

**CRJC Wantastiquet Subcommittee
Minutes**

Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 7:00PM

Hybrid Meeting – Windham Regional Commission, 139 Main St, Brattleboro, VT

Attendees

Walpole	Samantha Loch	X	Westminster		
Walpole			Westminster	Jim Calchera	P
Westmoreland	Perry Sawyer	P	Putney	Heidi Henkel	X
Westmoreland			Putney		
Chesterfield	Roland Volbehr	X	Dummerston		
Chesterfield			Dummerston		
Hinsdale	Mike Darcy	P	Brattleboro	Kathy Urffer	V
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Michael Fairchild	P
Vernon	Andy White	P			
Vernon					

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

Attending Virtually: Marie Caduto (Watershed Planner, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources)

Attending In Person: Margo Ghia (Natural Resources Planner, Windham Regional Commission; CRJC Commissioner); Majestic Terhune (UVLSRPC Staff)

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Sawyer called the meeting to order 7:05 p.m. Members introduced themselves.

2. Meeting Minutes from April for approval

Sawyer opened the April minutes for review. Fairchild motioned to approve the April minutes with minor edits; Calchera seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Sawyer noted to change the start time in the minutes from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

3. Basin Plan 12 Deerfield and CT River direct tributaries with Marie Caduto

Caduto provided an overview of the (Deerfield River and Lower Connecticut River) Tactical Basin Plan and shared current findings on water quality and habit conditions. Caduto provided examples of biological conditions under evaluation, types of assessments, and impaired rivers. Identifying waters that do not meet standards and need restoration is a top priority; note that headwater streams have a trend of pH issues.

Caduto is hoping to gather a list of any known water quality concerns, areas of high quality, or areas with special interest to assist with implementation and prioritization in the Basin Plan. Plan to be drafted over the next year (due at end of 2024). Caduto will be visiting other groups and is likely to revisit with LRS Wantastiquet.

White praised Long Island Sound and positive impact of restoration efforts.

Ghia clarified that Basin Plan includes areas of LRS Wantastiquet’s jurisdiction.

Terhune to share PDF of presentation and Caduto's contact information at request of members. Caduto to keep in touch.

4. Permit Reviews

a. In Review. Stormwater Discharges, Peck Road Log Yard, Vernon, VT (#3293-9050.1, <https://enb.vermont.gov/?id=21376>)

Fairchild offered clarification of location and conditions at Bemis Road.

Ghia provided summary: permitting for a pre-existing log and storage yard that is now tentatively qualifies as "impervious surface."

Calchera found no issue with the permit, although the system will require maintenance.

Fairchild offered insights on drainage system.

White and Sawyer noted that the location is beyond LRS Wantastiquet's jurisdiction.

b. Putney Rowing Club, VT. Status of Act 250 Permit.

Fairchild provided an overview of the history of the Putney Rowing Club, which has been around for approximately thirty years and is located off exit 4, across the railroad tracks. There are two boat launches separated by a couple hundred yards, with the lower boat launch having been improved and the upper launch likely having seen no changes since its construction. Dummerston had given prior approval for construction of 38' x 100' boat house, with driveway, parking, and installation of catch basin but process has stalled in Act 250 process.

Fairchild highlighted concern for A-frame that seems inhabited but unsure of septic system in place. Fairchild and White discussed what systems may be in place.

Calchera, Fairchild, and Darcy identified septic system and erosion on riverside for new slabs as areas of concern.

Ghia clarified Act 250 process and noted that the A-frame is not part of the same project. Ghia to give concerns to WRC staff member working with committee.

Calchera motioned to submit comments regarding septic and erosion concerns. Darcy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Eden Foundation, Eden Museum/Foundation to be 18.06 acres at 30 Farr Road, Chesterfield (Tax Map 13, Lot A4.1).

Sawyer provided an overview of the Eden Foundation's aim to build a museum that also acts as a retreat for artists along the Connecticut River. The Foundation is currently open for tax deductible donations.

Sawyer and Ghia reviewed Eden Foundation's website and began discussion of building plans (notably extension over water and the 18 acres of land the property covers).

Terhune noted that NHDES did not have any record of applications and that past Chesterfield minutes only made mention of height issues.

Fairchild added that there is currently an eagle's nest located on the site.

Members to remain aware of any new developments.

- d. Delta Business Campus, Brattleboro, VT. Wastewater compliance (#3779-9050.1, <https://enb.vermont.gov/?id=21370>)**

Terhune and Ghia provided summary of failure to comply with wastewater plans and standards. Fairchild commented on surface runoff into the river. Ghia reiterated that the State is working on the issue.

- e. Past Comment. Rebuild and New Septic, Shoreland, Chesterfield, NH (#2023-01284)**

Members noted that the permit is past comment and had been determined not to need further discussion.

- f. NH Dept. of Transportation, Standard Dredge and Fill Application, Cheshire Branch Railroad Over Great Brook Walpole, Cheshire, (#2023-01109)**

Sawyer clarified that the culvert is likely being adjusted at location and described previous issues with stormwater in Walpole. Exact location uncertain; potential to be out of jurisdiction.

Terhune to collect more information.

- g. New England Power (NEP), Alteration of Terrain, Hinsdale, NH (#20230303-049)**

Calchera reviewed NEP response from National Grid, noting that all questions seemed to have been addressed. Ghia clarified the financial process of the project.

Members to review response in "Response to Wantastiquet local river subcommittee" file on Wantastiquet shared drive.

5. Updates & Other Business

a. FERC Relicensing

Urffer offered an update that FERC process has been delayed for the past year due to FirstLight Power settlement negotiations. FERC's formal process becomes delayed while settlement negotiations are still in process.

Urffer stated that FERC has previously provided an opportunity for comments, with last comment round of comments having been submitted on July 25. Additional information requests are still possible, and FERC will issue an REA that, once opened, will provide an opportunity to comment on the full application, including applications filed in December 2020 and all settlement agreements that have been

filed since then. Once comment period is open, there will be 60 days to submit comments. Wilder and Bellows Falls processing anticipated to move forward.

White noted that he had submitted a presentation that was received and published and offered further insight to past comment opportunities.

Urffer provided an example of a submission from Vernon, noted that summaries of document in review will be provided to make it easier for commentary, and that she can be used as a resource on FERC going forward.

b. Town/Member Updates

Sawyer mentioned upcoming Old Home Day and noted that he will have a static display to help with LRS Wantastiquet member outreach.

Sawyer shared an article in *The Keene Sentinel* that stated New Hampshire as the inaugural state to partner with Ohio-based company that can break down PFAS molecules into safe byproducts. Calchera iterated the importance of such technology in groundwater. Members anticipate seeing how technology advances.

c. LRS Priority Actions

Ghia explained that the full CRJC is interested in hearing from local subcommittees on what projects they would be interested in pursuing and whether they'd need funding, with the full CRJC having capacity to look out for relevant grants.

Sawyer voiced the potential to share the history of the Connecticut River with local entities. White agreed, describing past educational programs that raised awareness about the local environment. Calchera reiterated an interest in generating interest in local waterways. Members agreed to consider sending a resource guide to schools and/or rec. departments. Fairchild expressed willingness to speak to public groups. Darcy sent a preliminary email to Vermont Academy.

Ghia emphasized that LRS Wantastiquet could also pursue other projects, such as ones related to infrastructure.

Terhune to add to agenda for next meeting.

Urffer left at 8:45 p.m.

d. Social Event

Terhune shared news of upcoming CRJC social on October 7, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Storrs Pond in Hanover, NH. CRJC members and their friends and families are welcome to attend. Terhune to send further details.

e. Other Updates

Terhune to send survey on best meeting times interest for group. Interest in meeting at 7pm.

6. Adjourn

The meeting is adjourned by motion of White. Darcy seconded. Motions passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Next Meeting

TBD

Minutes respectfully submitted by Majestic Terhune.