

**Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition**  
**January 25, 2007**  
**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**@ MDEP, Canco Road, Portland**

**2007 Upcoming Meetings of the PRWC Board**

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>March 22<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>May 24<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>July 26<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>September 27<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>December 6<sup>th</sup></b>

**In attendance:** Forrest Bell-PRW, Jeff Varricchione-DEP, Jim Stahlnecker- DEP, Joe Anderson - Americorps, Megan Wooster – Americorps, Matt Craig – CBEP, Dusti Faucher – FOPR, Dennis Hawkes – Windham Land Trust, Merrie Cartwright – NOAA Fisheries, Mike Doan - FOCB, Brooks More – City of Westbrook, Betty Williams-CCSWCD, Diane Gould-EPA, Matt Craig- CBEP, Will Plumley- FOPR, John MacKinnon, Windham Town Council, Lois Winter, USF&W, Erin Crowley – Contractor, Tom Jewell – Portland Trails, Fred Dillon - PRW

**I. Introductions** – Will led a round of introductions.

**II. Cumberland Mills Fish Passage**

- Dusti discussed the October 19th letter from FOPR and American Rivers to Commissioner Martin of Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) requesting that he “initiate proceedings to consider construction... of fishways” for the spillways at Cumberland Mills dam on the Presumpscot R. Since 1870, IF & W has had jurisdiction over non-hydropower dams above the head of tide. Their authority to require fish passage has never been used in an adjudicatory procedure. In the past, the owners of the first dam in a river have typically installed fish passage voluntarily. The requested hearing was granted last Friday. FOPR will be getting a letter soon indicating when the pre-hearing meeting will be. There will be a Public Hearing and an adjudicatory ‘trial type’ hearing. Both should take 5 – 6 days. The expected outcome will be a requirement for fish passage. SAPPI will likely go to the Maine Judicial Court and then Maine Supreme Court. The appeal process may take a couple of years.

Successful installation of fish passage will have a huge impact on the river, bringing fish up into a five-mile stretch that is good habitat for fish. Also, sufficient numbers of fish (blueback herring) would trigger the requirements in the federal license for fish passage at Mallison and Little Falls dams. Historically, the river provided important habitat for large numbers of shad, herring, alewives, even salmon. This could be true again.

Dam removal is beyond what the law requires. The best solution for fish passage would clearly be removal of the Cumberland Mills dam. SAPPI may ultimately choose that route. The issue is complicated by a hot water discharge on the river

side. SAPPI uses a gravity-fed pond for process water. The cost for passage at both channels would be around 2 million dollars. Passage on one channel and blocking the other would still be pricey, perhaps 1 to 1 ½ million dollars because of the complexity of the site. Fish lifts have more capacity than ladders but there is a crowding issue. The hydropower dams all have a Phase 2 that kicks in when certain numbers of fish are reached. Cumberland Mills is about 15 feet high as are most of the dams.

Letters of support went in from EPA and FOCB. There is an opportunity to weigh in with letters to the editor as well as letters to Commissioner Martin. Dusti noted that the setting the hearing date should generate public interest. Since the hearing was granted, it is clear that we have met the three requirements for a hearing:

- 1- There is sufficient fish habitat above the dam
- 2- The fish will be able to reach the habitat
- 3- The fish were there in the past, before the dam.

While these requirements have been met, the law says fish passage **may be required** if the conditions are met.

SAPPI will likely argue that they cannot afford fish passage based on their Capital Improvements budget. The law does not say anything about economic constraints. SAPPI could have begun putting away money from their Capital Improvement budget in 1996 when this issue was raised. They have planned poorly.

### III. PWI Grant Update

- Matt and Will discussed the website development. Will has been working with Jeff White, a designer, on a logo for the website. He noted that in designing the logo and website, he wrote a “creative brief” to guide him. He considered:

Target audience: People who want to realize the greatest good for the human and ecological communities that share the resources of the watershed.

Who are they: They tend to be members of other organizations, such as non-profits, town boards, agencies.

What are we: A regional collaboration of organizations.

Our character: We foster collaboration, are open, caring, informal, provide information, seek balanced solutions

Our audience is busy and we want them to know we don't usurp projects or authority. We foster collaboration, mutual support and advance ideas with a broad audience of stakeholders.

The goal of the website is to get others to use and support the coalition so that it has a voluntary benefit for all.

Further discussion of the website was postponed until later in the meeting when Erin Crowley would display the draft website.

**IV. 2007 Structure** –Will facilitated an open discussion of 2007 initiatives and organizational structure and took notes on flip charts, transcribed below:

➤ **2007 Initiatives**

- PWI [we are in year 2]
- Fish Assemblage Study [report due later this year]
- Group PRWC canoe trip – enjoy the river together
- Introduce PRWC to Municipal Gov't & increase involvement
- Plan for post-PWI action
- Plan for good momentum in components of PWI
- Address fundraising – establish a committee
- Greater collaboration of open space protection
- Event to define & promote initiatives (participation beyond just PRWC members)
- Support the River Bond [effort to bring money to municipalities to restore riverfronts and habitat]
- More involvement from business
- Utilize NPS brownfield funding [available to municipalities that have received brownfields funding in the past] for trails & Saccarappa Island
- Goal: Trail Connectivity through Westbrook [work with multiple organizations to create a network of trails]
- Sponsor macroinvertebrate species study in the river & tribs
- Incorporate as 501 © 3
- Expand watershed signage program – tribs & watershed
- Work with municipalities to improve riparian protection strategies
- Develop list of members & areas of interest to loop people in on projects & info
- Revisit sections of the Plan in meetings
- Begin to update the Plan

➤ **Org Structure**

Committees or **Not?**

-Project teams instead – as needed

501 © 3 or not?

-Takes more resources [e.g., tax forms, paperwork to incorporate]

-Allows more fundraising [leverage resources]

Will noted that the Executive Committee will digest these ideas and come back with some recommendations.

### III. Return to the website discussion

- Erin (who is under contract to help with website development) showed the draft opening page of the website on screen. Content on the PWI will be a major component of the web page. Lois volunteered to join the web page team (Erin, Matt, Will) and share her past experience.

Jeff noted that the font size on the left menu should be larger. Pop-outs should be limited to just 5 or 6 main headings. Lois suggested that a visually attractive opening page would lure people in and that text should be minimized. Forrest suggested a map was needed to show people where the watershed is. Will noted that the webpage will have links to other organizations. Matt mentioned that the PWI project will provide extensive original material. The website will be on the USM server but we will want to reserve a good domain name. The target for completion of the website is the end of June (when Erin is leaving).

### VI. Project Updates

- The *Guide to the Presumpscot* is on the fast track. Fred has spoken with the original authors and they are fine with revising the document. Something should be ready by the next meeting. The guide will have a link on the PRW website to the PRWC website.
- Suva site – The Suvas are a family on Pope Road (on the Presumpscot River) whose land is eroding, threatening their driveway. After much discussion, it appears that the erosion may be a natural process. Will has contacted Barry Schepp (Woodward and Curran) who has agreed to look at the site and share his thoughts in the spring.
- Fish Assemblage Study- Work on the report is ongoing. We should see something from Chris Yoder in March. There will be more field work in the spring.

### VII. Open Forum

- Dusti discussed the River Bond. Environmental organizations have proposed to the legislature a 25 million dollar bond for riverfront economic development, trails, etc. This is on the fast track and should go into the bond package in the summer. Non-profit organizations and towns can apply. There is a large match requirement. The details are still being worked out. Contact Dusti and she will put you in touch with John Burrows, Trout Unlimited. Possible projects that could be funded include dam removal, mill repair, recreational access. This would be like Lands for Maine's Future for rivers.
- John asked what is the economic potential of the river without the dam? Will noted that this was discussed during the planning phase but a credible number that everyone agreed upon couldn't be reached.
- Matt mentioned that he and Betty are looking for large scale restoration projects (public or Land Trust efforts) for the PWI. Please let them know if you have ideas for sites.
- Forrest noted that there is a huge amount of open space along the river that could be protected.

- Lois reported that her office is putting together revised coverage of conservation lands, especially in the lower 15 towns in the watershed. CBEP has provided \$7,000. Contact Bob Houston at USF&W for more information. The Casco Bay Watershed Coalition (land trusts) is meeting tonight (1/25)
- Proactive land protection opportunities – Tom mentioned that Portland Trails is now trying to contact land owners in the area. Dennis noted that in Windham the current project is 600 acres on Swett Road, and that 18 acres was recently donated on Otter Brook. Matt noted that the report on the activities of the YCC has been completed and that the local land trusts should know that the YCC is a resource available to them.
- Betty reported that the large culvert discussed at the December meeting (Laskey Rd in Windham) is being replaced now.
- Will mentioned the hanging culvert at Riverside Golf Course. The PWI tree planting there is looking great.
- Forrest and Fred noted that PRW hopes to work again with the King Middle School on adopt-a-stream. They will work with the Waynflete School on surveying the West Branch of the Piscataqua.
- Will asked if anyone who is not on the e-mail distribution list would let him know.
- Will asked for feedback on today's well-attended meeting. The comments (from the flip chart) are summarized below:

**Meeting Review**

+ [positive]	Δ [things to change]
Attendance Good info on Cumberland Mills Use of flip charts Facilitation Seeing website - presentation	Snacks Natural light/windows Location – meet elsewhere Meet in a variety of places in the watershed

**VIII. Next Meeting**

- March 22<sup>nd</sup>, **place to be announced.**