

Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
December 2, 2010
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
@Frog and Turtle, Westbrook

**2011 Upcoming Meetings of the PRWC
Board**

To Be Determined

The first hour of the meeting was a festive celebration of IF & W's final order for fish passage at Cumberland Mills and completion of the Presumpscot Watershed Initiative, with PRWC members and invited guests.

In attendance at the discussion session: Matt Craig - CBEP, Will Plumley - FOPR, Diane Gould – EPA, Merrie Cartwright – NOAA Fisheries, Rob Sanford (FOPR Board), Greg Altnauer (FOPR Board) and son Max, Michael Shaughnessy (FOPR Board)

Group Discussion: Recognizing that few PRWC members were in attendance but Friends of the Presumpscot River was well-represented, Will suggested we explore the question: “How can FOPR and PRWC work together to support each other around fisheries, stewardship and wildlife habitat issues?” acknowledging that there is considerable overlap in the missions of the two organizations.

It was suggested that PRWC could host a facilitated meeting to talk about what groups are doing in the watershed. Some important questions are: What are the emerging issues that are not in the Plan? Should we update the Plan? What issues need our attention? It was agreed that if neither PRWC nor FOPR does anything further, the chances of fish passage actually being installed at Cumberland Mills are questionable. So- who needs to do what?

Fish Passage

Merrie noted that while ensuring SAPPI installs fish passage is the state's responsibility, NGOs need to prod things along. Rob added that we should be present at any meeting on the details of fish passage. All agreed that we need a voice at the table and be on the record that we want to be involved and copied in on any correspondence, notice of any meetings between SAPPI and the state. The date for Cumberland fish passage is spring 2013.

The River as an Asset

The question was raised: should we get involved in getting more people using the river? PRWC could take on a broader river-oriented mandate, e.g., ecotourism. A broader membership would be good. Will noted that the Northern Forest Canoe trail approach includes stewardship, ecotourism, connecting people with place. Michael noted that the economic development side is important. Connecting the river with quality of life and attracting businesses makes sense. Matt asked what PRWC will look like in 5 years if it focused exclusively on the river. He sees a dwindling energy in the PRWC and reduced capacity in PRW to monitor. Should we focus on improvements - counting fish and eagles, getting more people to use the river, hold community events?

Merrie noted that the running of the alewives is celebrated in other areas. Michael suggested that if there is a build up in political expectation, there will be follow through to endear people to the river. Matt suggested a smelt fishing demo. Will noted that we could integrate annual/natural cycles in the river with organized events. Max suggested that we take advantage of the fact that every spring people count fish. We should have an award for those who count the peak of the fish run. Merrie thought the Coalition could give a stewardship award, perhaps raising funds by taking bets on the fish peak. Rob added that we need to bring in broader interests, more people into the PRWC. Get businesses and cities/towns to partner in the effort. Merrie noted that we do already have some town involvement, mostly in information gathering- but that is not the same as a decree from the Town Council. How do we get the cities more involved?

Rob suggested that we get students involved. His students are required to do a 120 hour internship. They could do a video, do class projects, field trips. A viewing station for fish was suggested as a great addition to the fish passage. Kids would be able to see and enjoy it. It would add an educational component of the required fish passage.

Next Steps on Fish Passage

Discussion returned to the need to stay involved in the fish passage issue. The Friends have historically taken the lead on oversight. Will noted that American Rivers has been involved but that FOPR is “carrying the ball”. Matt suggested that USF&W still has a role and the Stew Fefer would be a good person to follow up with – he will contact Stew.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.