

**Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee Meeting Approved Minutes
Haverhill, Bath, Landaff, Lisbon, Littleton, Bethlehem, and Carroll**

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

Members in Attendance: Michael King, (Haverhill), Rick Walling (Bath), Steve Jesseman (Lisbon), Charlie Ryan, Connie McDade (Littleton), Joan Karpf, Leslie Bergum (Carroll)

Nominated Candidates in Attendance: Jessica Willis (Littleton), Linda Dowling (Carroll)

Absent: Bill Harris (Haverhill), Errol Peters (Landaff), Marilyn Johnson (Bethlehem)

Guests: Tara Bamford, North Country Council Planner; Jon Warzocha, PG Project Mgr. Horizons Engineering; Bill Dowling (Carroll)

Phone Conference with Sandy Crystall, Senior Resources Manager, NHDES Wetland Bureau and Linda Magoon, NHDES Compliance Officer NHDES Wetland Bureau

Review and Approval of November Minutes

Charlie opened the meeting at 4:40 p.m. at the North Country Council. Joan made the motion to approve the December minutes as written; seconded by Leslie. Passed

Correspondence and Announcements

Introductions took place. Charlie said, "Duncan McKee had been officially appointed as a member by Commissioner Burack." Steve offered to obtain Duncan's contact info for LAC. Connie reported that Bill, Errol, and Marilyn phoned in that they could not attend.

Incoming Applications (none)

Old Business

1. Town Issues

• Carroll

So far no reply to LAC letter sent to DES about Old Town Road. Leslie phoned DES to check on status, but did not reach Linda Magoon.

Leslie received a questionnaire from new intern at DES VRAP. She'll get input from 2009 VRAP participants Rick, Joan and Connie to include in her reply.

Leslie asked for an update on possible new LAC representative members from the County. Michael has not received Coos County Commission Minutes.

• Ice Build-Up

Several members reported on ice build-up by Zealand Bridge (Carroll) and the Soccer Field (Lisbon).

2. Next Item on Agenda Deferred to Follow New Business Items

New Business

1. Phone Conference:

Phone Conference: Sandy Crystall and Linda Magoon, NHDES Wetland Bureau

Subject: Gold Panning in the Ammonoosuc River (4:45-5:30PM on 01/06/10)

Handouts: (2) from Tara Bamford

- Sandy Crystall provided LAC members with an overview of the permitting process. Pre-1990 there were minimal requirements for panning, however motorized drilling activity did require a wetland permit. In 1991 the law changed and the notification process went into effect. Since then, unassisted gold panning has continued not to require a permit, as long as the person engaged in the activity has obtained landowner permission. The motorized activity has required applying for a paper permit issued specific-to-person with power limit; the applicant has to get written permission from the landowner in advance of applying for the permit. The cost is \$25/resident with proof of residency and \$50 for non-resident.

Charlie inquired if the issued permit is good for any river in the State. Answer was that the permit is not location specific.
- Linda Magoon talked about calls from Bath Police Dept. and going out with Police Chief MacKay to check out reported activity where the Wild Ammonoosuc River flows into the Ammonoosuc River by the Twin River Campground. This past summer was especially busy because of the extent of enthusiasm for gold dredging on this stretch of the river. Linda looked at the impact on the banks and on the stream caused by digging into the bank and gave warnings to folks. The word got out about the enforcement, which seemed to help.
- Sandy and Linda responded to the following questions:

Tara inquired if it would be possible to run pertinent information by all the LACs.

There is a requirement to check location out with the Natural Heritage Bureau but applicant is not held to that. New rules restrict season June 1 to September 15. California, Oregon, Wyoming did impact species studies to be sure streams are not dammed or altered. An important question raised by the studies was how deep is a dredge? There's a new form out that gets at what DES can do.

Rick talked about the Swiftwater gold dredging hot spot. He raised the important point about cumulative damage. Need to take into account a location-specific approach.

Steve asked if landowner permission has to be obtained on both sides of the river and if the landowner permission has to be obtained before applying for the permit. Permit is owner-specific on bank side of river, going to the middle of river. Permission must be obtained prior to permit but there is no follow up mechanism to know if further landowner permission has been obtained as the gold dredger moves on to other locations. River corridor towns do not receive notice of permits issued.

Steve inquired how much harm does it do to alter the bottom of the river...some folks believe it helps fish habitat and returns to previous state after spring runoff. No scientific papers to date.

Charlie inquired if communities could set up their own ordinances that would be more stringent than the State. Tara talked about land use and local control. Enforcement would become an issue. Last year there was more gold dredging than since 1987.

Michael asked about the DOT's role in dredging along the banks roadside. He inquired about needing a permit for land in the Forest Service and State Land.

The answer was that panning only is allowed alongside Forest Service Land. It was believed dredging is not allowed at all alongside State land or perhaps could be done by special permit. Sandy and Linda will double check on this and get back to us.

According to the DES Fact Sheet 2005 (CO-GEO-1) on Gold Panning, "The use of power equipment for gold recovery including sluice boxes, rocker boxes, and dredges is **not** allowed in the White Mountain National Forest, but recreational panning is."(Referenced by CMC)

Rick asked if a memorandum is in place with NH Fish & Game and any chance of getting one. Discussion followed in favor of his suggestion.

Charlie suggested raising the price of the permit.

Michael asked how much information about dredging has been provided to the towns and suggested getting it out to them. He thought it would help if a copy of the permits would go to the towns; it would not have to be location along the river specific.

Joan recommended this subject be put on the agenda as a topic for the Annual Meeting of NHACC Workshop. Need to make suggestion to Carol Andrews.

Discussion followed about doing an informal survey on landowner permissions.

Charlie suggested consideration be given to change the rule to limit the number of locations to a question of say 5. LAC members concurred that how many people work on one stretch is important.

Joan talked about excavation RSAs in regard to excavation of mineral, i.e., when does motorized dredging require a mining permit under RSA 12-E? Small motor dredging may be limited to minimal impact, however rulemaking for obtaining wetland permit and mining permit is needed when extent of activity has outgrown a recreational level evident by impact rendered.

Rick reported the activity in Bath has undermined the banks in places. Need enforcement. LAC members agreed enforcement is a necessity.

Jessica expressed concern about the 4" wide suction across the sluice never leaving the river results in turbidity. The trouble is that the application is weak in protection of the bank from erosion. LAC members concluded, keeping a logbook on the dredging done would be helpful.

Michael suggested that ARLAC send a letter in support of DES, dealing with dredging. Noise and fuel leaking into the river need to be addressed.

Rick offered to write the letter on behalf of LAC. Steve said he would like to help. (Connie will provide minutes about phone conference for future reference)

Sandy Crystall said we would be receiving a written summary about gold panning and dredging in NH.

2. Management Plan Goals (5:30 to 6PM)

- Tara Bamford led discussion on list of goals #1-16 compiled by Management Plan Subcommittee members: Leslie Bergum, Joan Karpf, Marilyn Johnson, Rick Walling and Connie McDade. A handout was provided to members.
- LAC members engaged in active discussion, asked good questions, and offered suggestions for a few changes in wording and syntax. Issues were

discussed at a previous LAC meeting. The goals were grouped by issues. Future policies and recommendations will be in line with goals.

- Tara will provide handout to members of the goals, as revised and agreed upon by the LAC members at this meeting.

Old Business Resumed (6 to 6:32PM)

1. Review DES Application for the McGonagle Property in Carroll

Jon Warzocha, Professional Geologist for Horizons Engineering, was asked to come to meeting to discuss project on the Paul and Mary McGonagle Property, currently under technical review by the DES. Members asked questions about riprap emergency stabilization. It was an after-the-fact permit application. Palmer Group, owner of land prior to purchase by owner, is in favor of the bank stabilization project. The river has been cutting into the bank, which undermines the land. The McGonagle house is within 80 feet of the sloping and eroding bank. Rock wings are the preferred solution but very expensive. Riprap was done on adjacent property for stabilization. LAC members looked at the mapping. Could clearly see that the Ammonoosuc River takes curved configuration both above and below the site, illustrating why this segment of the river has a problem. Await action by DES.

2. House Bill 1451

Michael provided members with two handouts about HB1451. He suggested ARLAC send a letter to the appropriate committee, stating we are supportive of this bill, which would exempt LACs from being sunset by HB2. In addition to the letter, Michael said we might want to send member(s) to testify at the hearings. At this point, information is lacking as to name of chairman, committee, and address. Hearings have not been set as yet. Michael offered to obtain this information for ARLAC. Suggestion was made to call one of our representatives and ask how we can best be of help. A member advised we get further information from Kenneth Kimball, Chairman of Rivers Management Advisory Committee. Michael asked who would write the letter draft so we would have it in the ready. Connie will write the draft and pass it by Leslie and Rick for edit so we will have it ready to go, if it is needed.

3. ARLAC Submission to Town Reports

Connie inquired if LAC had sent out a year-end report to the river corridor towns, during her absence while in Australia. Michael replied that we missed the deadline.

Adjournment

Steve made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Rick. Passed. Adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Connie McDade

[Next Meeting Takes Place on Wednesday, February 3, 2010](#)