BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCE: September 21, 2011
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Carol Niewola
Chris Carucci
Jason Tremblay
Joshua Lafond
Kevin Nyhan
Laurel Pushee
Stephen Langevin
Stephen Liakos

Army Corps of Engineers
Rich Roach

NHDES
Gino Infascelli
Lori Sommer

NH Fish and Game
Carol Henderson

EPA
Mark Kern

NH Natural Heritage Bureau
Melissa Coppola

Hoyle Tanner & Associates
Matthew Low
Audrey Beaulac

Oak Hill Env. Services
Daniel Geiger

CLD Engineers
JoAnn Fryer

Stoney Ridge Env.
Tracy Tarr

Kleinfelder/SEA
Michael Croteau

Headwaters Hydrology
Sean Sweeney

Gale Associates
Colleen Maillhoux
Erik Strand

Nashua Airport Authority
Royce Rankin

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

PRESENTATIONS/ PROJECTS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:
(minutes on subsequent pages)

Finalization of August 17, 2011 Meeting Minutes 2
Winchester-Swanzey, DPR-BRF-X-0111(005), 12906 2
Lebanon, X-A000(235), 13558A 3
Alton, 20403 (non-Federal) 4
Nashua Airport Improvements, SBG 12-02-2009 6
Stratford, X-A001(002), 15866 7

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

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Finalization of August 17, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Carol Henderson inquired as to whether her comments on the draft minutes were received and included in the final version of the minutes. *Following the meeting it was confirmed that C. Henderson's comments on the August minutes were received and incorporated.* The August 17, 2011 meeting minutes were finalized.

Winchester-Swanzey, DPR-BRF-X-0111(005), 12906

This project proposes to replace the bridge that carries NH Route 10 over the Ashuelot River (152/181). The new bridge will be located adjacent to the existing bridge on the downstream side. A gravel parking area is proposed on the upstream side, adjacent to the existing bridge off Westport Village Road.

Jason Tremblay presented an update of the project that proposes to replace the existing bridge that was built in 1935. J. Tremblay mentioned that the proposed bridge is slightly wider than the original bridge and the proposed bridge length is 225 ft. The impacts to the channel and banks are proposed at 325 lf on the southern portion and 250 lf on the northern portion, making channel impacts 575 lf total. Proposed permanent channel impacts are approximately 4,600 ft^2 and the permanent bank impacts (stone rip rap) are approximately 19,000 ft^2. Also mentioned, were the shoreland impacts within the CSPA buffer zones as follows: Impacts within the 50 ft buffer - 0.2 acres, impacts within the 150 ft buffer – 0.96 acres, impacts within the 250 ft buffer – 1.42 acres.

Gino Infascelli inquired about why there was so much stone being used along the banks for this project, especially since the area seemed well vegetated and naturally stable. Jason explained that some of the impacts proposed were to make the slope more accommodating for people to carry boats to the water from the proposed gravel parking area, and that some of the stone was to stabilize a few locations along the bank where run off and a drainage outlet had caused some slope erosion. Laurel Pushee mentioned that the car top access and gravel parking area was requested by the Ashuelot Rivers Local Advisory Committee (ARLAC) and that they were aware of the impacts. They had also, requested that the DOT grade out or make the rip rap leading down to the river from the access parking area more manageable for people to use which did increase the amount of stone being proposed.

Rich Roach also asked about the stone impacts, wondering why the impacts stopped where they did other than for the access point, and inquired about the stabilization required. Jason indicated that there was a drainage area on the northeastern side of the current bridge and that this area of the bank had been eroding and would require some armoring especially since the intent is to perpetuate the existing drainage patterns and flow characteristics as they exist today. The other impacts would just be to taper in from these areas as well as some sections to protect the new structure. Carol Henderson asked whether it would be possible to be left alone and not disturb some of this area, and asked what the channel impacts were in relation to. R. Roach, J. Tremblay & L. Pushee explained that the impacts would occur during construction anyways, but some

reduction could possibly be considered temporary construction impacts rather than permanent impacts, and the only difference would be how the area is stabilized once completed.

C. Henderson inquired about the NHNHB search results indicating that she noted these should be updated. L. Pushee stated that the 2010 NHNHB search did contain a sensitive plant species that had not been noted on the July 2008 database search, and that the species would not be impacted by the proposed plans. A new search for this year had not been completed; L Pushee will look into updating this.

Kevin Nyhan asked about the project in regards to meeting stream-crossing rules, and inquired whether an assessment had been completed. L. Pushee responded by saying that at the time when wetland delineations were being completed, the stream-crossing rules had just been released and the project had not been on the radar for completing an assessment. She indicated that this would be completed, if necessary, before the permit application was sent.

The anticipated project will require both a shoreland and major impact wetlands permit. Wildlife benching at or below the ordinary high water mark was requested by NH DES. R. Roach indicated that the project would qualify for coverage under the NH Programmatic General Permit, assuming NHDES requirements could be met.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 8/19/2009, and 3/17/2010.

Lebanon, X-A000(235), 13558A

Matt Low began the presentation by summarizing the status of the project

The project status is:
- Preliminary (50%) plans will be submitted soon
- Permit applications are being prepared and include:
    - AoT
    - Shoreland Permit by Notification
    - Standard Dredge and Fill
    - Also, a non-programmatic CE is being prepared

At the February 16, 2011 meeting, one issue was brought up:

- Carol Henderson from NH Fish and Game was concerned that the long bridge structure may impede animal passage due to the extended absence of light.

Hoyle, Tanner has since retained the services of Dan Geiger of Oak Hill Environmental to perform several services, including preparation of the CE and Standard Dredge and Fill Permit and associated environmental studies and investigations.

M. Low introduced D. Geiger to explain his findings with regard to animal movements in the project area and other environmental aspects of interest.

D. Geiger explained that to address C. Henderson's concern over animal movements, a comprehensive site evaluation was performed. Oak Hill Environmental Staff visited the site for 3 full days, 1 full night and 2 other partial dusk and dawn visits. During these visits, they documented species of wildlife in the project area as well as their prevailing movement patterns. Wildlife species in the area consist of skunk, raccoon, deer, red fox, and groundhog. D. Geiger indicated that some evidence of travel was present near the bridge location, but most evidence was south of the project in a wetland area.

D. Geiger also informed the group that a S1 plant species was discovered near the project site, the "stickseed". A S1 form was previously provided to the Natural Heritage Bureau, but additional copies were handed out to the attendees. Stickseed is a biennial plant species that appears to establish itself at the edge of wooded areas, such as the railroad for this project. Eighty-eight percent of the identified clusters would not be impacted by this project.

D. Geiger asked if there were any concerns regarding wildlife passage or protection of the stickseed. C. Henderson questioned why an "open" bridge could not be constructed. M. Low explained that the geometry of the project, both horizontal and vertical, as well as the NH Route 12A skew to the railroad make it impracticable. This has been evaluated in the past. C. Henderson asked if light could be introduced within the bridge to make it more attractive to animal passage. R. Roach mentioned the "critter crossing" at Manchester Airport. M. Low described that the only place to allow light would be on the easterly/southerly end of the bridge, and would only be about 50 feet from the end, leaving another 200 feet or so in the dark. D. Geiger reaffirmed that the passage through the bridge is a dead-end for animals due to the cyclone fencing and lack of vegetative cover in the rail yard.

Melissa Coppola suggested a meeting with D. Geiger to see if any of the existing stickseed clusters could be avoided or designed around. D. Geiger will contact M. Coppola to set up this meeting. M. Low suggested that he would prefer a "pre-construction" survey and global protection solutions rather than the introduction of revised designs, additional retaining walls or steeper slopes.

L. Sommer asked if mitigation for wetlands has been discussed. M. Low mentioned that at the February 16, 2011 meeting L. Sommer had suggested in-lieu payment.

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

Alton, 20403 (non-Federal)

Tracy Tarr, Stoney Ridge Environmental, explained that tropical Storm Irene led to the partial collapse of the road at the existing Reed Road culvert location. The existing crossing consists of twin 93-inch x 70-inch metal culverts and services West Alton Brook. The Town has taken measures to brace the deteriorating culverts to minimize risk of further damage. However, traffic is currently limited to small passenger cars on one side of the road. This crossing is the only access point for 25 families and regular oil/gas deliveries and school bus access is restricted. The NHDOT has rated this crossing as a "critical emergency".

The existing structures pass the 50-year storm (without the DOT required freeboard). The project team has considered three alternatives and is proposing an 18-foot span precast rigid frame to both improve public safety and address environmental considerations. This proposed design meets the 100-year storm without overtopping, is greater than 1.2 times the average bankfull width, and includes a simulated natural bottom to improve aquatic passage. The project includes a temporary bridge (out of wetland jurisdiction) and the project will incorporate a bypass pipe if necessary.

Initial Environmental Review Summary

There are no NHB records of rare species or exemplary communities and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NH Fish and Game Department (Nongame Program) have no comments. The NH DHR has issued a determination that "no historic properties will be affected" and there are no impaired waters or NH Wildlife Action Plan Tier 1-3 habitats in the vicinity of the project. Due to the critical emergency status of the project, the NHDES has granted an expedited review upon submittal.

Project Schedule

1. Wetland Permit Application & Environmental Review – Short Form submitted next week
2. Advertise Date – October 3, 2011
3. Bridge construction start – late October
4. Substantially complete by Christmas – paving next spring
    - Alternate if issues arise in schedule – Phase 1 complete by Christmas, Phase 2 in spring

Gino Infascelli asked about the size of the downstream structure. JoAnn Fryer indicated that the downstream structure has similar capacity to the proposed structure.

Rich Roach indicated that the project might be exempt from Section 404 permitting, but would easily qualify under the NH PGP. He asked about the anticipated NHDES turn-around time and requested a copy of the NHDES permit and plans when they are available. Tracy Tarr indicated that copies would be provided to him.

Kevin Nyhan indicated that an Environmental Review – Short Form should be submitted, but that a full Categorical Exclusion submittal was not required.

None of the natural resource agencies had any concerns.

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

Bradford, 15857 (non-Federal)

Sean Sweeney and Mike Croteau presented the project, which involves replacing an existing 33' span steel beam bridge which carries Breezy Hill Road over the Warner River with a new 70' span bridge and raising the northerly approach. A temporary bridge will be needed to maintain access to properties on the south side of the river during construction. The project is a NHDOT

Municipal Bridge Aid Project. NHDOT bridge inspection reports indicate the existing bridge was constructed in 1940.

Permanent and temporary wetland impacts totaling approximately 1,800 sf are anticipated with 1,400 sf of impact within the channel and 400 sf of impact to an emergent wetland bordering the river. The cumulative length of river bed and bank impacts is expected to be about 210'. Wetland and floodplain resources and river morphology were discussed. NHB has no records of rare species or exemplary natural communities near the project area and there are no vernal pools in the vicinity of the project. The stream type is E5 with a bankfull width of approximately 50' and average gradient of 0.1%. Beneath the bridge deck is proposed to be created a 50' wide bankfull channel and a 20' wide active floodplain surface between the north riverbank and north abutment. The floodplain would pass floodwaters and provide for wildlife passage. A minimum span of 110' would be needed to fully comply with the DES Stream Crossing Rules. The proposed 70' span would need to be permitted as an alternative design. A Shoreland Permit will also be needed for the project.

Bradford participates in the NFIP. The SFHA designation at the project site is Zone AE. A regulatory floodway has not been adopted. The Bradford floodplain development ordinance uses minimum federal floodplain management standards, which allow a maximum 1' rise in the 100-year flood stage. Hydraulic modeling of the proposed bridge indicates 100-year flood stages would decrease upstream of the bridge.

Melissa Coppola asked if portions of the floodplain forest would need to be cut to construct the temporary bridge. Sean Sweeney replied that approximately 10 mature trees would need to be cleared from the temporary bridge location currently planned on the upstream side of the existing bridge. M. Coppola asked if these could be replanted after the temporary bridge is removed. Sean Sweeney stated that replanting could be made a condition of the wetland permit.

Carol Henderson asked when construction was planned. Mike Croteau replied that Bridge Aid funds are obligated for 2018 but that the Town wants to have the design completed well in advance so that the project could proceed prior to that time if alternate funding sources become available.

Gino Infascelli asked what the existing and proposed bridge widths were. M. Croteau replied that the existing bridge is 16' rail-to-rail and that the proposed width is 24' rail-to-rail.

Mark Kern indicated that he saw no reasons why the project could not be authorized under the PGP. Lori Sommer indicated that compensatory wetland mitigation would not be required.

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

Nashua Airport Improvements, SBG 12-02-2009

Colleen Mailloux provided a brief update regarding the Airport Improvement Project at the Nashua Municipal Airport (the Airport). Due to delays in Federal funding, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has only recently issued the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant to

the NHDOT. Grant offers have been signed by the NHDOT and the Airport and the project is scheduled to be on the Governor and Council agenda on September 28, 2011. The mitigation payment to the Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) fund will be made approximately 30 days after Governor and Council approval. Because this is approaching the Dredge and Fill permit deadline for payment, the Airport will submit a letter to NHDES requesting an extension of 45 days for this payment.

In November 2010, NHB provided a memorandum outlining their requirements for mitigation for impacts to rare plant species. There were concerns at the time that the requested mitigation measures would exceed the FAA grant amount. Construction bids for the overall Airport project came in lower than anticipated, so that the complete mitigation package requested by NHB will be met.

All mitigation measures will be implemented prior to construction.

Erik Strand discussed the construction schedule. Pre-construction meetings will be scheduled in the next month, and some preliminary construction efforts are slated to take place over the winter. No impacts to resource areas will occur until major construction efforts begin in Spring 2012.

This project was most recently presented on the following dates: 4/18/2007, 8/19/2009, 1/20/2010, & 3/17/2010.

Stratford, X-A001(002), 15866

Chris Carucci presented this project, which involves pavement, guardrail, and drainage improvements along a 2 mile segment of US Route 3 in Stratford. The limits of work are from the intersection of Tetrault Road, north to the Columbia town line.

Work involves:

- Reclaim and add pavement, approx 6” to 8” raise in grade,
- Slope work to correct roadway drop off,
- Guardrail replacement – remove cable rail, replace / extend beam rail and add terminal units and platforms.
- Drainage – repair or replace storm drain pipes, catch basins and underdrain in-kind.
- Add new basins
- Add 300 LF of 36” wide x 4’ deep aggregate underdrain
- Work will be within existing ROW and within original roadway template

This section of roadway was originally constructed as follows:

- 1939 – Sta 106+50 (just N. of RxR yard) to Columbia Town Line (ROW 66’ wide)
- 1958 – N. Stratford to Sta 106+50 (ROW 100’ wide)

There are several delineated wetlands along the corridor, as well as three perennial streams. Work at the streams consists primarily of headwall repairs or addition of end sections. One larger structure that outlets on the opposite side of the railroad will be let as a separate contract.

Total wetland impacts are approximately 700 sf of permanent impacts, and 200 sf of temporary impacts. Linear impacts total 60’.

Total Shoreland impacts are approximately 2 acres. There is very little clearing, only a few hundred sf. Most of the impact is for regrading existing grass slopes. (*Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that the clearing would total approximately 1,275 sf.)*

There are two locations of invasive species (Type II), one of which is within the work limits. This will be treated pursuant to the NHDOT manual of BMPs for Roadside Invasive Plants.

The DOT recently updated NHB review. *Although there was a record for dwarf wedgemussel, follow-up correspondence with the USF&WS indicated that none are known to occur this far up the Connecticut River.*

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