

Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
March 25, 2010
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
@GMRI, Portland

2010 Upcoming Meetings of the PRWC Board

May 27, 2010
July 22, 2010
September 23, 2010
December 2, 2010

In attendance: Matt Craig - CBEP, Will Plumley - FOPR, Jeff Varricchione - DEP, Diane Gould – EPA, Betty Williams, CCSWCD, Cindy Montanez - Americorps, Merrie Cartwright – NOAA Fisheries. Mary Cerullo – FOCB, Karen Wilson – USM, Cayce Dalton - FB Environmental, Forrest Bell – PRLT, Richard Curtis – PRLT, Brooks Moore – Town of Windham, Landis Hudson – Maine Rivers

1. Introductions: Will led a round of introductions.

2. Maine Rivers Briefing – Landis gave a powerpoint presentation on Maine Rivers, a statewide advocacy organization whose goal is the ecological health of Maine’s rivers. They restore native fish, support grassroots efforts, and advocate for free-flowing rivers. They are working in the Mousam and Kennebeck watersheds. The Mousam has more dams for its length than other Maine rivers and has no fish passage, Last weekend they had a charette that included a walk along the Mousam. Maine Rivers has helped to purchase land. Their fish work includes education on alewives and eels. Maine has 12 diadromous species. Eels are catadromous.

Maine Rivers is working to support restoration in the Sebasticook. Large numbers of alewives are returning since the removal of the Edwards Dam and Ft. Halifax. They hope to sponsor a film fest to bring people together to see the barriers and non-functional culverts, etc. Another area they are working on is the Royal River. They are meeting Wednesday to discuss a study underway on fish passage issues. More information is posted on the Yarmouth’s and the Maine Rivers website. Maine Rivers is part of the Interagency Working Group on Connectivity along with DEP, DOT, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Nature Conservancy and others. Dams and culverts are the cause of fragmentation of habitat. Landis showed maps that display the extent of sea run fish habitat on the Mousam and Sebasticook with and without fish passage.

Questions included whether Maine Rivers is involved with the New Meadows causeway project. Landis said no, but would be interested to learn more. Landis was asked who is doing the Yarmouth study. The answer is Stantec. She was asked whether atlantic salmon are indigenous on the river. She replied that they were there but there likely isn’t habitat for them now. The concern now is with alewives.

3 and 4. Monitoring Plan: Proposal and work session to refine the plan and move into implementation, DEP role – Will gave a brief introduction to the reclassification project, noting that we are looking to the 2012 decision opportunity to reclassify the lower river from Westbrook down from C to B to lock in higher water quality as we welcome fish back to river when there is fish passage at the Westbrook dam. FOCB is working on the estuary, aiming at reclassification from SC to SB. Bureau will hear these as two separate cases. Karen Wilson’s class did a project to learn what DEP is doing and

what would need to be done to reclassify the river. They presented their report to us last May, with Dave Courtemanch from DEP in attendance to respond to questions.

Matt led a Powerpoint presentation on Casey Dalton's efforts to develop a draft sampling plan and QAPP (Quality Assurance Program Plan) to support the reclassification project. The mainstem of the river is C downstream of Saccarappa. We hope to build on the water quality data collected via sondes during the Presumpscot Watershed Initiative (PWI). The QAPP has been submitted to DEP and EPA for review and comments. The issues we need to discuss regarding the sampling plan are:

Sampling dates

Locations

Methods

Rotation frequency

Calibration/download

Sonde technician

Dates- Cayce explained a graph of PWI sonde data downstream of the falls showing 3 years of dissolved oxygen data versus the week of the year. The PWI data showed the lowest DO is between weeks 27 – 31 (5 weeks). The river met Class B standards (8 ppm) for 3 years at this site. If we put in the sonde weeks 27 – 32 we will capture the period representative of the lowest DO (June 20- Aug 15). The recommendation was to deploy the sonde between June 20th and August 15th. Jeff noted that DEP wants 7Q10 (the seven-day, consecutive low flow with a ten year return frequency; the lowest stream flow for seven consecutive days that would be expected to occur once in ten years). Hence, the longer we keep the sondes out, the better. Cayce noted we could monitor flows and put them out at lowest flows. We would have to ask Dave Courtemanch and Barry Mower how DEP would feel about that. Merrie wondered if aeration from the falls would affect DO.

Locations- Matt showed a map of proposed deployment locations for 3 sondes.

1- in impoundment below Saccarappa

2- Rt 302/Mill Brook in the mixing area

3 –below the Piscataqua confluence

We will have access to CBEP's sondes for a few months for deployment in the Presumpscot. FOCB will not have a sonde near Walton Park but in a more saline area. Karen noted that she has a friend in impoundment area who could watch the sonde. Merrie noted that doing outreach to neighbors might be helpful. Will noted that Leon Tsomides had sent us DEP information on 2 sites below Westbrook Mill where they will be sampling macroinvertebrates again (done previously 2 years ago). The question was raised whether we should coordinate our sites with the DEP sampling sites. Jeff noted that DO isn't the key issue for the Presumpscot classification. The macroinvertebrates are the issue. The sonde 2 site will be the most important. Karen noted we need to know where DEP's site is (above or below Mill Brook) and ask DEP where they want the sonde. It was noted that DEP's second sonde is further upstream than our suggested Sonde 3 site. Again, we should ask DEP where they want Sonde 3 or ask DEP for an additional rock bag.

Cayce asked what we should do if we see serious DO problems. Matt noted the issue of “aspirational reclassification” and that we would likely propose reclassification even if we are not in attainment. Will felt we should keep the sondes in for a full season and see a full profile. There is lots of oxygenation from the Saccarappa Falls so the impoundment may be OK. Jeff encouraged us to make proposals to DEP and get feedback.

Forrest asked about bacteria. PRW notes that the numbers go up after a rain. Jeff proposed we ask DEP about the bacteria issue.

Karen suggested we propose 2 options to DEP for Sonde 3 and if DEP if they would put in another rock basket. It was agreed to place the sondes in the same locations as the DEP rock baskets and place sonde 3 at the confluence or in the impoundment (based on DEP’s response).

Deployment – Cayce and Matt explained that sondes are long metal cylinders with probes and internal electronics. For PWI they were used in shallow tribs, placed in metal tubes anchored on docks. For this work, they need to be placed in deeper water out in the river.

Possible approaches:

A- Drop off bridge or canoe with a mushroom anchor or float with cables/ropes securing to shore.

B-Strap to a tombstone on the bottom – Problem is they might be buried in sediment.

C-Vertical deployment: strap to a bridge footing and sink into a PVC pipe.

Option A is recommended. Karen will talk to Charlie Hobson at DOT about the bridge option. Maybe we could use a heavier anchor and no security cable. Karen will provide contact information for a Penobscot team she knows that used fish detectors deployed in the river. She expressed concern that if secured to shore they won’t stay in place and debris will catch in the line. Jeff suggested asking DEP about the method they used for sondes. Karen suggested on a dock near her friend’s house in the impoundment is a possibility. Will wondered how others have tackled this problem elsewhere. It was noted that this project is difficult because we can’t afford an expensive mooring ball and we have to use a canoe. Landis offered to post the question and get answers from a broad audience. The question was raised whether turbulence at the bridge is a concern.

Rotation/calibration frequency- The recommendation is to rotate every 4 weeks, download the data, and deploy a new sonde. Remove after 8 weeks.

Sonde technician - Options (budget concerns)-

-FBE perhaps calibrates and helps deploy then others help with other tasks

-USM urban streams interns (not available until next year)

-PRW coordinator takes on added responsibilities

-CBEP staff (training needed)

-FBE staff

Will encouraged us to do the study for the intended two years to give DEP the most data we can. He gave us a heads up that the Sebago Lake Level Management Plan will likely result in a release to bring the lake down to drought year approximation this year.

The budget for the project this year is approximately \$10,000 with another \$10,000 in July. Should we use our entire budget. Will noted that our other two major projects (Sebago to the Sea Trail and the Land Conservation Vision, Values, and Priorities don't need funds at this time) so we should target our funds to this effort.

Cayce suggested FBE could calculate 7Q10 and deploy the sondes when needed. Karen noted we should see what calibration costs then see what we can afford to do. Her students may be available. In any case, it was agreed that we need someone experienced for the first deployment. The question was raised whether FBE could do the whole project for \$10,000. Forrest said yes. Students could still assist. Betty noted that the Highland Lake folks have a boat and we could coordinate with Keith Williams about using it.

Matt and others will follow-up on these suggestions and work with DEP to complete the project design and QAPP.

Other issues:

Mary asked for the name of a civil engineer to assist a homeowner with stormwater issues in Falmouth. Mary suggested they speak to Chris Baldwin at CCSWCD.

The next meeting will be May 27, 2010, location to be announced.