

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting

DATE OF CONFERENCE: March 20, 2013

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building

ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT

Cathy Goodmen
Christine Perron
Marc Laurin
Matt Urban
Randy Talon
Alex Vogt
Don Lyford
Mike Dugas
Steve Liakos
Wendy Johnson
Mike Servetas
Amy Lamb
Ron Crickard
Leah Savage
Tony King
Peter Salo
Bob Juliano
Kathy Corliss

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Jamie Sikora

Army Corps of Engineers

Rich Roach
Michael Hicks

EPA

Mark Kern

NHDES

Gino Infascelli

NH Fish & Game

Carol Henderson

NH Natural Heritage

Bureau

Melissa Coppola

Town of Francestown

Abigail Arnold
Gary Paige
Henry Kunhardt

CK Danforth & Associates

Chris Danforth

CLD Engineers

John Byatt
Jaime French
Kelsey Gagnon
Heidi Marshall

HEB Engineering

Jason Ross

Town of Milford

Jodie Levandowski

City of Nashua

Katherine Hersh
Roger Houston

McFarland Johnson

Vicki Chase
Gene McCarthy

HDR, Inc.

Loretta Girard Doughty
Jim Murphy

Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Paul Stanton
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll

Jacobs Engineering

Aaron Seaman
Ted Setas

(When viewing these minutes online, click on an attendee to send an e-mail)

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NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**Finalization of January Meeting Minutes**

The January 16, 2013 meeting minutes were finalized.

Fracestown, non-federal, 22892

John Byatt presented an overview of the project. The existing 14-foot span corrugated metal pipe arches have been closed to traffic due to their poor condition and require complete replacement. Options evaluated include a 36-foot span precast concrete arch and a 54-foot span bridge on stub integral abutments. Both options meet NHDOT and NHDES hydraulic criteria. The Town is going to select the 54-foot bridge using precast concrete beams, as this structure is slightly more cost-effective than the 36-foot precast arch options. The 54-foot bridge has abutments placed at the top of the river bank slopes; therefore, construction is in a dry condition. Water diversion is to consist of sandbags or sheet piling along the banks of the river. Permanent wetland impacts would be approximately 1500 sf, and all work is within the Town right-of-way. J. Byatt noted that the proposed bridge is a significant improvement over the existing bridge.

Rich Roach asked if the existing structure could be considered an historic resource. J. Byatt noted that the bridge was constructed in 1983 so it should not be considered historic.

Jamie Sikora and Carol Henderson asked if a shelf or flat area would be constructed for wildlife. J. Byatt replied that a shelf was not planned as this would increase the bridge span width. He noted that wildlife passage is possible on the rip rap slopes under the bridge which would typically be dry. When asked, J. Byatt noted that there is approximately 8 feet from the stream bed to the bottom of the beams.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Barrington, X-A002(738), 16402

Leah Savage provided an overview of the project. The purpose of the project is to replace a 100-foot long 54" corrugated metal pipe that carries Caldwell Brook under US Route 4 in Barrington, approximately ½ mile west of the Lee traffic circle. The existing structure is undersized and has become increasingly problematic, causing overtopping of the road and flooding at adjacent apartment buildings and homes. The inlet is also prone to clogging from woody debris, and the outlet is perched, making it a barrier for aquatic organisms. The current alignment of the structure skews the stream away from its natural course, contributing to erosion.

A Stream Crossing Assessment was conducted and recommended a 3-sided 18.8' span. Concerns include large right-of-way impacts, high cost, impacts to aerial utilities during installation, and the need to reroute heavy commuter traffic on Route 4. A concrete box culvert alternative would have similar concerns on a slightly smaller scale.

The preferred alternative is a double pipe option, with one 8' diameter plastic pipe embedded 3' for primary/low flow, and a 5' diameter concrete surge pipe approximately 40' to the west, both aligned perpendicular to the roadway. The pipes would be separated by a natural berm to prevent debris from blocking both pipes, and the constructed berm would be 3' higher than the inlet in elevation. Advantages of this design include the option to convey the stream through either channel during installation/maintenance, reduced ROW impacts, and lowest cost. This alternative also allows for the maintenance of two-way traffic during construction. A wetland delineation has not yet been completed; however, estimated wetlands impacts at this time are 8,500 sq. ft.

Caldwell Brook is a Tier 3 stream due to watershed size. State-listed threatened and endangered species are located within 1 mile of the project area and the stream is a tributary to the Oyster River. Caldwell Brook supports brook trout, and could potentially support American brook lamprey, which is found in the Oyster River. The Department met with John Magee, Kim Tuttle, and Matt Carpenter from NH Fish and Game on March 13, 2013 to discuss design and construction considerations with regards to these aquatic species. As a result of this meeting, it was decided that the replacement structure should be embedded; have a 0-1% slope; and incorporate outlet control to encourage pooling through the culvert and ensure connectivity.

Mike Servetas stated that another structure downstream that washed out during the Mother's Day flood is being replaced by the town around the same time; NHDOT will schedule work accordingly. He clarified that the embedded pipe is the low-flow pipe, and noted that there is scour at an adjacent driveway at the outlet. The new channel will be constructed with outlet control to remove the existing perch. (Subsequent to the meeting, Gino Infascelli clarified that that the downstream project is DES File 2010-02742, and the applicant was Emerald Acres, not the town. The downstream project was awarded an ARM fund grant for the replacement of a 9' box culvert with a 25' bridge in order to fully restore fish passage at this crossing. The estimated cost for engineering and construction for the downstream project was \$100,000.)

G. Infascelli expressed concerns with the design, stating that the pipe would be unlikely to retain material during storms. M. Servetas responded that the pitch would be almost flat and any material that gets washed out should be replaced naturally over time. The 3' of embedment would include large rocks to hold smaller material in place, and during 25 year storms, overflow to the surge pipe would slow velocity in the primary pipe.

G. Infascelli commented that he did not think wildlife would use the pipe due to its small diameter.

Rich Roach commented that more watershed information would be helpful. Amy Lamb replied that the watershed size is 2.1 sq. mi., and M. Servetas added that the stream flows north and connects with the Oyster River, and that there are flooding concerns with surrounding homes. Matt Urban commented that a hydraulic engineer did look at this design.

Carol Henderson commented that photos would be helpful. A. Lamb showed a few photos.

G. Infascelli suggested that a larger structure would be preferred to provide better connectivity, especially given the presence of prime wetlands just upstream. He was unsure if the proposed design would satisfy Stream Crossing Rules. M. Servetas reiterated the issue of maintaining two lanes of traffic during construction, and G. Infascelli indicated that the Department should be able to devise a way to accommodate a larger structure while still maintaining traffic. R. Roach stated that he had no objection to using temporary fill to detour traffic around the structure during construction.

Jamie Sikora asked if there would be a substantial cost difference between the proposed 2-pipe design and a bridge. M. Servetas indicated that a bridge would approach \$0.5 million, more than double the cost of the proposed design. That cost estimate does not take traffic control and utility line issues into account.

Christine Perron suggested looking at the Stream Crossing Rules to ensure that the proposed alternative meets all general design criteria. M. Servetas stated that the design team would discuss constructability concerns with Construction.

The project would return to a future meeting prior to submittal of permit applications. All agreed that additional evaluation of alternatives was needed before a final design is initiated.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Milford, X-A002(055), 20253

Heidi Marshall, P.E. of CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc. presented the project on behalf of the Town of Milford. The project, which will utilize federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, expects to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and improve safety at the intersection. The intersection was originally constructed in the 1970s in conjunction with NH Route 101. The intersection currently has a poor level of service. Proposed improvements include adding separate turn lanes and modifying existing signals. The project is currently scheduled to advertise in the fall, with construction completed in spring of 2014.

There are two culverts that run under the existing roadways: a 60-inch RCP located approximately 160 feet from the intersection under NH Route 13 to the north, and a 72-inch RCP approximately 80 feet from the intersection under Emerson Road to the east. Wetlands exist in all four quadrants of the intersection. No work is proposed on either of the culverts, and the project will not result in any wetland impacts.

The project has been mapped in Flood Zone A; however, the road sits nearly 10 feet above the adjacent wetlands and there is no documented history of any flooding in this area. The project will involve roadway widening, resulting in a total of 0.15 acres of impacts to the flood zone. All widened areas are expected to be filled less than one foot. In order to avoid the lengthy process of a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) for the work in the flood zone, the project instead proposes to provide compensatory flood storage equal to the volume lost. All excavated areas will be located outside wetland limits.

No other resources are anticipated to be adversely impacted. Environmental resource research and coordination has concluded that there are no 6(f) or LCIP properties, species of concern, threatened or endangered species, or critical habitat located in the project area.

Rich Roach questioned why a LOMR would be needed, how it would slow the project down, and if it could be completed after the project to avoid project delays and the need to mitigate for flood zone impacts. H. Marshall confirmed that the LOMR process takes almost a year to complete and that in the best interest of the Town, CLD would typically propose compensatory storage for any "real" flood impacts. The difference here is that most of the proposed work is at an elevation far above the floodplain, but the LOMR would pose additional survey, cost, and time to the project. R. Roach suggested further coordination with Jennifer Gilbert to determine if a LOMR is really necessary. He noted that it seemed excessive to excavate instead of doing additional paper work. H. Marshall confirmed that CLD would reach out to Ms. Gilbert as soon as possible to resolve this issue. *[Subsequent to the meeting Ms. Gilbert confirmed that in this case, compensatory storage is not required by FEMA. Compensatory storage for fill clearly outside the anticipated flood elevation will now be removed from the project proposal.]*

R. Roach commented that the site does not look terribly ecologically sensitive and does not have concerns with the proposed project.

Gino Infascelli asked if the wetland delineations were depicted on the project plans. H. Marshall responded that wetlands are shown on the plans and reiterated that no impacts to the wetlands were proposed. G. Infascelli suggested that this would be an appropriate time to improve water quality treatment/stormwater runoff if drainage work was proposed. H. Marshall stated that existing infrastructure would be utilized as much as possible and that no new drainage infrastructure is anticipated at this time.

Carol Henderson asked that measures be taken to avoid the introduction of invasive species during construction.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Stark, X-A001(157), 20224

Jason Ross of H.E. Bergeron Engineers (HEB) presented the project on behalf of the Town of Stark. The project goal is to rehabilitate the Stark Covered Bridge for a 10-ton live load. The project is being funded with a grant from the FHWA National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program, the NHDOT Municipal Bridge Aid program, and a Town bridge capital reserve fund.

This is the HEB's second meeting with the Natural Resources committee regarding this project. The first meeting was last June, at which time HEB reviewed three different rehabilitation alternatives. HEB was asked to come back to a second meeting in order to review the final selected alternative prior to the Final Design of the project.

The final proposed alternative includes rehabilitating the existing stone abutments by installing new concrete caps and re-pointing the existing stones. The existing concrete pier will remain in place and be rehabilitated with a new concrete cap and a new concrete facing. The Upper Ammonoosuc River has been identified as a "Scour Critical" river, so partially grouted riprap will be installed around the existing pier and in front of the existing stone abutments in order to protect the structure.

The partially grouted riprap will be installed within 10 feet of the existing pier and abutments. It will consist of a 30" thick blanket of stone and grout that follows the contours of the natural river bottom. Temporary cofferdams will be installed around the work areas so that the partially grouted riprap can be installed in the dry. The project will involve 2,626 s.f. of temporary wetland impact and 1,903 s.f. of permanent impact. The NHDES Wetland Application has been prepared and will be submitted soon.

The project will require the Town of Stark to obtain four temporary construction easements in order to install the riprap. These easements have already been requested from the property owners.

Many of the people attending the meeting have received a letter from HEB regarding this project as part of coordination needed for the completion of the "Categorical Exclusion – Programmatic Determination" checklist. The only thing remaining on the checklist is getting confirmation that the project has "No Adverse Effect" on historic structures. This determination is expected at the April Cultural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting. Once completed, the Categorical Exclusion form will be submitted to NHDOT for review.

Melissa Coppola asked if a more up-to-date NHB review is available. J. Ross stated that it was updated about a month ago. The new file number is NHB13-0525.

Carol Henderson stated that at the June meeting she had expressed concern about timing of in-stream construction. J. Ross stated that the revised schedule is to advertise the project in July/August, with construction starting in late fall of 2013. Construction is anticipated to last about a year, so the timing of the in-water work could be specified in the contract. C. Henderson said that limiting work in the water to early summer would be Fish & Game's preference.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 6/20/2012.

Bow-Concord, non-federal, 13742A

Gene McCarthy provided an overview of the project. The project involves the replacement of Bridge 203/087, which carries NH Route 3A over Interstate 93. The bridge replacement is the fourth and last bridge reconstruction of the 13742 project, and follows the corridor planning study that concluded in 2008. Initially the bridge was going to be rehabilitated, until inspections in 2010 revealed that the bridge had deteriorated to the point where rehabilitation was not a feasible option.

The proposed bridge replacement will consist of construction of a new single span bridge parallel to and east of the existing bridge. There will be some minor changes to access ramps. All work will be conducted within the right of way.

Vicki Chase provided an overview of environmental resources. There are two wetlands to the east of the bridge – the South End Marsh on the north side of the highway, and the “Mitigation Wetland” on the south side. Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that the mitigation wetland was constructed as mitigation for impacts that occurred as part of I-93 improvements in 1987 (State project number P3858, Federal project number [IR-93-2(102)36]). There are no impacts to either wetland proposed. There are no other resource impacts anticipated as part of the project.

There is currently no stormwater treatment occurring at the site. As part of the proposed project there are two possible areas proposed for stormwater treatment – one north of the I-93 southbound off-ramp onto Route 3A northbound, and one in the interior of the I-93 northbound off-ramp onto Route 3A northbound cloverleaf. Stormwater treatment will be formalized as design progresses.

Don Lyford, Project Manager, commented that a federal number was mistakenly included on the agenda. This project would be funded with Turnpike funds, not federal funds.

No one in attendance expressed any concerns with the project as proposed.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Nashua, CM-X-5315(041), 13117

Katherine Hersh presented the project. The proposal is to acquire the 7.1 acre site located at 25 Crown Street and to construct an approximate 250-space park and ride. The existing buildings will remain and continue to be used for office, showroom and storage. The site was initially developed in the 1870s for manufacturing. Only one small building remains from the original development.

The adjacent uses to the south and west are residential. The site abuts the railroad tracks. The adjacent uses to the north and east are industrial. The site is a couple of blocks from the Taylor Falls Bridge, which connects to Hudson and Litchfield. An average 38,000 vehicles per day cross the bridge. The closest bridge over the Merrimack River to the north is the Airport access road, 16 miles away. Residents from Hudson and Litchfield traveling south cross the Taylor Falls Bridge or the Sagamore Bridge to get to the FE Everett Turnpike. There are two other park and rides in Nashua that are very well used.

The testing for the Phase II on the site is completed. The soil results were under the standards. Five wells were installed across the site. They indicated the groundwater is 18 to 22 feet below the site. There was only one detect in the five wells and it was under the standards. There are no wetlands or water bodies on the site; no impact to 4(f) or 6(f) resources; and no affect on historic or archeological properties, per letter from SHPO dated 2/19/13.

Mark Kern asked if there were any opportunities for pervious pavement. Roger Houston said the City has standards in place for stormwater and was one of the first communities in the State to adopt stormwater standards in the 1990s. Various options to address stormwater will be considered, including rain gardens, porous pavements, etc. K. Hersh also noted that the City ordinances require a tree per certain number of parking spaces. This provides cooler pavement and additional non-paved surfaces. The details of the site plan required for Planning Board approval will include addressing the stormwater issues.

Rich Roach asked about safety and access to the backs of the residential properties. K. Hersh explained that the residential properties are all uphill from the site, which is not conducive to accessing the backs of those properties. She said the site is currently dark and the project will provide lighting. The City has met with the neighborhood and offered to provide an opportunity for the residents to comment as the design moves forward.

Carol Henderson asked about overnight parking and cameras. K. Hersh said there would be overnight parking and she thought the cameras were a great idea that the City will consider. They are known to be a deterrent.

R. Roach asked about the potential for busses on the site. The site is proximate to the current Nashua Transit System route on Arlington Street. The route can easily be diverted to include the park and ride, since the City owns the Transit System. The City is also considering making sure there is a strong pedestrian connection between the park and ride and Arlington Street.

Jamie Sikora noted that the project may need an Alteration of Terrain permit.

The determination was made that there is no need to return to a future meeting.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

New Castle-Rye, X-A001(146), 16127

The intent of the meeting was to introduce the agencies to the project, the rehabilitation or replacement of the New Castle-Rye Bridge. Project team members in attendance included Loretta Girard Doughty (HDR), James Murphy (HDR), Paul Stanton (FHI), Stephanie Dyer-Carroll (FHI), Alex Vogt (NHDOT), and Marc Laurin (NHDOT). L. Girard Doughty opened the meeting by providing a brief summary of the history of the bridge and its current condition, and by clarifying the alternatives currently under consideration, including rehabilitation of the bridge, replacement on the same horizontal and vertical alignment, replacement on the same horizontal alignment but raised vertical alignment (to eliminate the movable span) and replacement on a different alignment. P. Stanton then discussed key environmental resources in the vicinity of the bridge and summarized agency consultation to date, including correspondence with the NH Natural Heritage Bureau, NH Division of Historical Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Coast Guard, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. He outlined next steps that include the identification of the preferred alternative, the completion of the wetlands delineation report, the preparation of an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment, the completion of the individual evaluation of the bridge and archaeological survey, and the preparation of a Categorical Exclusion NEPA document. A Biological Assessment may be completed, if determined necessary.

Melissa Coppola stated that project team should look for marsh elder in the project area even though NHB records suggest this rare plant is located outside of project limits. It can be identified any time of the year, and the project team may need to request an informal consultation.

Rich Roach suggested that the project team look at correspondence for the nearby Sagamore Creek Bridge in Portsmouth for informational purposes, including the Coast Guard and National Marine Fisheries.

The presence of a wetlands mitigation area to the east of bridge was confirmed. The project team should check with the Wentworth by the Sea Marina for details.

Carol Henderson suggested that the project team should send a coordination letter to NH Fish and Game, in particular to the Marine Fisheries Division.

R. Roach commented that the project team should pull the Coast Guard into the process as early as possible and suggested scheduling a site walk with them in June or July of 2013. The project team should coordinate with National Marine Fisheries Service as well.

Jamie Sikora confirmed that FHWA is the lead federal agency for the project.

P. Stanton indicated that an EFH Assessment would be prepared for the project and that a biological assessment may also be necessary. R. Roach suggested that, as the design advances and the extent of potential project impacts are better understood, the project team can determine whether a Section 7 ESA Biological Assessment is necessary.

C. Henderson commented that seasonal restrictions would likely be required for construction activities. It was noted that UNH did a study on the effects of noise on fish migration that may be useful for the project team.

R. Roach suggested that the project team contact Chris Williams at the NHDES Coastal Program regarding the NH Coastal Zone Management program.

Mark Kern indicated that EPA has a dive team that could potentially check for eelgrass. The project team should coordinate with Phil Colarusso or Mark Kern. C. Henderson stated that Fred Short from UNH also did an eelgrass survey that could be useful. R. Roach stated that pre- and post-construction surveys would be required for the project.

R. Roach suggested that the project team check the utility line height above the bridge for clearance.

C. Henderson asked whether the project team would present the project again at a future meeting. L. Girard Doughty confirmed that the project team would present updates in the future.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Bedford-Manchester, X-A002(238), 25481

Ted Setas gave an overview of the project, which involves median crossover safety improvements on NH Route 101/I-293 and I-93. The project also includes safety improvements to three ramps. The length of improvements totals approximately 4.4 miles in the Bedford and Manchester area, which begins approximately 0.4 miles east of the NH Route 101/114 intersection near Plummer Road and continue easterly to a point approximately 0.3 miles north of Island Pond Road bridge over NH route 101/I-93 (near I-93 Exit 6).

An aerial of the corridor was presented depicting the existing conditions. A second aerial delineated the project limits and areas of improvements along the highway. T. Setas indicated that there were seven segments comprising the areas of improvements. He explained that the safety improvement treatment types

have not been finalized, but the disturbance areas will not exceed what is presented regardless of barrier type. The limits for each of the seven segments are as follows:

- Segment 1: NH Route 101/I-293 between Plummer Road and Route 3 bridges (approximately 1.0 mile).
- Segment 2: NH Route 101 Westbound ramp to I-293 Northbound (approximately 0.1 miles).
- Segment 3: NH Route 101/I-293 between the Merrimack River and Brown Ave (approximately 0.2 miles).
- Segment 4: NH Route 101/I-293 between Brown Ave and Huse Road (approximately 1.5 miles).
- Segment 5: Ramp from NH Route 101 Eastbound/I-293 to I-93 Southbound (approximately 0.3 miles).
- Segment 6: Ramp from I-93 Southbound to NH Route 101 Westbound / I-293 (approximately 0.5 miles).
- Segment 7: I-93 from the crossover north of Island Pond Road to existing concrete barrier (approximately 0.1 miles).

The first segment of median safety improvements has fairly flat slopes but might require some grading. There are no delineated wetlands in this area.

In Segment 2, high friction pavement and a roadside safety rail system are being recommended at this time. A wetland exists between the ramps but no impacts are anticipated.

Due to inadequate median width in Segment 3, the existing single face guardrail would be replaced with double face guardrail. No slope impacts are proposed near the Merrimack River area. Rich Roach indicated that he would prefer to have impacts to created wetlands around the ramp areas rather than impacts to the Merrimack River.

The current proposal for Segment 4 extends existing guardrail around the sign structure foundation and re-grades the median for median rail through the end of the segment.

The recommended improvements for segment 5 are high friction pavement and a roadside safety rail system. Wetland area between the ramps and I-93 will not be impacted. The work is expected to be within 250 feet of Cohas Brook; however, no impacts to Cohas Brook are anticipated.

Jamie Sikora asked if there were many accidents in this area. T. Setas indicated that the higher rates of accidents are near exit 6 and that there was a multiple fatality recently located within segment 5.

The recommended improvement for segment 6 is roadside safety rail system. There are wetlands adjacent to the ramp; however, no impacts to the wetlands are proposed.

Several treatment options are being considered for segment 7, including safety rail and concrete barrier. A small wetland consisting of approximately 390 square feet may be impacted by slopes resulting from these treatment options. R. Roach indicated that he had no concerns with impacts at this location.

The total area of earth disturbance for the entire project is approximately 13.1 acres.

Invasive species are known to exist outside the project limits near the South Willow Street on ramp to Route 101 east.

Melissa Coppola asked if a NH Natural Heritage Bureau review had been completed. Cathy Goodmen indicated that it had been completed in the fall and will need to be updated.

Jamie Sikora asked if there were archeological concerns. C. Goodmen indicated that archeological concerns are only in areas previously undisturbed by the highway, and all work as proposed would be contained within disturbed areas.

T. Setas indicated that there may be some concrete barrier utilized on the project. Carol Henderson asked that the use of concrete barrier be minimized as much as possible.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.