



RIVERS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
29 Hazen Drive, P.O. Box 95, Concord, NH 03302-0095
phone: 603-271-2959

RMAC MEETING MINUTES

January 7, 2022, 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Online Meeting

Members Present

Michele L. Tremblay, Chair
Larry Spencer, Vice Chair
Peter Bowman
Jennifer Gilbert
Mark Hemmerlein
Christopher Hodgdon
John Magee
Frederick McNeill
Madeleine Mineau
Robert Roseen
Ruth Ward
Donald Ware

Representing

Conservation Community
NH Association of Conservation Comm.
Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources
Director, Office of Strategic Initiatives
Commissioner, NHDOT
NH Fish & Game Commission
Executive Director, Fish & Game Dept.
Municipal Government
Granite State Hydropower Assoc.
Recreational Interests
Local River Management Advisory Comm.
Public Water Suppliers

Term

Dec. 28, 2023 V
Oct. 12, 2022 V
Indefinite NV
Indefinite NV
Indefinite NV
Sept. 28, 2021 V
Indefinite NV
Nov. 16, 2020 V
Jan. 5, 2024 V
Dec. 28, 2023 V
Sept. 5, 2022 V
Sept. 28, 2022 V

Members Absent

Victoria Bunker
Brian Eaton
Shawn Jasper, Comm.
Vacant
Vacant

Historical and Archeological Interests
Department of Safety
Dept. of Agr, Markets, & Food
Agricultural Community
NH Business and Industry Association

June 15, 2022 V
Indefinite NV
Indefinite NV
March 22, 2021 V
Sept. 28, 2019 V

NHDES Staff Present

Nisa Marks Rivers and Lakes Management and Protection Programs
Tracie Sales Rivers and Lakes Management and Protection Programs
Joseph Schmidl Instream Flow, Rivers Management and Protection Program

Guests

John Mullen Chair, Cochecho River Local Advisory Committee
Paige Wilson Lakes Region Planning Commission
Bill Bolton Chair, Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee

I. Welcome, Roll Call, and Brief Announcements

Chair Michele L. Tremblay called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm. Chair Tremblay asked members, staff, and guests to introduce themselves.

Chair Tremblay called a remote meeting under the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A:2 III(b), after learning that an in-person quorum would not be possible based on a snowstorm and factors personal to RMAC members that were expressed to her ahead of time. A physical location at the NHDES office was available for members and the public.

II. Acceptance of the Consent Agenda

- ***Fred McNeill moved to accept the Consent Agenda, consisting of the October 26, 2021 draft minutes and surplus land review DOT SLR Conway. The motioned was seconded by Don Ware and passed by unanimous voice vote.***

III. Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP) Relevant 2022 Legislation

Larry Spencer gave an overview of the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee’s January 6, 2022 meeting. The subcommittee considered bills pertinent to the resources specified in RSA 483 or to the function of the committee, including bills about changing quorum requirements and allowing remote meetings. The RMAC will file letters of testimony for bills where the Committee takes a position other than track or delete.

Support: HB1014, HB1071, SB257, SB342, SB344

Support with Amendment: HB1066, HB1195, SB322

Oppose: HB1167, HB1440, HB1620

Track: HB1073, HB1217, HB1227, HB1293, HB1316, HB1528, SB359, SB378

- ***Larry Spencer made a motion to adopt the legislative positions recommended by the RMAC Policy and Legislation Subcommittee at their January 6, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Madeleine Mineau and passed by unanimous voice vote.***

IV. RMAC Member Spotlight

Chris Hodgdon gave a presentation about the composition and duties of the Fish and Game Commission. The Commission oversees policies for the Fish and Game Department, and the Executive Director supervises department staff and operations. The Commission’s purview includes policies regarding the conservation, protection, and management of the state’s wildlife; development of the department’s 5-year strategic plans; acquisition, development, and maintenance of public access; public education about habitat, fisheries, and wildlife; and taking positions on legislation relevant to fish, wildlife, marine resources, and the department. The Commission also approves some types of dedicated funding for the department. Chris described that the Commission balances biological, technical, legal, financial, and social-political factors when making its decisions.

V. RMPP Program Updates

1. Tracie Sales provided an update on the Pemigewasset Campground. The RMAC previously reviewed a preliminary SLR to allow the owner to cross railroad tracks in order to access land for the campground’s expansion. Bill Bolton, Pemigewasset LAC Chair, emailed Tracie a month ago that owner of campground has put it up for sale and the expansion project will not occur.
2. Eight redevelopment options for the Hampton Liquor Stores on I-95 have been proposed, some of which include building a casino or hotel on the site. The Liquor Commission has requested Hampton rezone those areas. A public hearing will be held on January 19, 2022. Rob said that the news reported that Hampton had voted down the casino.

3. Darlene Forst, formerly the shorelands coordinator, has taken a new position as administrator of the Land Resources Management Bureau, working for Phil Trowbridge. Her former position has not yet been filled.
4. In response to Larry's request for an update on the LACs, Tracie described that some are having challenges meeting with the current surge in COVID-19. Some LACs have expressed a strong desire for being allowed to have virtual meetings, especially on larger rivers where members have long drives to meetings.

John Mullen, chair of the Cocheco LAC, shared that his LAC's small membership is challenging. He expressed that the in-person meeting requirement is burdensome for civic duties that are done on volunteer basis. His LAC often does not have a quorum at its meetings.

VI. RMAC Administrative Updates

1. Nisa Marks reminded Chris and Fred to submit membership renewal information.
2. Stewart Yeaton has resigned as the agriculture community's representative on the RMAC. Appointing organizations for this seat are the New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts, and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire. If any RMAC members know of someone who may be a good fit for the position, please reach out to Michele or staff.
3. Nisa reminded members to submit their 2022 financial disclosure forms to her or suzanne.e.beauchesne@des.nh.gov by January 21. Members can submit one form for all commissions that they sit on.

VII. RMAC Forum Transition

Tracie informed the RMAC that the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) is going to require that all web blogs or forums be discontinued due to security concerns. This will affect the RMAC and LMAC forums. New pages will be created on the NHDES website to replace the forums. Staff are in the early stages of learning about the forum migration and do not yet have additional information. Staff have requested that the transition occur outside of the legislative session. The next step is a meeting that will include Michele, the LMAC Chair, and staff.

Tracie asked members to describe how they currently use the forums. Michele described that she appreciates the existing quick turn-around time for posting materials like membership updates and meeting materials. Approximately half of members referenced the forum as the place they find meeting materials and the legislative spreadsheet. Chris and Rob emphasized that they find it helpful that past meeting materials are organized by meeting date. Jennifer mentioned that the map of designated rivers and associated LAC contact information is useful in her work on the floodplain program. Don and Mark refer to the forums to determine which reaches of which rivers have which designation status. Don also mentioned using it to find instream flow information, and that the New Hampshire Water Works Association also uses the map of river reaches. Several members mentioned using it to find contact information for RMAC members and LAC chairs. Larry refers people to the forum as a place to learn more about the work of the RMAC.

VIII. Instream Flow Update

Joe Schmidl presented a description of the work done in 2021 by the instream flow program and work they anticipate in 2022. Each designated river requires baseline data collection, development of protected instream flow (PISF) criteria, creation of a water management plan to achieve the PISF, and monitoring to track the effectiveness of and make adjustments to the management plan. A portion of the Lamprey River and the Souhegan River are already under management. The Cold, Warner, and Ashuelot rivers are under study to develop PISF criteria, with the Cold River's PISF criteria soon to be published.

For 2022, staff plan to collect baseline data on the Ammonoosuc, Ashuelot, Contoocook, Isinglass, upper Lamprey, Pemigewasset, and Warner rivers, with help from an EPA grant to acquire more dataloggers. Staff will evaluate the first round of long-term monitoring data for the Lamprey River. Contractors will work on the PISF studies for the Warner and Ashuelot rivers. Another year of long-term monitoring data will be collected on the Souhegan. The Warner River PISF criteria will be established, and drafting done on the Cold River's water management plan. Staff plan to conduct outreach events on several rivers.

At present, there are many gaps in streamflow gauging. Program staff are starting to install additional gauges. Streamflow measurement is uploaded to NHDES website. Once under management, flow data are collected continuously.

Madeleine asked about how the current extreme variability in water flows affects data collection. Joe described that the baseline data collection period is typically three years. Each subsequent monitoring period is three years, with eight years between monitoring periods.

Larry asked about funding and who is doing the ISF work. At present, Joe and Wayne are doing almost all of it. Michele recommended pursuing an AmeriCorps position. Rob recommended posting internships at UNH.

IX. State Land Mapping Joint Subcommittee Update

The State Land Mapping Joint Subcommittee met on January 3, 2022. The group aims to develop a statewide map layer of state-owned lands and conservation lands, with accompanying listed information. The subcommittee began work on a list of criteria to associate with each property to make it easier for the RMAC and LMAC to make recommendations on land disposals. Shane Bradt, Mark Hemmerlein, and Joe Schmidl are working on a sample map to show proof of concept. The subcommittee's next meeting is February 8, 2022.

X. LMAC-RMAC Joint Meeting: Topics and Timing

Michele solicited input from RMAC members on potential meeting topics. Suggestions included:

- An update on cyanobacteria blooms in New Hampshire
- The progress made by the state land mapping joint subcommittee
- Dam-related discussions, where dams are the intersection between lakes and rivers, including changing flood patterns
- Federal infrastructure funding regarding dam repair and removal
- Culverts: what funds are available for watershed-based plans, how to convene stakeholders to update culverts, climate change impacts and culvert updates, etc. DOT is working on asset mapping of culverts to assist in culvert project planning.
- Floodplain program overview. Jennifer Gilbert offered to present.

Madeleine mentioned there will be a lot of opportunity from federal infrastructure bill, through federal Department of Energy, for dam improvement, regardless of whether a power source or no. John pointed out that the same bill includes money through NOAA and USFWS for dam removal, when in wildlife interest.

XI. Member Comments

Larry provided an update on Livermore Falls project. The west side has been logistically challenging and is still in progress. Partners are still working on a new LWCF grant proposal to protect the oxbow area behind Plymouth skating arena. The Merrimack River Watershed Council has a partnership to do tree planting in riparian zones within the next two years.

XII. New Business and Action Item Review

1) New Business – none.

2) Action Item Review

Action Item	Leader	Supporter(s)	Target Date
Outreach to LMAC regarding joint meeting topics	Michele	Nisa	January 10, 2022
Complete financial disclosure forms and email to nisa.m.marks@des.nh.gov or suzanne.e.beauchesne@des.nh.gov	All members		By January 21, 2022
Recruitment to fill agricultural interests seat	Nisa	Michele	January 2022
Provide Joe with contact information for UNH internships	Rob		January 2022
2022 letters of testimony	Nisa	Michele	January – March 2022
Jennifer Gilbert to present next member spotlight	Jennifer		March/April 2022

3) Next Meeting and Agenda Items

Staff will poll to have a next meeting around the time of legislative crossover, March 31.

Potential future agenda items include: an update on the state lands mapping subcommittee; legislative updates; and an update on the RMAC forum transition.

The motion to adjourn was made by Ruth Ward and seconded by Fred McNeill. Chair Michele L. Tremblay thanked RMAC representatives for their attendance and participation, and adjourned the meeting at 3:01 pm.

Meeting summary prepared by Rivers Program staff.