

Penobscot River Science Steering Committee
Spring Meeting
June 9, 2008
University of Maine

Present: Aponte Clarke, Courtemanch, Daigle, Dressler, Hart, Kelley, Larsen, Lewis, Loftin, Royte, Schmitt, Snyder, Trial, Wilson, Wildman

1. Presentation by Lynne Lewis on studying the economic impacts of dam removal, and discussion of human dimensions. Lewis has two students working this summer on a survey of homeowners in the Penobscot valley, and is looking for suggestions for questions, etc. (is there information you'd like them to obtain as part of the survey?). Discussion followed.

2. Project update. The Trust is working towards exercising option before June 22 (when price increases), then have approximately 30 days to file permit applications (which include designs ("preliminary plans"/40 percent complete) for removing dam and constructing bypass at Howland). Draft applications (available on Trust's web site) went out for review to agencies, etc., with deadline for comments on June 6. Agencies have until June 18 to comment on designs. Technical Studies are also available from the Trust. Most critical at Howland, where approval is needed from state and town. Lot of work—geotechnical team out looking at proposed bypass area (and revising estimate of cost). Vote in Town of Howland June 10. Stantec recently collected additional bathymetry data from Veazie tailrace to Eddington Bend (in partnership with G. Zydlewski/sturgeon work); data were not previously collected due to unfavorable field conditions.

Public meetings required by DEP on Veazie and Great Works dam removals - June 17 and 18 @ 7:00 at Black Bear Inn.

Broad Area Announcement grant from NOAA (\$450,000) is paying for permitting work. Most of the \$9.55 million is going toward acquisition of dams, but there will be some extra funds available from the grant to pay for follow-up/supplemental studies. The Trust is working with NOAA and other agencies to identify future opportunities, such as Open Rivers Initiative, that if funded would be appropriate for dam removal phase.

3. Research updates—

Trial: 436 salmon have passed Veazie so far, the highest number by this date in over 30 years—run is early this year—don't know yet if trend will continue.

Trial and Wilson report that alewives came slightly early this year (Dresden, good run in St. Croix and St. George). Underwater videos have been placed in the Veazie fishway.

Royte: IBI work on the Penobscot with Yoder, Kulik – week of June 16—need volunteers. Hoping to resample in fall and continue with NOAA-TNC partnership grant.

Kelley: Open file reports will be available for surficial geology: Bangor, Veazie, Hermon, and Old Town 7.5 minute quads (on Maine Geological Survey Web site). Field work this summer for Pushaw, Kenduskeag, and Otter Chain Ponds.

Joe Zydlewski and Cyndy Loftin have a graduate student who is selecting streams for MDN study.

Snyder: Mostly on Narraguagus this summer (July), with Jed Wright and Greg Mackie, large woody debris additions. Early August, a few days in the Pleasant to do some reconnaissance for 2009-2010 seasons.

Royte: Mac Hunter and student starting in January, Charlie Todd, Jeff Wells are getting interest from Audubon and Calhoun student and Chris DeSorbo of BRI: pilot program this summer to try out bird sampling techniques. *Todd flew to look at osprey (being displaced along the river by eagles—with more food, can share space along the river). Daigle working on a poster and related articles on the project's benefits to birds.

Barnhardt (submitted after meeting): USGS/UMaine Geology Group (Barnhardt, Kelley, Belknap, and Brothers): Preliminary seafloor mapping (swath bathymetry, sidescan sonar, subbottom profiling) and coring have been completed in upper Penobscot Bay estuary. Additional sampling and geophysics are scheduled for this summer (Aug-Sept). Goal is to establish baseline information on geomorphology, geochemistry, and sedimentology of estuary prior to dam removal.

4. Framework Review: Reaffirmed decision to focus on broader review by a few reviewers. CS will draft text for the reviewers about the kind of "overall" review we are looking for: continuity, connections/integration between sections.

Trial will check with John to see if it fits in his schedule.

Jeff Duda: Elwha USGS. Josh willing to send to someone if no one else volunteers.

Collins can contact Pizzuto.

5. DSRRN: The PIs met on May 6. Karen has drafted an outline of the Web site map, and will distribute so people can comment. Wherever possible, site links to other information already available on the Web, but for example may contain more about ecosystem integration with diadromous species, since there is less information available on this topic.

Two meetings scheduled in the coming year: stakeholder meeting and first science meeting. There is some concern about "stakeholder fatigue" with all the activities going on in the watershed, and not wanting to repeat what has already been done. But want to get more marine people, alewife harvesters, guides in the upper watershed, etc. Looking for input. Discussed a number of ways to engage stakeholders to minimize fatigue and increase participation/meaningful exchange.

Q: What do we want from stakeholders?

--may get more honest feedback if non-scientists kept separate from scientists

--need to give incentives to participants

--may be better to go to them—less fatigue, better input, different way of doing things.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05.

--CS