a decision on the application. A license, if provided, then goes through a 401-application process within the impacted state for up to one year. The draft license will then go through a



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final comment period before finalized. The relicensing effort as it relates to these three dams is currently awaiting a final decision on its application.

Ragonese then provides a summary of the application as it currently stands including discussion on a modified operations plan that follows what is being called a "run of the river" flow where inflow of water equals outflow. A designated amount of time, varied by the month due to seasonal variation in fish impacts, is allowed to deviate from the "run of the river" with limitations on ramp up and ramp down speeds. The dam operators must also respond to any emergency dispatch requests from the ISO New England (www.iso-ne.com).

Ragonese shares updates or comment on other elements on the application from GRH's standpoint including:

- Fish Passage Settlement agreement: GRH has just submitted a response to comments made on the agreement.
- Erosion concerns: Addressed by the change in operations. No mitigations or enhancement funds are included in the application.
- Recreation: The application maintains maintenance of current recreation facilities managed by GRH, including upgrades needed. The addition of canoe campsites have been added to the GRH management.
- Cultural and Historic Resources: An agreement is currently under development with relevant stakeholder groups.

Discussion with commissioners can best be viewed on the recording. Griffin thanks Ragonese for the information and discussion.

3:00 PM Business Meeting

Griffin opens the business meeting.

3. Adopt/Review Minutes of June

Griffin opens the June meeting minutes for review. No comments are made.

By motion of Miller/Lembke, the minutes are approved as presented. The motion passes unanimously.

4. Financial Report

Rasmussen explains that the August financials reflect a bit higher use of funds than anticipated. At this point, no serious concerns are present, however the expense of funds will be monitored.

Caduto provides an update on the Vermont contract. A few adjustments are being made before finalized. Specifically, these include a timeline adjustment, so contract renewal takes place at a time when the legislature is available to approve and avoid delays that have been experienced. The timeline being considered is from November to October with deliverables still based on the CRJC fiscal year.

By motion of Caduto/Miller, the August financials pass unanimously

5. Revitalization and Assessment Plan

Griffin runs through each item in the plan asking commissioners to comment as appropriate.

a. State contracts



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Caduto provides further information on the VT-CRJC contract renewal. Caduto has been requested to look at the dollar figure and suggest a round number for the CRJC budget. Caduto finds the request encouraging that their may be a slight increase in budget provided by VT.

Griffin shares that Tracie Sales with NHDES is working on an increase request to the CRJC budget, specifically to increase CRJC's budget for FY24 and FY25 by 3% of FY 2021 funding.

b. CRJC contractual deliverables

Griffin reports that the organization is on track to meet its deliverables at this point in the fiscal year.

c. Administrative services

CRJC is currently under contract with UVLSRPC.

d. Executive board leadership development

A team for the 2023 fiscal year is full and active.

e. Bi-state Discussion

Caduto reports on the next bi-state discussion on water quality monitoring being planned for November 2022. This meeting will likely be a smaller group and focus on clarifying data gaps and confirming commitments to increase monitoring.

f. Local river subcommittee coordination

Hastings will be engaging LRS chairs shortly on how best to evaluate and move forward in any needed coordination between Commissioners and LRS.

g. Recruitment

Lembke explains the importance of recruitment and furthering a strong membership across the organization. Lembke reiterates recruitment model summarized in the June meeting minutes: "Rather than invite new commissioners to act as a full member, invite to act as an advisor in particular interest areas to the Connecticut River Valley, and aligns with topics for additional bi-state meetings. Lembke feels that they do not all need to be Commissioners, although CRJC can host up to 30 Commissioners. This model would help CRJC to advance topic areas without having challenged meeting a quorum for organizational business."

Lembke asks Caduto and Rasmussen to suggest three bi-state discussions that can be initiated over the next twelve months, during which an advisory process can be trialed. Uyizye is currently compiling input from all Commissioners on their expectations for their ability to stay on as a commissioner in the coming years. As part of the recruitment process a streamlined process must be available for interested members to submit their appointment requests as required and for onboarding new members through an updated manual and conversation with a longer standing member.

h. Climate migration project & Agricultural stake holder discussion update

Griffin reads a written update provided by Chris Company who was unable to attend the meeting.

- "Climate Migration Webinar – Current thinking is to highlight the example of the stress migration into the watershed has placed on the housing market in terms of both supply and demand and related increase in housing costs and housing scarcity. We'd then provide an overview of the implications for land use and the likely continuation of further subdivision of



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land and large lot single family home development and the challenges due to lack of infrastructure to support compact settlement and development of affordable housing at scale, especially in rural areas. From there we'd highlight the work of Keys to the Valley as an intergovernmental, interorganizational effort at a regional scale to get a handle on planning for housing."

- Agriculture – Would like to have the Secretaries/Commissioners of Agriculture in VT and NH engage with one another and the commission. I personally believe the focus needs to be their perspective on farm viability in the watershed, but would like to know if the Commission as a whole has a different opinion. I suggest farm viability as the primary subject as agriculture is both a significant economic sector as well as a major land use. As dairies in particular struggle, we need to know what the probability is of their remaining in some form of agricultural production, because that has implications for farmland conversion (i.e., sale) for non-agricultural purposes such as residential subdivisions."

Discussion follows:

- Fellows suggests any climate migration work might be in coordination with the Keys to the Valley effort – www.keystothevalley.com
- Lembke asks, how real is climate migration at this point? Many are bored or overwhelmed by housing in the news. Jumping to discussion on climate and land use may be skipping a step
- Caduto highlights the cascade of effects on the housing market due to migration by largely higher income households. It is not only housing for low-income households out of reach, but also moderate-income households are severely hampered in their choices.
- Griffin asks where do we go from here?
- Caduto suggests that the climate migration subgroup for CRJC needs to reconvene.
- On Agriculture, it is suggested that this be one of the 3 new bi-state discussion to initiate in the next 12 months.

i. Watershed speaker

Cooley reports that after the talk today by John Ragonese, the CRJC will have at least one more speaker this fiscal year. The topics for this presentation are a native American speaker and an update on dam removal from Ron Rhodes with CRC.

j. Adherence to strategic plan

Lembke reports that activities of CRJC are currently in line with the strategic plan.

6. Tactical basin plan update

Caduto reports that the Ottauquechee and Black river basin plans are being written with now an extended deadline of June 2023. The next basin plan along the Connecticut river to be initiated is the White River basin at the start of 2023. The CRJC commissioners are asked to review and provide input on these plans, while the LRS are more specifically engaged with informing priorities as they relate to the Connecticut River.

7. LRS Update

Uyizeye summarizes local river subcommittee activities as described in the latest LRS report. Uyizeye adds the notice of two riverwide speaker events to take place this September and October, as well as a successful social event for Riverbend and Headwaters LRS at Weeks State Park.



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4:00 PM Adjourn

Griffin thanks everyone for attending.

By motion of Caduto/Miller the meeting is adjourned. The motion passes unanimously.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.