

Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee

Washington Lempster Marlow Gilsum Sullivan Surry Keene Swanzey Winchester Hinsdale

Draft Minutes
November 17, 2015
7:00 p.m.
Keene Public Library
Keene, New Hampshire

ARLAC members present: Barbara Skuly, Chairperson, Swanzey; Brett Thelen, Vice Chairperson, AVEO; Carl MacConnell, Marlow; Gus Merwin, Marlow; Pablo Fleischmann, Gilsum; Jim Holley, Keene; Chuck Mills, Swanzey.

Guest: Eloise Clark

I. Minutes from October 12, 2015 were approved as corrected.

II. Permits.

1. Swanzey—wetlands- NHDOT scour measures Cresson Covered Bridge. National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program funds will be used to protect the Cresson Bridge. Structures (A-Jacks) will be placed in streambed at center pier, riprap at abutments. Our concerns were: a. Dwarf wedge mussel protection, b. Recreational and monitoring access and navigability during and after construction, c. Type of streambed material to be used to cover the A-Jacks and how long the material will stay in place, d. Specifics needed on bank restoration post construction, e. Location of the causeway.

2. Winchester –wetlands, NHDOT scour measures Ashuelot Covered Bridge. National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program funds will be used to protect the Cresson Bridge. Structures (A-jacks) will be placed in streambed at center pier, riprap at abutments. Our concerns were: a. Type of streambed material will be used to cover the A-Jacks and how long the material stay in place, b. Accommodation to paddlers who might take out at the construction site, c. Specifics needed on bank restoration post construction, d. Location of the causeway.

3. Keene – wetlands, Eversource installation of 1,100 linear ft distribution lines along Rte 12 we saw no impacts to the river, but would like to see the viewshed in this stretch of Rte 12 protected.

III. Watershed Projects/Issues

1. Winchester-- Mitchell Sand and Gravel Permit to remove material down to surface water approved by Winchester Planning Board, however any water pumped from the excavation will not be returned to river. ARLAC was not represented at this meeting. Permit not yet on the agenda in Swanzey, but Barbara will follow.

2. West St. Hydro/Dam –Barbara attended the Keene ConComm where the preliminary hydrological study was presented by VHB. It appears the dam has a greater influence on low flows vs high. Dam removal would have greatest impacts closer to the dam vs upstream limit at Court St. Evaluation of the effect on wetlands would be qualitative not quantitative, however it is felt Tenant Swamp would not be affected, but the wetlands closer to the dam might be. Full report to be presented to ConComm in Dec. and will go to a public informational meeting in Jan.

3. Conte management plan public hearing Nov. 5 attended by Carl MacConnell who felt the Conte representatives had little knowledge of our area. Was a strict public hearing with public comment only.

4. Draft Final Proposal for the re-adoption of Env-Wq 800 (Sludge Rules) – Nov RMPP comments reviewed. Of note were recommendation that LAC's be copied on sludge permits and that plans show designated rivers within 1320 feet of a project site.

5. Land Resources Management Bureau reorganization. Barbara attended the presentation by LRMB who was seeking input regarding proposed changes to create regions that would be overseen by DES personnel assigned to one geographic area. It is perceived that this would be the most efficient way to provide services on permit reviews to include wetlands, shorelands, subsurface and alteration of terrain. Personnel would be cross-trained with specialists available for consultation. However, it appears these changes will not be happening for some time.

6. NH Draft 2014 303(d) List of Impaired Surface Waters –comments by 12/11. A brief discussion of the impaired waters on the Ashuelot River with demonstration of the Watershed Report Card website. It was determined that this is too involved for us to make comment at this time, however ARLAC would like to have a better understanding of the listing. Members to take the sites noted in their towns and determine where the locations specifically are. We will continue the discussion next month.

7. NH Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) update. Barbara attended the presentation on Nov 16. Updated maps and information regarding species management at Taking Action for Wildlife website.

8. Shoreland Advisory Committee (SAC) – Nov RMAC letter reviewed. RMAC with the Lakes MAC willing to take on the role of the SAC which is due to sunset this Dec. They recommend that on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd order streams only the 50ft buffer be enforced on new RMPP rivers, but existing rivers would be grandfathered as legislated when designated.

III. Meetings

1. Tom Wessels - Forests, Succession, and Self-organization: Why Old Forests are Important
Thurs, 11/19, 7pm, Centennial Hall, Alumni Center, KSC

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Holley
Clerk