

# **BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT**

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

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** August 17, 2005

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

**ATTENDED BY:**

**NHDOT**

Charlie Hood  
Marc Laurin  
Mike Dugas  
Chris Waszczuk  
Bill Hauser  
Craig Drouin  
Robert Decker  
Mark Hemmerlein  
Trent Zanes  
Don Lyford  
Bob Landry  
John Kallfelz  
Alex Vogt  
Mark Whittemore  
Matt Hill  
Cathy Goodmen

**Federal Highway  
Administration**  
Bill O'Donnell

**Army Corps of Engineers**  
Rich Roach  
Paul Minkin

**NH Wetlands Bureau**  
Gino Infascelli

**NH Fish and Game  
Department**  
Bill Ingham

**EPA**

Mark Kern

**NH Coastal Program**

Chris Williams

**DES**

Becky Ohler

**VHB**

Jake Tinus  
Peter Walker

**Smart Asso.**

Bill Grace

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

**Newington-Dover, NHS-0271(037), 11238**

This meeting was held to brief Resource Agencies on the preliminary mitigation package being considered by NHDOT for proposed wetland impacts from the Newington to Dover Spaulding Turnpike project.

Chris Waszczuk reviewed the previous RAM held in July. He reminded attendees that at the last meeting the various project alternatives were reviewed, wetland impacts in each of the communities were explained, and the method used to catalog each of the parcels presented was reviewed. Now each of the parcels had been reviewed in the field. Chris introduced Jake Tinus, VHB Environmental Scientist, to explain the components of the mitigation package.

Jake began by providing handouts with updated project information including maps of Newington and Dover and a table with the results of field review summarized. He explained that the project was estimated to impact 17.0 to 18.0 acres of wetland impact based on current design, with approximately 5.0 acres occurring in Dover and 10.0 acres in Newington. In addition, the mitigation package would compensate for the 0.67 acres occurring from the Exit 4 Interim Improvements project, 1.3 acres from a previous bridge project in Madbury, and 0.5 acre from the Dover Park and Ride project. Jake stated that it was NHDOT's desire to mitigate for wetland impacts proportionally in Newington and Dover.

Using a large aerial map showing each of the proposed areas, Jake briefly explained the major features and attributes of each of the parcels. He said that the basic strategy was to provide preservation in Dover and restoration/preservation in Newington. Jake explained that many of the parcels that were reviewed in the field were initially reviewed for the study for 19 coastal communities that was produced several years ago for the New Hampshire Estuaries Project. A GIS analysis also pointed to several areas for consideration. Others

were identified through consultations with the Dover and Newington Conservation Commissions, the Nature Conservancy, and others familiar with the two communities.

Jake provided the following synopses for each of the sites that were determined to be high priority.

## **DOVER**

### **DR-8 – Blackwater Brook – Preservation**

- Identified as high priority by City of Dover
- Consists of over 200 acres of diverse significant aquatic and non-aquatic habitat
- NHDOT would protect between 50 to 60 acres

### **DR-4 – Bellamy River – Preservation**

- Approximately 30 acres of mostly river floodplain red maple forest (wetland/upland), with hickory variant tree strata and vernal pool complexes
- Abuts existing conservation land, with remaining portions surrounded by residential development

### **DR-11 – Johnson Creek – Preservation**

- Approximately 65 acres of diverse wetland community
- Surrounded by adjacent residential development and agricultural land

### **Varney Brook Culverts – Restoration**

- Twin 6-foot culverts under highway; granite block headwalls/tidal gate provide restrictions
- Invasive *Phragmites australis* stands along stream in a few locations
- Small site, surrounded by residences and agricultural activities

## **NEWINGTON**

### **NN-8/NN-4/Railway & Flagstone Brooks – Restoration**

- Interconnected sites described collectively.
- Railway Brook was originally straightened and damned for flood control.
- In Flagstone Brook, down cut and eroded banks suggest a dynamic system.
- Flagstone Brook provides good fish habitat with fish observed ~400 feet upstream.
- Much of stream originally flowed east (Pickering Brook) but was diverted into Railway/Flagstone.
- System presents excellent opportunity for restoration.
- Drive-in theatre property could be linked to stream restoration for possible creation/restoration.

### **NN-1 – McIntyre Brook – Restoration**

- Straightened and damned system similar to Railway Brook.
- Possible restoration, but potential conflict with residences in the area.

### **Paul Brook – Restoration**

- Appears to be in good health except for western upper reaches, therefore low priority.

### **Unnamed Perennial Stream – Restoration**

- Highly urbanized stream would benefit most from improved storm water treatment and good housekeeping measures in watershed

### **Thomas Family Tracts/Fabyan Point South – Preservation**

- The Nature Conservancy land preservation parcels south of Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge
- Not yet investigated in the field – recently brought to team's attention.

### **Coastal Ponds – Restoration**

- Lower pond is salt water influenced and appears to have adequate tidal flushing.
- Upper pond is largely freshwater marsh with little open water; now providing water quality functions; unless dredged to recreate open water – little benefit/cost.

After concluding his presentation of each of the potential mitigation sites, Jake opened the floor to questions and comments. He indicated that the next step would be for the resource agencies to see some of the more important parcels in the field.

### **QUESTION & ANSWERS**

Bill Ingham asked how improvements/restoration would affect Railway Brook. Jake explained that because the stream is so heavily altered, restoration activities would do much to improve the aquatic habitat. He said that the stream system would have to be looked at closer to get a better idea of the organisms that are found there, as well as to better understand the hydrodynamics of the stream before any restoration could be considered.

Mark Kern questioned whether or not The Nature Conservancy had been contacted. Jake indicated that he had corresponded by email and would be getting additional information on some of the parcels currently being considered.

Mark Kern suggested that Paul Minkin be included in the process to review the sites in the field, especially the Railway Brook/Flagstone Brook restoration. He questioned whether potential secondary impacts were being addressed. Chris Waszczuk explained the project would result in very slight growth and that NHDOT is not anticipating the need to mitigate for this growth.

Pete Walker elaborated on the potential stream restoration project. He explained that the site presents a unique opportunity to do a restoration project, in that it has one owner (Pease Development Authority), and has the potential to be the largest restoration project in the state at about 3,000 linear feet. Bill Ingham and Bill Neidermyer commented that the inclusion of restoration would be an important component of the mitigation package.

### **Bath-Lisbon, MGS-STP-NHS-F-X-T-0331(081), 10425**

This project was initiated several years ago and after going through the public involvement process and going to a public hearing, bypasses of Bath, Bath Upper Village and Lisbon were proposed. Since that time, based on input from the towns and the identification of poor soils along the bypass locations in Bath, the Department is now investigating primarily upgrades along the US Route 302 corridor, with consideration of a bypass of Bath Upper Village. The Department's goal is to balance impacts to the natural and cultural landscapes, while satisfying both towns.

John Kalfelz discussed the project limits along US Route 302. The project begins at Lower Bath Village near the NH Route 112 intersection, and continues northerly approximately 8.5 miles through Lisbon to a point just east of the intersection with NH Route 117. The project will upgrade the existing road, and fix minor deficiencies, which include vertical and horizontal curves of the roadway and addressing Cate's Corner. The new Cate's Corner alignment reduces wetland impacts from 2.8 acres to 1.8 acres at this location. Overall wetland impacts, with all upgrades along the roadway were approximately 3.9 acres, with the modification of the Cate's Corner alignment reducing that to 2.9 acres. Alternatives that included bypass portions have approximately 7-8 acres of impact, depending upon the bypass alignment.

Bill Grace detailed proposed wetland mitigation, which includes a hemlock swamp under development pressure. Preserving this area would be approximately 22 acres of preservation. In addition, there are several creation/restoration sites near Cate's Corner that could be used for mitigation.

Rich Roach suggested that the Department review two properties in Littleton, near the Home Depot. *Subsequent to this meeting, the Department reviewed this suggestion. The subject properties were being sold for approximately \$1M, which was too expensive.*

Mark Kern expressed concern for the location of the mitigation sites near Cate's Corner being too close to the roadway. He asked about water quality enhancements provided by the mitigation proposed. Bill Grace responded that the opportunity existed to preserve these sites and they are under pressure for development.

#### **Chesterfield, STP-X-000S(448), 13597**

This project involved construction a bypass around the Brattleboro row housing along the shores of Spofford Lake. The project would include a two-lane facility that would begin at old County Road and would reconnect with NH Route 63 near North Shore Road. The road would consist of a 11-4 typical laid out on Limited Access Right of Way. The environmental benefits would include better stormwater management and protection of landlocked parcels on the western side of the proposed bypass. A visually altered photograph was presented that showed the impacts to the viewscape from the lake. The group did not object to the proposal and in light of the recent flooding issues along NH Route 63 though it would be a benefit. They also like the fact that the traffic was being moved away from the lake. The ACOE indicated that this project would qualify for a SPGP.

#### **Hanover, 13935**

This project involved replacement of the bridge that carries NH Route 10 over Mink Brook. The bridge would be essentially replaced in-kind with the same 12-10 roadway typical and a equal or greater bridge span. There would be some minor drainage modifications. The group did not object to the proposal and the ACOE indicated the project would qualify for a SPGP.

#### **Windham, STP-TE-X-000S(343), 13113**

C. Goodmen and M. Hill presented the widening of Lowell Road in Windham. This project will change the existing roadway from 12-12 with no shoulders, to 4-11-11-4 for pedestrian and bicycle safety, from the intersection of Lowell Road at NH Route 111, south, to just south of the intersection with NH Route 111A. There will be minor wetland impacts along the road, associated with slope work and replacement of a 4-foot diameter culvert carrying Tributary Brook under the road. This will be replaced with a box culvert to increase waterway flow and help alleviate flooding which is common in this area. No one objected to the project as proposed and it was agreed that it would qualify for the ACOE State Programmatic General Permit.

#### **Belmont, STP-000S(279), 12792**

Alex Vogt discussed this project, which is located at the NH Route 106/ NH Route 140 intersection. This intersection will be advanced to add turning lanes with existing signals. The lack of turning lanes and appropriate turning radii causes safety problems. It will be included in a future resurfacing program. All work falls within the Concord-Laconia, 10672 project proposed corridor right-of-way. There will be several wetland impacts, which include a stream that is carried through a five-foot pipe under NH Route 106. Rich Roach okayed the project under the State's Programmatic General Permit.

**Derry-Londonderry, IM-0931(201), 13065**

*No Minutes Prepared. For information on this project, contact either Chris Waszczuk at 271-2171 or Marc Laurin at 271-3226.*