BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCE: March 21, 2007
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Bill Hauser
Charlie Hood
Kevin Nyhan
Randy Talon
Ron Crickard
Cathy Goodmen
Joe Patusky
Carol Niewola
Alex Vogt
Jon Evans
Dave Scott
Andy Hall
Bob Davis
Christine Perron
Bob Aubrey
Jim Bowles
Marc Laurin
Chris Waszczuk
Mike Dugas
Pete Parenteau
Meredith Germain
John Kallfelz

Federal Highway Administration
Bill O'Donnell

Army Corps of Engineers
Rich Roach

DES Wetlands Bureau
Lori Sommer
Gino Infascelli

NH Fish and Game
Mike Dionne

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Neidermyer

EPA
Mark Kern

DRED – NHB
Melissa Coppola

National Marine Fisheries Service
Mike Johnson

LCHIP
Rachel Rouillard

DES Coastal Program
Ted Diers

The Nature Conservancy
Duane Hyde

FST Inc.
Peter Howe
Kevin Gagne

Louis Berger Group
Craig Wood
Jeff Cicerello
Paul Kirby

SEA Consultants
Wade Brown

Lebanon Airport
Jay Fitzgerald

Pathways Engineering
Michael McCrory

VHB Consultants
Peter Walker

PROJECTS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:
(minutes on subsequent pages)

(When viewing these minutes online, click on a project to zoom to the minutes for that project)

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Finalization of January 24, 2007 Meeting Minutes

No one in attendance provided additional changes to these meeting minutes. The January 24, 2007 meeting minutes were finalized.

Tamworth, X-A000(299), 14317

Peter Howe, FST, provided an overview of the proposed project. The following was presented:

1. The Chocorua Village Safety Improvements project is a Municipally Managed TE Project with total available funding for overall corridor planning and Phase 1 design/construction of $500,000.

2. FST reviewed the overall purpose and need of the project including pedestrian safety improvements, water quality improvements and aesthetics/streetscape improvements.

3. The overall study area extends approximately ½ mile in both directions (north and south) along NH Route 16 from the intersection with NH Route 113.

Kevin Gagne, FST Inc., provided highlights of the project. They are as follows:

1. FST reviewed the 40-scale color plot of the existing conditions roll plan, noting the study limits including the village approaches, and Chocorua Road and Runnels Hall Road and numbered wetland resources areas. Handouts of a wetlands report were provided.

2. Long-term improvements on the approaches would include sidewalks, landscape buffers where possible (through which sidewalk runoff would pass), 28' curb-to-curb pavement width (narrower in most cases than existing) and horizontal geometric deflections for traffic calming.

3. Village area / intersection improvements will focus on pedestrian safety improvements, sidewalks and crossings, geometric/turning movement improvements and parking. The locations of the intersections that will be the main focus in the Village area were noted. Some intersection adjustments open up greenspace opportunities.

4. Existing drainage (corridor wide) consists of direct sheet flow from roadway to adjacent properties/wetlands/river/pond with erosion problems in spots. Catch basins (located primarily in the village area) discharge directly into the surface waters/wetlands.

5. Limited funds have lead to community and selectboard approval of Phase 1 to be carried through preliminary and final design. Phase 1 Area is generally from the northerly end of Mill Pond to the NH Route 16/ NH Route 113 intersection and includes sidewalks and crosswalks, lighting, landscaping and limited parallel parking. NH Route 16 realignment is required; shifting away from Mill Pond, avoiding slope impacts. A new closed drainage system will be provided.

6. The former village store was purchased by the Town and razed. The current location is a "crater" with seeded slopes. The town successfully pursued a NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Watershed Improvement Grant to provide a bio-retention stormwater treatment area integrated with passive park. The area will require a retaining wall at the top of the bank and design coordination with the catch basin system required on NH Route 16 with the new sidewalks.

Bill O'Donnell, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), inquired if wetland area #4 would be impacted. The proposed road shift keeps the top of the slope impact within the limits of existing guardrail due to steepness of slope and desire to avoid impact.

Lori Sommer, NHDES, asked if wetlands would be impacted by this project. While most of the corridor improvements are conceptual, the intent is to avoid wetland impacts. There are no impacts anticipated in Phase 1.

Gino Infascelli, NHDES, asked if the bio-retention treatment area is planned for construction at the same time as Phase 1 of the project. If so, how is this to be phased? The phasing for construction and implementation of the proposed bio-retention area and NH Route 16 closed drainage system, will be established as the system designs are advanced. Stormwater will not be directed through the bio-retention area until the vegetation is fully established to prevent erosion. Connections to the proposed and existing catch basin system will be made during construction but designed with shutoff valve(s) or temporary plug(s) as required, allowing stormwater to temporarily bypass the bio-retention system. G. Infascelli suggested the basin be constructed prior to connecting any new drainage. Appropriate phasing and BMP's will be planned during the design phase for stormwater pollution prevention during construction.

Dover, X-A000(136), 13945

Jeff Cicerello (LBG-Project Manager) provided a brief overview of the project.

The original Washington Street Bridge over the Cocheco River was closed to vehicular traffic in 1966, and completely removed in 1982. Currently, two bridges exist at this site. A single span covered timber truss bridge, constructed in 1996, carries pedestrians over the river on the former Washington Street alignment. The pedestrian bridge substructure utilizes cast-in-place concrete caps placed on the 1896 construction stone masonry abutments. The second bridge is used for carrying utilities (a sewer and natural gas line).

Under the proposed condition, a new bridge will carry two 11- foot lanes, two 4- foot shoulders and two 5-foot sidewalks on each side. The new Washington Street Bridge will also carry utilities (the relocated existing sewer and gas lines) and piping for a future 12" water line.

The new bridge provides an alternative gateway to the City and will include ornamental railing and lighting. The purpose of the project is to restore the historic vehicular connection over the Cocheco River and improve downtown traffic circulation consistent with the City's Traffic Master Plan. The new bridge will also provide access to a future waterfront development.

Craig Wood (LBG-Environmental) provided an overview of construction impacts.

The area of wetland impact is limited to rocky intertidal shore. This segment of the Cocheco River is mostly contained by man-made slopes and retaining walls that constitute the riverbank, which rapidly transitions into rocky intertidal shoreline (E2RS1/2). Vegetated wetlands (marsh or swamp) do not occur within the project area. The project will require removal of the existing granite abutments, which supported the bridge superstructure that was previously removed, and the construction of new footings, abutments and wingwalls in virtually the same location. The use of sheet-pile cofferdams, slightly beyond the structure, will be necessary for installing the new abutment footings. An apron consisting of 18-24 inch stone will be placed along the base of the abutments and wingwalls for scour protection. The total impact to rocky intertidal shore for the proposed project is approximately 2,320 square feet with a dredge and fill volume of approximately 996 cubic yards.

The Natural Heritage Bureau (NHNHB) has records of three state-listed plant occurrences in the vicinity of the project area. However, they are typically found within brackish tidal riverbank marsh vegetation communities, which do not occur within the project limits. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) has determined that there are no federally-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species or critical habitats know to occur in the project area. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has determined that the proposed project site borders or includes areas identified as an essential fish habitat (EFH) for juveniles and adults of Atlantic salmon, and is known to support a number of other migratory fish species. As such, the placement of cofferdams will be done outside the timeframe of concern for migratory fish (April to June). All other work will be done out of the water, either within the cofferdams, above the high tide line or during periods of low tide. No substantial change in habitat (substrate or elevation) or flows is proposed. Therefore, impacts to EFH are not anticipated.

Rich Roach, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), inquired about the status of the river waterfront development. LBG responded that the development is several years away from final design, and is currently in concept phase.

Mike Dionne, NH Fish and Game Department (NHF&G), inquired whether moving the abutments back would reduce impacts to the river. LBG responded that replacing the existing walls and providing scour protection at base of walls, would not restrict channel width or alter grades within the river channel.

Bill O'Donnell, FHWA, inquired whether the project will restore an important connection for traffic circulation within the City and if access to the waterfront development is an additional, but not primary, purpose of the project. LBG responded that it would.

Lori Sommer, NHDES, inquired whether the project could include landscaping to provide more of a vegetated buffer along the river. LBG responded that there is limited area available, but would be considered during next design phase.

Gino Infascelli, NHDES, inquired about the length of the new bridge. LBG responded that it would be 135 feet long.

M. Dionne stated that the Cocheco salmon-stocking program ended in 2003 and agreed with the data presented in the EFH Assessment regarding the low returns.

Mike Johnson, NMFS, questioned the time of year the work was proposed. LBG responded that the only in-water work is associated with the installation of cofferdams, which would likely be scheduled for winter of 2008 and would avoid the sensitive April to June timeframe.

M. Coppola, NHNHB, inquired whether a rare plant search was conducted. LBG stated that the time of year that fieldwork was conducted was not ideal for observing intertidal plants, and findings were based on available habitat conditions and lack of associated plant communities.

R. Roach inquired whether there would be any objections to issuing a State Programmatic General Permit (SPGP) for the project and that an Individual Permit would not be required. Response: No objections

Bristol-New Hampton, 13573A (Non-Federal)

Rich Roach provided a brief update on the ACOE involvement with this bridge replacement project. The ACOE requires a Section 404 permit for this project. The ACOE would probably grant the permit based on conformance with the requirements of the NH SPGP along with stipulations from the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for historical resources. In addition, Federal easements are necessary because the

ACOE owns much of the land along the river.

Wade Brown, SEA, provided a brief overview of the project, which is a Municipal Bridge Aid project currently in the final design phase. The project involves the replacement of the bridge that carries Central Street over the Pemigewasset River. Exhibit drawings and photos were provided to present the existing and proposed conditions along with the temporary construction impacts and construction phasing. The primary purpose of this project is to replace the existing structurally deficient truss bridge, built in 1928, which is in an accelerated state of deterioration due to steel rusting. Several bridge alternates including single-span options, a 3-span option, and two truss rehab options were evaluated during the preliminary design phase. The proposed bridge consists of a 240' single span with steel plate girders supported on new concrete abutments. The proposed bridge is the same length as the existing bridge. The new bridge/road is in approximately the same location as the existing bridge/road with improvements to the width and roadway alignment. The proposed road on the bridge will be substantially higher than the existing road (above the highest flood of record and about 10' higher than existing) because the bridge has been closed on several occasions due to the flood storage by the Franklin Falls Dam (12 miles downstream) controlled by the ACOE. In 2002 the NHNHB determined there were no endangered species in the area. As part of the dredge and fill permit application process, the NHDES requested that the NHNHB be notified again to determine if their 2002 finding still holds true.

Mike Johnson, NMFS, asked for clarification on the method of removal of the existing bridge. He was concerned with dropping the bridge in the river and the resulting disturbance to aquatic species and their habitat, particularly the riverbed. After discussion on the subject by R. Roach, M. Johnson, Mike Dionne, NHF&G, it was decided that removal of the bridge could consist of dropping it in the river if the pieces were picked out with a crane but not by dragging them out of the river. Dragging could cause excessive disturbance to the river bottom. M. Dionne was not aware of any sensitive species in the project area, including Atlantic salmon. He was more concerned with mussel species that may be present. An additional review by NHNHB should determine this.

Gino Infascelli, NHDES, discussed their comments with the wetland application. A Request for More Information was recently issued. He mentioned the concerns with stormwater treatment for the southwest drainage outlet directly on riprap, constriction of the river caused by inspection platforms in front of abutments, and the amount of riprap for slope protection at river embankments. W. Brown briefly explained each of these, including the design intent. S E A plans to meet shortly with NHDES to clarify the design and work towards satisfying permitting requirements.

R. Roach asked why the proposed bridge span was the same as the existing and not bigger to push the abutments back away from the river. W. Brown explained that other options were considered but a girder style bridge was selected. This girder bridge is very long; in fact it would be the longest single span girder bridge in the state of NH. The new hydraulic opening under the bridge has been increased because the bottom of the bridge is above the existing bridge. A longer three span bridge with piers in the river was considered but the towns did not want to have piers in the river. R. Roach stated that the ACOE would not want piers in the river either.

Mark Kern, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), asked about mitigation for loss of floodplains. R. Roach stated that compensatory storage would be a stipulation of the ACOE permit. The ACOE will require that the volume of fill within the 100-year flood storage area, associated with the road and bridge improvements, be offset by removing an equal amount of earth somewhere else on adjacent ACOE property. The location would be south of the site east of the river along Coolidge Woods Road.

Bill Neidermyer, USF&WS, requested confirmation that dragging the bridge out of the river would not be allowed. R. Roach said this would be a stipulation of the permit. The Contractor would only be allowed to pick it out of the river.

R. Roach indicated that the project qualifies under the SPGP.

Enfield, 13185B (Non-Federal)

Alex Vogt provided a brief overview of the overall project which includes the 13185A, B, C & D projects which are located in the towns of Lebanon and Enfield, NH along NH Route 4A adjacent to Mascoma Lake. The 13185B project involves pavement rehabilitation, adding shoulders and sight distance improvements. It begins roughly 1 mile southeast of US Route 4 at the Lebanon/Enfield town line and proceeds southeast approximately 0.9 miles.

Andy Hall presented the details of this project. The majority of this project runs immediately adjacent to or in close proximity to Lake Mascoma. This project includes overlaying the existing pavement and minor widening where necessary to accommodate for a 10' travel lane with 3' shoulders. This increased typical section will allow for increased bicycle and pedestrian safety. The existing drainage patterns will be maintained, however some of the pipes will be replaced and their sizes increased to accommodate for Bureau of Highway Maintenance recommendations. In several locations the banks of Lake Mascoma are somewhat unstable and may require stabilization to protect the adjacent roadway structure.

Rich Roach, ACOE, asked if the roadway could be shifted away from the lake to avoid impacting the banks. Bill Neidermyer, USF&WS, felt that this would require unnecessary impacts to an already stabilized and undeveloped slope on the opposite side of the roadway. A. Hall noted that this slope is steep and a shift in the roadway alignment would require the slope to be reconstructed a substantial distance beyond the existing right-of-way. Jon Evans noted that a small portion of the southern end of this project is located adjacent to an LCIP property held by NHF&G. A realignment of the roadway would likely require substantial reconstruction of the western slope, which could potentially extend onto this Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) property.

Gino Infascelli, NHDES, noted that since this project includes tree removal along the banks of Lake Mascoma requirements of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act should be addressed prior to applying for a wetland permit. This may include restoration of disturbed vegetation. R. Roach asked if new trees could be placed within the riprap to help facilitate revegetation of the slope. It was agreed that the Department would look into the feasibility of such revegetation.

R. Roach indicated that the project would qualify under the SPGP as long as the Department examined the possibility of planting trees within the area of disturbed shoreland.

Rye, MGS-BRF-X-221(10), 13269

Cathy Goodmen presented an overview of this bridge replacement project. The bridge is a timber bridge built in 1943 and carries NH Route 1 over Seavey Creek. It needs to be replaced because the piles are too deteriorated to repair. There will be impacts in the tidal waters due to removal of the existing pilings and construction of the new pilings. Three options will be taken to the Public Hearing in June.

Joe Patusky presented the bridge replacement alternatives that the Department has considered. These alternatives were presented to the Town at a Public Informational Meeting and at a Selectmen's Meeting. The structure selected will be approximately 10 feet wider than the existing structure. The alternatives presented and their respective status is as follows:

1. Concrete alternative: A two span bridge, 155 feet in length was eliminated due to esthetic consideration.
2. Replacement in-kind: An eight span all timber bridge with a bare timber deck, 144 feet in length and similar in appearance and construction to the existing bridge was considered and eliminated due to past maintenance requirements, complaints by abutters of the traffic noise it generated, and short anticipated service life due to water damaging the bare timber deck and timber pilings.
3. Replacement with a timber superstructure consisting of prefabricated deck panels with an asphalt overlay. The substructure would consist of short concrete abutments supported on steel H-piles, piers would be open bent type consisting of concrete filled steel pipe pilings with either concrete or timber cap beams. Bridge length would be 160 feet, consisting of five equal spans. This bridge would be similar in appearance to the existing bridge but would provide a longer service life than the in-kind replacement alternative.

The duration of construction will be about 9-10 months and cost approx $1,300,000.00.

Rich Roach, ACOE, asked about moving the abutments back. J. Patusky noted that if it were replaced in-kind, the abutments would remain where they are, but with the other two options the abutments would move 8 feet landward on each end. R. Roach requested that the Department not increase the footprint of impacts in the creek section. If the Department were to widen the abutments and bridge, the abutments should be move back from the waterway so as to limit the amount of new fill (typical for all options).

It was asked whether the proposed toe-of-slope hits down in the tidewater, and if so, would moving the abutments shoreward reduce this impact. Bob Aubrey stated that the existing structure is 148 feet long. A new hybrid or prefabricated structure would be 160 feet long.

Lori Sommer, NHDES, inquired about the roadway closure. Alex Vogt stated that the bridge would be built in the off-peak tourist season (fall to spring).

Bill Neidermyer, USF&WS, indicated that the timing of construction should be outside the time of seasonal migration of aquatic fish species.

Mike Johnson, NMFS, suggested that driving piles may affect the fish runs in April and May. He asked if construction could start in the fall. A. Vogt said we would advertise in August of 2008 and work should start late fall of that year. The piles should be done before the April time period. The Department should follow-up on other fish runs.

Ted Diers, NHDES Coastal Program, stated that a salt marsh restoration project was undertaken at the parking lot for the boat launch at the state park. That area is now collecting a lot of sediment. It was suggested that the DOT could coordinate with DRED and remove some of this sediment as part of this project. T. Diers asked how the drainage on the bridge would work. Is the water being concentrated in scuppers? B Aubrey responded that the sides are open, so the water would run out along the entire length of the bridge on both sides, much as it does today.

T. Diers added that there is phragmites growing on the southwest side of the bridge. Removal of this could be a mitigation possibility. Further, with the expansion in width of the bridge can the Department calculate the change in median tide height upstream? A. Vogt stated that the Department would look into this.

M. Johnson asked what the new concrete piles would look like. J. Patusky and B. Aubrey described that the steel piles are reinforced concrete and filled.

L. Sommer, NHDES, asked if DRED indicated that the Department could use the boat launch as staging and if the entrance /use of the boat launch would be blocked. C. Goodmen indicated that NHNHB said the

Department could use the parking lot, but only for a 6-month period as this is a Section 6(f) protected resource. J. Patusky and B. Aubrey said we would use the approach roadway to the bridge since it would be closed to traffic. Since the boat launch closes from Labor Day to June, the work shouldn't impact access to it.

R Roach asked if the historic piles could be removed north of the existing bridge as they could be a hazard to boaters. C. Goodmen said SHPO would probably not let us because they are historic. J. Patusky and B. Aubrey said no one has requested they be removed or noted a problem with them.

R. Roach- asked if the proposed toe-of-slope would be in salt marsh? B. Aubrey responded that it would and probably a little in the tidal flat. The Department will steepen the slopes to minimize the impacts.

Melissa Coppola, NHNHB, asked if the project area had been reviewed by NHNHB. She noted there is a threatened plant at this location. C. Goodmen said that it had been reviewed and there didn't seem to be anything adjacent to the bridge, but the Department would check again. B Aubrey stated that the project would be filling slopes along the roadway approaches to the bridge because of the proposed widening. These slopes will be riprapped. The general feeling at the meeting was to steepen the side slopes to reduce the impacts to the salt marsh. J. Patusky stated that the pile options would involve creosote/copper Naphthenate treated wood, or steel with concrete fill. The consensus was that steel and concrete should be used and no creosote or copper naphthenate should be used in the water.

C. Goodmen noted the possibility of adding stable fill on Rye town property to enhance the boat launch area. The consensus was that no fill on tidal mud flats should be used.

Since there will be fill in salt marsh and tidal flats, an Individual Permit will be needed from the ACOE.

The project will be presented again when wetland impacts are determined.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 4/18/2001 & 1/24/2007

Lebanon Municipal Airport Safety Enhancement and Conceptual Improvement Study, AIP #3-33-0010-XX-2007

Jay Fitzgerald, Lebanon Airport Operations Supervisor, made a presentation with an overview of the pending Airport Safety Planning Study. The pending study will address FAA-mandated safety improvements, which will need to be implemented by 2015. J. Fitzgerald provided a brief overview of the alternatives to be evaluated. A grant application for this study will be submitted May 1, 2007.

J. Fitzgerald noted that the airport has selected a new consultant team for this and future airport projects. J. Fitzgerald noted that the airport has adopted a new, more proactive, approach to addressing environmental issues. For example, the airport will work to implement needed mitigation prior to beginning construction of a project with associated environmental impacts. The airport will maintain open communication with the environmental agencies throughout the planning and design processes.

Mark Kern, EPA, commented that, in his view, on-airport mitigation efforts are not preferred and that the airport might benefit from a citywide ecological inventory to take a broader view of the mitigation options. M. Kern also stated that he feels it is a mistake to put conservation areas adjacent to the Lebanon Airport and that mitigation should fit with the long-term planning for the airport and the City. J. Fitzgerald responded that the City and the airport both recognize that there is a need for a broad-scope approach to ecological issues and are currently pursuing this type of evaluation.

Lori Sommer, NHDES, stated that she is pleased with the new approach to environmental issues by the airport, but wanted an update on the mitigation issues associated with the last airport project (a.k.a. the Executive Ramp). J. Fitzgerald responded that several mitigation options have been evaluated and presented to the conservation groups, however gaining consensus on the appropriate mitigation efforts has been a stumbling block and the deadline is approaching to apply for the FAA grant to pay for this mitigation. J. Fitzgerald also noted that the City will be conducting a peer review of the identified mitigation plan to identify possible alternatives. M. Kern noted that with time running short and no consensus on a preferred mitigation plan, perhaps the environment would be better served by putting the money into the "In Lieu Fee" program at NHDES. Rich Roach, ACOE, noted his willingness to look at alternatives to the mitigation plan, but noted that input is needed from others first. J. Fitzgerald reiterated that timing is critical.

J. Fitzgerald also presented a conceptual plan for removal of a rock knob south of Runway 18-36 for safety purposes. J. Fitzgerald presented the rock-removal plan to the Lebanon Conservation Commission on March 8, 2007 and received a positive response. L. Sommer noted that there is a conservation easement over a portion of this property and questioned whether the rock removal would conflict with the conservation easement language. R. Roach suggested that this conservation easement could be traded with another property elsewhere in the City. Melissa Coppola, NHNHB, questioned whether there would be an assessment of exemplary natural communities on the rocky knob to be removed. J. Fitzgerald clarified that regular maintenance of vegetation occurs on the knob now. M. Coppola responded that this no longer appears to be an issue.

Carol Niewola, L. Sommer and R. Roach discussed the opportunity for the airport to request modifications to the mitigation plan related to the Executive Ramp project. Coordination with State and Federal agencies will be very important. There was consensus that promoting an unfavorable project in the short-term to meet a deadline could be detrimental. A time extension to the mitigation plan to allow for a well-formulated plan would be one option as would payment into the In Lieu Fee program (if deemed acceptable) or combining this mitigation with mitigation for the next airport project. A letter from the airport needs to be submitted regarding the status of the current mitigation plan and recommendations by the airport on how to proceed.

Gino Infascelli, NHDES, noted that the airport is currently in violation of a NHDES Administrative Order regarding the Wetlands Permit and a letter is needed from the airport to address this compliance issue.

Newington-Dover, NHS-027-01(37), 11238

Chris Waszczuk opened the meeting by reviewing recent events. The Public Hearing for the project was held last September. The Department and VHB are working on responding to comments on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and expect a Final EIS (FEIS) to be issued this summer. In the meantime, progress has been made on the mitigation plan. EPA in particular had commented that the mitigation plan should be discussed prior to the FEIS. That is the main objective of this meeting – to update the resource agencies on the mitigation plan and to solicit any final comments.

C. Waszczuk explained that the City of Dover and NHDOT had closed on the preservation of the Tuttle Farm. A total of 120 acres has been preserved in partnership with the City, the Strafford Rivers Conservancy, and the US Department of Agriculture. NHDOT holds an executory easement on 109 acres.

Mark Kern, EPA, asked C. Waszczuk about the finances of the Tuttle Farm. C. Waszczuk explained that NHDOT had contributed $1.34 million of the total $2.8 million cost. C. Waszczuk expressed concerns about the accounting for mitigation credits. In essence, NHDOT has pursued acquisition of several very expensive parcels (e.g., Tuttle, Watson) at the Resource Agencies' recommendation. If NHDOT is not

given adequate credit, then NHDOT will have to rethink the mitigation strategy to pursue less expensive properties. Ted Diers, DES Coastal Program, explained that the only problem would be if the City were to request mitigation credit for preserving Tuttle Farm – i.e., "double counting" the preservation credit.

Rich Roach, ACOE, commented that recent developments in the Corps' application of mitigation guidance have stressed the policy of "no-net-loss." Thus, restoration of Railway Brook would play well into the no-net loss issue. Bill Neidermyer, USF&WS, stressed that USF&WS would object if Railway Brook is not included. R. Roach and M. Kern stressed that NHDOT should explain how it arrived at the package and what effort was expended to look for restoration.

Pete Walker summarized the current mitigation proposal, as well as the NHDOT's overall search for a mitigation strategy. NHDOT has looked extensively for both restoration opportunities as well as preservation. He cited a data set provided to the resource agencies in a memo dated November 1, 2005.

The mitigation search involved looking for restoration opportunities in conjunction with the conservation commissions, and other forums & seacoast groups. In Dover, only Varney Brook was identified as potential restoration. However, this opportunity was relatively limited and involved modifications to culvert structures that would have been very expensive. This restoration was therefore ruled out due to a poor cost/benefit ratio.

Other restoration opportunities included Railway Brook, Stubbs Pond (Great Bay NWR in Newington); Macintyre Brook in Newington; and Hodgson Brook in Portsmouth. Each of these, with the exception of Railway Brook, was eliminated for a clear and well-documented reason – either cost, lack of community support, or relatively small restoration benefit.

After the discussion of restoration, P. Walker summarized the full mitigation plan consisting of the following elements:

1. Tuttle Farm – 109 acres preservation.
2. Blackwater Brook – probably able to obtain up to 90 acres of the Tsimekles Property.
3. Railway Brook Restoration – a revised concept plan was distributed with more detail than contained in the DEIS.
4. Watson Property – about 35 acres, with cooperation of The Nature Conservancy.

It was noted that the Watson Property appears to be available, but may be cost prohibitive. If TNC/NHDOT cannot come to an agreement with the Watsons, then the mitigation plan would include:

5. Knights Brook – Probably could obtain preservation easements on 60 to 70 acres of land. Some informal landowner contact had already occurred, and it appears that at least one property owner in this area (Hislop) is in favor of preserving in this area.

With regard to the Railway Brook restoration, P. Walker updated the group on the recent development of a concept plan for "Alternative A." Based on feedback from the Pease Development Authority, as well as the NHDES Waste Management Division and the US Air Force, VHB is recommending abandoning "Restoration Alternative B," which was located in the stream headwaters, due to its proximity to Landfill 5 of the former Air Force Base. This Alternative occurs entirely within a Groundwater Management Zone (GMZ), which presents issues of contamination and would substantially complicate the restoration. At this time the NHDOT is not intending to pursue this option.

P. Walker explained the main features of Alternative A at Railway Brook:

- A preliminary conceptual design has been developed;

- Total of 3,100 linear feet of valley would be created;
- Approximately 3,400 linear feet of new stream channel – sinuosity of 1.015;
- Stream would be a Rosgen "B/C" stream type;
- Stream would be approximately 20 feet wide;
- Streambed would be raised, and weirs removed;
- Most of the existing streambed would be filled;
- Wetlands/floodplain can be developed and connect to existing prime wetlands;
- An area about 300 to 400 feet wide would be permanently preserved i.e., 23 acres total to ensure restoration is not threatened by future development.

Based on discussion during this meeting, it appeared that all meeting participants agreed that the overall mitigation plan would be acceptable, even though it may not meet the no net loss of wetlands concept. R. Roach suggested that he would discuss the package with Paul Minkin & Chris Godfrey, both of the ACOE, to render a final Corps opinion.

M. Kern indicated that, while EPA supports the restoration of Railway Brook in Alternative A, it does have some drawbacks given the large amount of development both upstream and downstream of the restoration location. Further, given the study by Mark West of restoration sites in the seacoast and the work that VHB has completed, EPA feels that NHDOT has done their "restoration homework," and the package makes sense based on what was available.

Among other notable items discussed during the meeting:

- P. Walker asked if mitigation credit would be granted for gravel wetlands. B. Neidermyer said these structures generally wouldn't be treated as mitigation by USF&WS.

- T. Diers asked if NHDOT would consider adding a trail to the Railway Brook project. C. Waszczuk commented that there would need to be maintenance access, which could serve as a trail; NHDOT would agree to make it an educational component.

- Mike Johnson, NMFS, expressed support for additional restoration in lieu of preservation if possible.

- T. Diers asked about development of a monitoring plan. P. Walker replied that no plan for monitoring had been developed yet. T. Diers suggested that the barrier removal document from Maine would give a good protocol. Kevin Nyhan added that NHDES is in the process of developing a stream restoration/ design guidelines document.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 4/16/2003, 7/16/2003, 4/21/2004, 6/23/2004, 1/19/2005, 4/20/2005, 7/20/2005, 8/17/2005, 11/2/2005, 12/14/2005 & 2/21/2006

Statewide, X-A000(535), 14802

This project involves repairing the piles of three bridges located on NH Route 1B in New Castle and Portsmouth. The piles are steel and were encased in concrete over 20 years ago. This concrete is now in poor condition. Work will consist of removing the old concrete and encasing each pile with new concrete. This work will likely be completed from a barge, although details on how the work will progress have not been determined at this time. Wetland permit applications will be submitted for each bridge; all impacts are expected to be temporary.

Rich Roach, ACOE, commented that the necessity of a US Coast Guard permit should be determined. He also noted that the project entails only repairs to existing structures, which may preclude the need for confirmation of SPGP or an Individual Permit. However, more information on how the work will be carried out is needed before that decision can be made.

R. Roach and Mike Johnson, NMFS, commented that an apron-like device could be placed around each pile to catch concrete as it is removed. Christine Perron replied that a permit for temporary impacts is being obtained in the event that debris inadvertently falls into the water and needs to be removed.

R. Roach asked why concrete would be used. Jim Bowles explained that concrete and steel work together to provide corrosion resistance and that concrete has corrosion inhibiting additives. The existing concrete is over 20 years old, so the new concrete is expected to last at least that long.

M. Johnson asked if the piles would be encased below the channel substrate. J. Bowles answered yes and explained how the existing concrete was put into place. There was debate on whether or not this method constituted dredging of the substrate. However, it is not yet known how the piles will be encased with new concrete.

M. Johnson stated that turbidity would need to be controlled. Also, he would like to see the project occur outside of the window of herring and alewife migration (outside April – June).

More information on how this work will be accomplished will be provided to the resource agencies in the near future.

Lebanon, X-A000(141), 13951

Jon Evans provided an overview of the project area and the natural resources, which have been identified in the area. The proposed project consists of replacing the bridge that carries US Route 4 over the Mascoma River (Br. No. 188/126), near the intersection of NH Route 4A in Lebanon, NH. The current bridge has 6 spans, one of which has a pier located within the channel of the river. Running parallel to the river are the remnants of the Northern Railroad, which has been converted into a recreational trail. The southwestern quadrant of the existing bridge contains a conservation property owned by the City of Lebanon. Several wetland areas have been identified in both the northwestern and southeastern quadrants of the existing structure.

John Kallfelz provided a description of the current design which involves replacing the existing 6 span bridge with a 450 foot, 3 span structure located just to the east of the existing structure. The intersection of US Route 4 and NH Route 4A will be redesigned to include a roundabout. A roundabout was chosen to accommodate for future increases in traffic volumes on both US Route 4 and NH Route 4A. This will also eliminate the need for additional lanes and a wider bridge to accommodate a traffic signal.

Gino Infascelli, NHDES, noted that if the roundabout is installed it would require trucks to slow down before climbing the hill to the south of the bridge. He felt that trucks would have a hard time climbing the grade after nearly a complete stop and asked if a truck-climbing lane would be examined to help alleviate this issue. J. Kallfelz indicated that this option would be further examined.

Alex Vogt noted that once the new bridge is constructed the old bridge would be removed.

Mike Johnson, NMFS, asked if the same type of pier would be used in the channel of the river. J. Kallfelz responded that since the number of piers would be reduced, the new structure will span the entire river and a pier within the channel would not be necessary.

Rich Roach, ACOE, tentatively confirmed SPGP assuming that the project was reviewed at a later date when the wetlands have been delineated and the extent of the proposed impacts have been determined.

Mike Johnson, NMFS, asked what would happen to the old pier within the channel of the river. A. Vogt and J. Kallfelz responded that this pier would be removed along with the rest of the structure. J. Evans added that although removal of the old bridge is expected, it still needs to be reviewed with the NHDHR to determine the historic importance of the structure.