

**Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
Board Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2005
4:00- 6:00 p.m.
@ MDEP, Canco Road, Portland**

Next Meetings: 4:00 – 6:00 (note: new start time)

Thursday	April 28th
Thursday	June 23rd
Thursday	August 25th
Thursday	October 27th

In attendance: Mary Cerullo-FOCB, Richard Curtis-GSLRLT, Will Plumley-FOPR, Forrest Bell-PRW, Jeff Varricchione-DEP, Don Kale-DEP, Betty Williams-CCSWCD, Diane Gould-EPA, Matt Craig- CBEP, Erin Crowley –DEP Americorps Volunteer, Fred Dillon, PRW, Lois Winter, USFWS, Irwin Novak, USM

PRWC Business Items

Cumulative Impacts Committee Sign Proposal

Betty noted that we could order one-sided metal signs for \$40.00, although we would probably want wider signs than the example she showed the group. It was suggested that we may be able to negotiate a discount with a local sign company (Bailey Signs, Fastsign, the Signery). The proposal from the Cumulative Impacts committee suggested 6 large 2-sided metal signs with the watershed name and tributary name (the proposal and sign locations are described in detail in the December minutes). After discussion, it was agreed that it is preferable to have a sign on each side of the road for drive-by visibility, hence a total of 12 one-sided signs at road crossings. Betty offered to check with the towns and DOT regarding permission to erect the signs. Lois suggested that creating a template would reduce the price. Erin agreed to work with the committee and get information on pricing and a template. Lois asked whether it would make sense to wait until we have a logo to include on the signs. The group agreed by consensus to ask the Cumulative Impacts team to work with Erin to make recommendations about branding and signage. Don agreed to contact a Pennsylvania website with signs designed to raise the visibility of streams. Betty agreed to send out website addresses to the group. The Rivernetwork site is:

http://www.rivernetwork.org/interact/index.cfm?doc_id=856

It was agreed that our goal is to have signs in place by the August 25th meeting.

Ideas for Expenditure of PRWC Funds

Forrest noted that we have approximately \$17,000, \$7,000 left from this year and \$10,000 in 2005 funds. Last year we funded two small signage projects, Mill Brook Fish Friends and equipment and a display board for PRW. It was agreed that funding projects should be a rolling agenda item.

Possible projects:

- It was noted that the NEA report (lower Presumpscot River restoration site inventory) is due out in two weeks. Betty suggested that we keep Mill Brook in

mind. We need to find out how the town of Westbrook feels. Don agreed to follow up with the town. We can use the inventory database to identify restoration sites in Mill Brook.

- Lois suggested that we see if the Highland Lake fish passage project needs additional funds.
- Karen had asked that we consider Riverside Golf Course. PRW held golf course workshops last year regarding Audubon International Certification. Several courses have signed on (Valhalla, Riverside and Sable Oaks). Riverside has 7,000 feet of river frontage. Washing equipment is the biggest issue due to polluted runoff. Valhalla is building a washing pad. Buffering is also an important issue. The city of Portland (an MS4 community) may be motivated to provide 50/50 match for improvements at Riverside. Forrest will look into this.

Targeted Watershed Initiative Grants (TWIG)

Forrest and Matt will take the lead on responding to the TWIG request for proposals. They noted that a total of \$10 million is available nationally this year. Fortunately the guidelines are similar to last year, mainly focused on on-the-ground water quality improvement. We had very positive feedback from EPA Region 1 in the past, so we plan to work with last year's proposal, with some revisions. Matt noted that we will request \$750,000 this year rather than the \$950,000 we asked for last year. The proposal is due to EPA May 19th, and to DEP about a month earlier. We will know in summer whether we will be funded. If funded, work would start in October, 2005 and continue for two years. Both FOCB and CCSWCD had projects included in last year's proposal. We will check in with our partners about this year's proposed tasks. Betty suggested that we pay for Forrest's time (40 hours at \$30/hour = \$1200). The group agreed unanimously to provide the funding.

Gravel Pit Discussion

Will introduced Irwin Novak from the Geology Dept. at USM. He teaches glacial geology at the University. Irwin discussed the proliferation of gravel pits in the Presumpscot River watershed. He noted that DEP maintains files of gravel pits (he distributed a map showing gravel pit locations as red dots). He noted that many pits (abandoned or under 10 acres), including Grondin Pit and Busky Pit in Gorham, are not on the state maps. There is a need to go through town records and aerial photos (2004 digital flights are available) to identify active and inactive pits. When gravel is removed, recharge is not an issue but there is a danger of hydrocarbon failures. Urban sprawl results in removing open space. We should compare gravel pits and urban sprawl. Irwin would like us to fund a student to pull the data together. He will get a proposal to us before the next meeting. It would be helpful to know the impact of the pits and trends in acreage. Lois offered Bob Houston's services for GIS assistance as needed. Irwin noted that USM has a GIS lab and GIS library. Irwin volunteered to do a geology talk for Presumpscot River tours.

Emerging Threats to the River/Watershed – Revisiting the Plan

Will noted that it has been three years since we finished the Plan. He suggested that rather than holding committee meetings, we use the time to brainstorm on important

issues that we should be addressing. The following issues were discussed. The group was asked to vote for their top three issues. The votes are recorded below. The top items (**in bold**) will be added to the next agenda.

- 0 votes - Proliferation of gravel pits
- **12 votes** –Development (growing much faster than preserving)/smart growth – Grow Smart Maine
- **5 votes** -Impervious surface, low-impact development
- 3 votes -Need to involve land use planners in the Steering Committee
- 0 votes -Need to involve GPCOG
- 3 votes -Cumberland Mills leverage resulting from ME Supreme Court ruling
- 1 vote -Mapping risks/threats
- 0 votes -Invasive species (milfoil in the river, NEA study)
- **5 votes** -Strengthen communication with non-attendees
- **8 votes** -Annual meeting (schedule/set agenda, target planners, legislators, conservation commissioners, other policy-makers)
- 1 vote -Impact of agriculture

It was agreed that someone from **Grow Smart Maine** should be asked to speak to us at the next meeting. Fred will follow up.

In the discussion that followed the vote, it was noted that impervious surface data on the towns will be available soon from DEP. On the subject of attendance, Will noted that some non-attendees may feel that our meetings are not relevant. Betty felt that once we complete our planning, our activities will become clearer. Don offered to pull together a menu of ongoing activities in the watershed that provide synergy with the Plan and that we should be supporting. Will suggested that the role of our committees should be to act as experts on their part of the Plan and to identify gaps where no activity is occurring.

Presumpscot Tour

Forrest noted that the University Coalition of Water Resources (made up of 90 universities) will meet at the Holiday Inn by the Bay July 11 – 14. The group contacted Karen Young about arranging a tour of the Presumpscot for the attendees. They will provide buses and lunch for a 4-hour tour. Suggested stops were:

- Audubon Gilsland Farm
- Smelt Hill Dam site
- Highland Lake fish ladder
- Highland Lake DEP/CCSWCD sites: Tamara is a speaker at the conference, could be a guide at a Highland Lake site
- Cumberland Mills Dam/Riverwalk in Westbrook
- Gambo Dam - Geology talk by Professor Novak

Lois noted that the tour could serve as a dry-run/model for future tours aimed at targeted policy-makers, planners, etc. Diane suggested that we need to know what our costs

would be for future tours. It was noted that some towns have vans that we may be able to use.

Forrest will be the main contact with the UCOWR. Jeff, Betty, Don and Lois offered to help. This small group will meet to discuss the tour further.

Wrap-Up

The April 28th agenda should include:

-Discussion of the top items from our vote:

- Development/smart growth
- Impervious surfaces/low impact development
- Strengthening communication with non-attendees
- Annual meeting

-Presentation from Smart Growth Maine

-Projects that need funding:

- Mill Brook –Don Kale
- Highland Lake fish passage- Lois
- Riverside golf course – Forrest
- Other worthwhile projects going on in the watershed – Don

-UCOWR tour update

Other possible items- Report from signage committee, discussion of Irwin Novak's proposal (if he submits one before the meeting)

There was a suggestion that our committees should meet on the alternate months (when the Steering Committee is not meeting).