BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCE: April 20, 2011
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Bob Landry
Dave Smith
Jon Evans
Kevin Nyhan
Steve Liakos
Tom Jameson

Federal Highway Administration
Jamie Sikora

Army Corps of Engineers
Rich Roach

EPA
Mark Kern

NHDES
Gino Infascelli

NH Fish and Game
Carol Henderson

NH Natural Heritage Bureau
Melissa Coppola

NH Office of Energy and Planning
Jennifer Gilbert

HEB Engineers
Jason Ross

CHA
Kevin Thatcher

McFarland-Johnson
Vicki Chase

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

PRESENTATIONS/ PROJECTS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:
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NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Finalization of March 16, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The March 16, 2011 meeting minutes were finalized.

Piermont, 16193 (non-Federal)

This project involves the replacement of the bridge that carries Barton Road over Eastman Brook in Piermont, NH. HEB Engineers presented an initial project review, including a review of the alternatives and the proposed wetland impacts.

- The existing bridge was closed by the Town at the recommendation of NHDOT. The bridge is one lane (16' wide) with a clear 26' span. The abutments are stone & concrete and are anchored to ledge on the western side of the stream. The bridge superstructure consists of steel stringers and a timber deck. There is no history of flooding at the site and calculations show that the existing bridge opening is adequate to handle the 100-year flood event without overtopping.
- The proposed bridge structure will have two lanes and have a clear span of 28'. There will be precast concrete footings on the east side of the stream and cast-in-place concrete footings on the west side. The bridge superstructure will be a precast concrete rigid frame. The wingwalls will be precast concrete blocks.
- A standard dredge and fill permit will be required by NHDES. There will be approximately 1500 s.f. of wetland impact. We have checked the NHB record and there are no rare species or exemplary natural communities in the area. The NHB File ID number is NHB11-0748.
- The bridge is considered a Tier 3 stream crossing. We believe that it is "Not Practible" to meet the NHDES Stream Crossing requirements for bridge span due to the large price associated with widening the span and the location of the bridge relative to NH Rt25C. We will be making the bridge wider than the existing structure. HEB will submit a request for an alternate design during the wetland application process. We will meet all of the General Considerations and the Specific Design Criteria as much as possible.
- The base flood width for the stream is approximately 45 feet based on observations of normal high water, downstream from the bridge.
- Gino Infascelli stated that upstream from the bridge site the stream passes through a 42"x69" pipe culvert. Downstream there is a 45' span bridge. He also stated that the alternate design will need to state specific dollar figures for how much the project will cost and how much of an increase it would be to adhere to the stream crossing regulations.
- Carol Henderson asked what time of year that the project will be constructed. Jason said that construction would occur in late summer or early fall. Carol stated that this is a stocked trout stream and asked about cofferdams. Jason said that temporary cofferdams would be constructed around the footings to prevent silt from entering the river. The main channel will remain open during construction.
- The project is OK for a SPGP.

- Rich Roach said that even though the project does not meet the strict standards of the stream crossing rules, if the NHDES approves the project, the Army Corps will be OK with it as well.
- Jason asked who makes the decision weather or not the alternate design will be approved. Gino said that HEB should have a pre-application meeting with NHDES to discuss the project. He thought that Craig Rene would be the one making the ultimate decision. Gino followed up the meeting with an e-mail stating that Sandi Mattfeldt is the NHDES inspector for the North Country.

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

Freedom, 15987 (non-Federal)

This project involves the replacement of the bridge that carries Ossipee Lake Road over Danforth Bay Outlet. HEB Engineers presented an initial project review, including a review of the alternatives and the proposed wetland impacts.

- The existing bridge is in poor condition. The bridge has two lanes (21' curb to curb) with an 18.5' clear span. The bridge, abutments, and wingwalls are all constructed of cast in place concrete. The bridge is located just west of a dangerous intersection on Ossipee Lake Road. There is no history of flooding and calculations show that the existing bridge opening is adequate to handle the 100-year flood event. The water surface elevation in this area is controlled by the dam at the outlet of Ossipee Lake. There is a lot of boat traffic under the bridge going between Lower Danforth Pond and Ossipee Lake.
- The proposed bridge structure will have two traffic lanes and two bike lanes. It will be 32' curb to curb and have a clear span of 20' which is wider than the existing structure. The new bridge will have precast concrete footings. The bridge superstructure will be a precast concrete rigid frame. The wingwalls will be precast concrete panels.
- A standard dredge and fill permit will be required by NHDES. There will be approximately 1000 s.f. of wetland impact. We have checked the NHB record and there are potential impacts to rare species or exemplary natural communities in the area. We have sent a check to NHB and are waiting for a response.
- The bridge is considered a Tier 3 stream crossing. We believe that it is "Not Practible" to meet the NHDES Stream Crossing requirements for bridge span due to the large price associated with widening the span. We will be making the bridge wider than the existing structure. HEB will submit a request for an alternate design during the wetland application process. We will meet all of the General Considerations and the Specific Design Criteria as much as possible.
- The base flood width for the stream is approximately 48 feet based on observations of normal high water, downstream from the bridge.
- Melissa Coppola asked if cofferdams will be used for this project. Jason answered yes; temporary cofferdams will be constructed around the footings to prevent silt from entering the waterway.
- Melissa asked if riprap will be used in the channel. Jason answered yes; stone fill will be placed only directly in front of the footings for protection. Natural streambed material,

excavated from in front of the existing footings and stockpiled on site, will be replaced on top of the stone fill to make a natural stream bottom.

- Melissa said that there is an endangered aquatic plant near this project site. She said that she will be in the area in the near future and will take a look at the stream.
- Carol Henderson asked if boat traffic will be restricted during construction. Jason answered that the waterway will remain open to boat traffic as much as possible.
- Carol asked what time of year the project would be constructed. Jason answered that it hasn't been determined yet, but it would likely be summer.
- Gino Infascelli stated that the waterway has been like this since the 1930's. He asked if we could look into widening the bridge opening so that a shelf could be constructed for small mammals to pass through. Jason said that he would look into it.
- Rich Roach asked what criteria was used to select a 20' wide bridge span. Jason said that hydraulic calculations were performed and it was determined that the existing 18.5' bridge span was wide enough to pass the 50 year and 100 year flood events. It was decided to widen the opening to an even 20' so that it would be a standard precast concrete bridge span.
- The project is OK for a SPGP.
- Carol Henderson asked if the 1000 s.f. of wetland impact included the material that will be excavated from the stream and stockpiled. Jason said yes; this material is just the soil that needs to be excavated in order to remove the old footings and install the new footings.
- Jason asked if the shoreland rules apply to this project. Kevin Nyhan said that they do apply and a shoreland application will need to be submitted. Impervious area in the right of way will need to be calculated just within the project limits. The drainage system will need to be specified. Tree counts are typically not required for this type of project.

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

Keene, X-A000(562), 14834

This project involves trail improvements along an 8,000 linear foot section of the existing Cheshire Rail Trail in Keene. Work begins at NH Routes 9/10/12 and continues to Whitcomb's Mill Road. The purpose of this project is to enhance the trail's utility as a pathway for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, snowmobiles, and cross-country skiers. Clough Harbor & Associates (CHA) presented an initial project review, including a review of the alternatives, impacts and mitigation.

Project Description: City of Keene plans to improve approximately 8000 feet of the abandoned rail bed of the Cheshire Railroad by doing minor grading and clearing, and adding a stable gravel surface. A small trailhead with limited parking will also be developed at the westerly end of the project, adjacent to Whitcomb's Mill Road.

Location: Between NH Route 9 and Whitcomb's Mill Road and crosses West Street, Bradford Road – refer to USGS sheet.

- The eastern 6500 feet of this segment of the trail is located on a fill as high as 50 feet +/- in places.

- Between Route 9 and Bradford Road it is bordered by residences on the north and a power line corridor on the south.
- West of Bradford Road the trail runs between lands owned by the Keene Country Club which maintains a golf course on both sides of the elevated trail bed.
- The most prominent feature in this section of the rail corridor is located a short distance west of Bradford Road. It is a Stone Arch Bridge used to cross the Ash Swamp Brook.
- The westerly 1500 feet of the project is in a cut section at the toe of West Hill. There it is bordered by the Keene Country Club on the north and south until it reaches the lands of Langdon Place (a privately owned assisted living/nursing home facility) on the north and a privately owned parcel on the south.

Prior Submissions: The following documents were submitted in advance of the meeting

- AIRF – Agenda Item Request form
- Cheshire r-t map – USGS quad showing location of project
- Soil Map – NRCS soil map
- USFW – US Fish & Wildlife review
- Onestop – One Stop Environmental database
- NHB - Natural Resource Bureau review
- 6(f) – LWCF review

History:

- Railroad was constructed in 1849
- Rail operations ceased in 1972 and rails, ties, signals, and most of the ballast was removed.
- The corridor was abandoned in 1983
- NHDOT purchased the right-of-way and it was placed under the care of the Bureau of Rail and Transit.

Current and Proposed Uses: The trail is and will be used by pedestrians, runners, bicyclists, equestrians, cross country skiers, snowshoers, and snowmobilers.

Proposed Improvements:

- Though minor grading will be completed, no soil will be removed from the trail corridor
- A 10 foot wide gravel surface centered on the existing trail
- 2 foot wide shoulders on each side
- Signage
- Gravel trailhead

Further Discussion:

The project falls just outside the trail exemption criteria per Alteration of Terrain rules due to the grading of shoulders to match the proposed surface improvements and minor drainage improvements in the western portion. The project has been discussed with NHDES staff regarding the possibility of a waiver due to the minimal impact of the project but a determination has not been made.

The issue of construction impacts over the existing stone arch bridge on Ash Swamp Brook was raised. No impacts to the bridge or brook are anticipated as construction in this area consists only

of minor regrading and placement of new surface on existing grade. The bridge is sufficiently wide to accommodate the construction and the existing surface is stabilized.

The issue of invasive plant species was raised relative to the trail corridor. The project was not screened for invasive species. CHA is working to have this task completed.

The issue of Cultural Resources review was raised. The project was presented to the Cultural Resources meeting on February 10, 2011 and received a finding of de minimis impact. See attached memo.

Due to the construction of the trailhead, it was stated that the project would not be eligible for a trail exclusion relative to a categorical exclusion for the project. CHA will remove the trailhead from the proposed project.

Agency File Numbers: Natural heritage: NHB10-2963

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

Portsmouth, NH – Kittery, ME, A000(911), 13678F

This project involves the replacement of the Memorial Bridge facility, which carries US Route 1 over Piscataqua River between Portsmouth, NH and Kittery, ME. The Department provided an update on the project status moving through the design-build process and sought input on permitting issues associated with this multi-state permit.

Kevin Nyhan began by providing a brief project history:

- DOT received TIGER II grant on 10/20/10
- Design-build (DB) approval on 12/20/10
- TIGER II grant threatened on 3/1/11
- NEPA classification on 3/17/11
- Initial Request for Proposal (RFP) on 3/17/11
- TIGER II funds obligated on 5/1/11
- Remainder of TIGER II funds eliminate on 5/15/11

The project will address structural deficiencies, decreased reliability of the liftspan, limited multimodal opportunities, location of the operator control house, and multiple piers under Scott Avenue. The project will be constructed under DB process. The DB team will be selected on 10/21/11, with construction from 7/2010 to 5/2014.

Kevin then discussed some of the highlights of the project and the commitments that were made to secure NEPA approval. The project constraints include historic districts in both Kittery and Portsmouth, arsenic in the soils, Piscataqua River and coastal wetlands, Floodplains Zones AE, Shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon, and eel grass.

Permits that will be needed include NHDES Wetlands, MEDEP Wetlands, Water Quality Cert., US Coast Guard Permit, ACOE permit(s), Shoreland, and a Coastal Zone Consistency Finding. After some discussion, R. Roach indicated that based on his conversation with his counterpart in Maine, the impacts in Maine would qualify for a ME SPGP, and the impacts in NH would quality for the NH SPGP.

The environmental commitments made include:

- Providing a shuttle service for pedestrians across the river during construction between Kittery and Portsmouth
- Development of construction BMPs
- A restriction on in-river work (unless behind cofferdams) from March 15th to November 15th
- Additional coordination with the resource agencies (including NOAA) once the DB contractor is selected and the exact construction type is known
- Soils management plan

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 9/15/2004, 9/21/2005, 5/16/2007, 1/16/2008, 11/19/2008, 3/17/2010, 10/20/2010