

# **BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT**

**SUBJECT:** Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** May 18, 2005

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** John O. Morton Building

**ATTENDED BY:**

**NHDOT**

Mark Hemmerlein  
Charlie Hood  
Jon Evans  
Kevin Nyhan  
Bill Hauser  
Pete Stannas  
Mark Whittermore  
Russ St.Pierre  
Bob Landry  
Keith Cota  
John Butler  
Wayne Brooks

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Bill O'Donnell  
Ed Wolford

**Army Corps of Engineers**

Rich Roach

**NH Wetlands Bureau**

Gino Infascelli  
Lori Sommer

**NH Fish and Game  
Department**

Mike Marchand

**EPA**

Mark Kern

**NMFS**

Mike Johnson

**US Fish and Wildlife  
Service**

Bill Neidermyer

**Smart Associates**

Bill Grace

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

**Bath-Lisbon, MGS-STP-NHS-F-X-T-0331(018), 10425**

Bob Landry, NHDOT Project Manager, opened the discussion with a brief overview of the project status. This project was re-introduced to the agencies in the fall of 2004, and he explained that a new environmental document (Environmental Assessment) was being prepared, Public Informational Meetings will be held in the fall of 2005, and a formal Public Hearing is expected in the winter of 2006. Modifications to the bypasses that were studied in the previous EA have been considered and the natural resource impacts, particularly wetlands and surface waters have been identified.

Bill Grace of The Smart Associates, Environmental Consultants, Inc, presented an overview of the project and the potential impacts. The project is approximately 8.6 miles in length, beginning just north of NH Route 112, and ending just south of NH Route 117. The project can be broken into four major sections – Bath Lower Village, Bath Upper Village, Cate's Corner, and Lisbon Village. Bypasses are being considered around Bath Lower Village and Bath Upper Village, either individually, or together, and improvements along the rest of the project will only consider an upgrade alternative. No bypass around Lisbon Village is being considered under this new EA, due to a lack of public support. An upgrade alternative along the entire 8.6 miles is also being considered. The roadway typical for the bypasses and most of the upgrade alternative would

include 12-foot travel lanes and 4-foot shoulders. Exceptions may be required in portions of the village segments. Truck climbing lanes are not considered warranted at this time.

Wetland impacts that could result from the current design plans were summarized in a hand-out and include the following: Bath Lower Village – 3 acres for the bypass alternative, or 0.2 acres for the upgrade; Bath Upper Village – 3.72 acres for the bypass alternative, 0.2 acres for the upgrade; Cate's Corner - 3.5 acres; Lisbon Village – 0.02 acres. Total wetland impacts for the various combinations of alternatives range from 3.92 acres (complete upgrade only) to 10.24 acres (including both bypasses).

Permanent (year-round) stream crossings are proposed at Simonds Brook (Bath), Mill Brook (Landaff), and Pearl Lake Brook (Lisbon). There are also three unnamed streams that appear to flow year-round, as well as numerous intermittent streams that will be crossed.

There are historic districts in Bath Lower Village, Bath Upper Village and Lisbon Village, as well as several individual properties that are potentially historic.

Presently there is strong local support for the Bath Upper Village bypass, and less support for the Bath Lower Village bypass. Wetland mitigation opportunities were investigated under the previous EA studies, and these sites will be re-visited in the near future. Those present were advised that a field review of the project area as well as proposed mitigations sites will take place in mid to late June, and a list of potential dates will be sent out in the near future.

Some concern was expressed over the amount of wetland impacts within the Cate's Corner segment. NHDOT will investigate the proposed improvements and provide further information at a later date. Cate's Spring, an important local water source, is located in this area and the proposed roadway is shifted away from the popular collection point for this underground spring.

#### **Durham-Newmarket, STP-TE-X-5133(009), 13080**

This project involves construction of 4' bike shoulders from the Oyster River Bridge to Dame Road (3.4mi). The construction of the proposed project will impact approximately 1-acre of wetlands along the toe-of-slope of NH Route 108 (*later revised to approximately 0.5 (+/-) acre*). Wildlife habitat is one of the primary functions of these wetlands. The species of primary concern is turtles, specifically the threatened Blandings Turtle and its habitat. Recognizing this, at the December 18, 2002 Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), among others, requested that the Department seek to mitigate wetland impacts with an emphasis on wildlife.

To accommodate this request, on July 17, 2003 NHDOT met with the NH Fish & Game Department (NHF&G) (Eric Orff), the Lamprey River Local Advisory Committee (LRLAC) (Margaret Watkins) and a Naturalist (David Carroll) with knowledge of this portion of roadway and the Blandings Turtle to discuss potential mitigation options. In addition, the Newmarket and Durham Conservation Commissions and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) were contacted on May 17, 2004 to see if they had any interest in assisting the Department in our search for mitigation. The only response received was from TNC. Lastly, the document Freshwater Wetland Mitigation Inventory for 19 Coastal Communities (FWMI19CC), prepared by the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP) that outlines known potential mitigation opportunities was reviewed. Based upon the information gathered, an initial list of opportunities was developed.

The following represents a proposed wetland mitigation package:

### **As Part of Design**

1. Maintain as much vegetation as possible along the project corridor by limiting clearing to the proposed toe-of-slope.
2. Remove Japanese Knotweed (invasive species) along the project corridor in the “flats.” It is estimated that approximately 0.5 acre of this plant is growing along the roadway. This is however, a very rough estimate, subject to additional field investigation.
3. Erect turtle crossing signs on either side of the “flats” to alert motorists of the potential of encountering turtles in the roadway.
4. Roughening roadway side slopes with ballast in the “flats” to deter turtles from nesting in sandy roadway side slopes.

### **Wetland Creation/Wildlife Habitat Construction (*Powers Project*)**

The Nature Conservancy recently purchased a tract of land within the project corridor (Parcel 85 – formerly owned by Powers) and transferred ownership to the NH Fish and Game Department (NHF&G) for the construction of a wildlife enhancement area. The current partners in this effort include TNC, The Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GBNERR), NHF&G and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The wildlife enhancement area will provide habitat for multiple species through the construction of a small damming structure and the excavation of a 6” deep pond. In addition, sandy areas will be constructed for use by nesting turtles. Targeted species include Black Duck, Blandings Turtle, Willow Flycatcher, Blue-winged Warbler, Ermine and Snowshoe Hare among others. It appears that a unique opportunity exists to partner with others on this project to construct mitigation that is within the project area and meets our mitigation goals.

The University of New Hampshire (UNH) Wildlife Management program may also be participating in this project by conducting a study to determine the successfulness of the site. If NHDOT participates in the study, it would be a great opportunity to academically assess the impact of the proposed roadway improvement project on turtle and other wildlife populations. *Subsequent discussions did not prove successful. TNC and NHFG will be revising survey protocol, but will most likely not be participating with UNH.*

After contacting GBNERR recently, they indicated that NHDOT could benefit this project by the contribution of a State match to Federal funds in the amount of \$30,000. ***The only stipulation is that the NHDOT funding portion must be a match using State funds only.*** In addition, if roadway construction timing were to coincide with the construction of this wildlife area, the Powers Project could benefit through the excavation of the pond by the NHDOT contractor. NHDOT recently mitigated the Bedford, 10018C project by providing a monetary contribution to the development of the Natural Stream Channel Design and Streambank Stabilization Guidelines document; thus a precedent mechanism exists.

### **Summary**

The proposed contribution of \$30,000 to the *Powers Project* with the combination of the considerations “as part of design,” is a fair and equitable mitigation package.

The Powers parcel is within the Doe-Mooney-Dame-Stevens Farms Historic District in Durham. Although there may be special considerations relative to the excavation of the site, they should be addressed during the *Powers Project* planning phases by others.

L. Sommer suggested that more money may be appropriate. *Subsequent to this meeting, however wetland impacts were modified and reduced, brining the proposed mitigation package more into line with what L. Sommer had suggested.*

M. Kern would like to see any proposed study before he OKs the project for qualification under the SPGP.

Another meeting will be held to discuss these issues.

**Meredith, STP-F-X-0241(014), 10340**

This project involves reconstruction of US Route 3 and NH Route 25 from NH Route 104 to the Center Harbor Town line. A review of the process being utilized to restart this project was presented. Mark explained the project would be spilt into 3 phases; A) planning, B) NEPA Stage and C) Final Design Phase. During the A phase of the project the Department, in coordination with the Town of Meredith, would like to come up with some reasonable solutions to the traffic issues at the US Route 3 and NH Route 25 intersection while maintaining the character of Meredith Village. The downtown area was recently re-flown to provide us with an up to date base plan. The roadway north of the High School is being resurveyed. Most of the natural and cultural resource inventorying has been completed. McFarland Johnson will be reviewing the existing data and updating it as needed. The subs on the project include; Projects for Public Spaces, Carl Johnson and Associates (Landscape Architects), Resource Systems Group (Traffic Modelers), Applied Economic Research (Growth Modelers), Liz Hengen (Historian) and Victoria Bunker (Archeologist). Currently the Department is setting up the scope of work and fees. We hope to start with some traffic analysis this summer and meeting with the Advisory Task Force in the fall.

**Sanbornton-Belmont, X-A000(214), 14150**

Russ St.Pierre presented a project to rehabilitate the bridge that carries US Route 3 over Lake Winnisquam in the Towns of Sanbornton, Belmont, and Tilton. The proposed bridge improvements include a deck replacement utilizing full depth, precast/prestressed concrete deck panels post-tensioned longitudinally. There will be some spot painting of the girders, bridge rail will be replaced or reset depending on the type of rail used and the expansion joints at both abutments will be replaced. The project also includes improvements to 800 feet of road and replacement of the closed drainage system the on the west approach, 700 feet of road on the east approach and traffic signal replacement/upgrades at the Bay Road intersection on the west approach. The roadwork shall mainly consist of the existing pavement being removed and replaced. The existing pavement width will be maintained. The west sidewalk will be repaved and the east sidewalk will be made ADA compliant by extending it further toward the east. Two-way traffic will be maintained during construction by building the bridge deck in phases. In phase 1, traffic will shift to the north in two 11-foot lanes while the south side of the bridge deck is removed and replaced. In phase 2, traffic will shift to the south side and the north side of the bridge deck will be removed and replaced. In phase three, the addition of the sidewalk will complete reconstruction of the bridge deck.

A dredge and fill permit will be required for replacement of the outlet of a closed drainage pipe on the west side of the bridge. There may also be jurisdictional impacts on the north side of Route 3, on the east side of the bridge. There were no specific concerns with the project as proposed.

**Merrimack, 12105**

Widening and rehabilitation of the FEE Turnpike bridge over the Souhegan River. Involves the replacement of the concrete deck, removal of paint and repainting of the structural steel, lengthening of the existing piers and abutments, and placement of stone fill within the eroded fill slopes in front of the abutments. *For more information on this project, contact either Steve Liakos at 271-2731 or Marc Laurin at 271-3226.*