

PUBLIC WATER ACCESS ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 6, 2017  
9:00 a.m. – NH Fish and Game Headquarters

Members Present: Thomas Quarles, Esq., Chairman (general public); Glenn Normandeau, NH Fish and Game (NHFG); B. David Bryan, (coastal interests); Rep. Chris Christensen; Gary Clark (general public); Bill Gegas, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources; Gene Porter, (power boat interests); Joseph Goodnough, NH Lakes Association (NHLAKES); Garret Graaskamp, (NHFG); Rep. Bob L’Heureux; Rebecca Martin, NH Dept of Transportation (DOT); Ronald Sowa, (hunting interests); Dick Smith, (fishing interests); Michele Tremblay, (river interests); Paul Van Blarigan, Governor’s Commission on Disabilities (GCD).

Members Absent: Timothy Dunleavy, Dept. of Safety (*excused*); Jim Gallagher, Dept of Environmental Services (DES), Senator Dan Innis; (*excused*); R. Andrew Robertson (non-motorized boating interests); Senator Ruth Ward, Ken Gallager, Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) (*excused*).

Audience Members: Betsey McNaughten, Land Agent, NH Fish & Game Department.

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**AGENDA ITEMS – [Note: Text in bold denotes action items or motions.]**

**MEETING CONVENED:**

Chairman Tom Quarles called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Chairman Quarles welcomed everyone to the meeting. He informed everyone that Ellen MacNeil, Administrative Secretary, recently left the department to work at another State agency. **It was suggested that a thank you note be sent to Ellen on behalf of the Public Water Access Advisory Board in appreciation of her great work over the years.**

He further reported that Joe Goodnough has been asked to be a board member of the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of NH. Joes explained that the Foundation is a charitable, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation whose stated purpose is to enhance, through private financial support, the critical conservation programs of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, so that people and wildlife will benefit for generations to come. Funding for projects and programs comes from private and corporate donations, memorial gifts, bequests, the annual NH Moose Permit Auction.

In addition, Chairman Quarles introduced Tanya Haskell, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director and the Fish & Game Commission. “We are thankful to have her here helping out.”

**1. Approval of May 1, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Representative L'Heureux moved to approve the May 1, 2017 minutes as written, Michele Tremblay seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved.

**2. Approval of September 11, 2017 Field Trip Minutes**

Gene Porter moved to approve the September 11, 2017 minutes, with the insertion of the word "lower" after the second sentence on page 1, Gary Clark seconded the motion. There were two abstentions (Rep. L'Heureux and Rebecca Martin). The motion carried.

**3. Follow Up from Field Trip – Henniker RTPW signage, Pennichuck possible access, Fish & Game Horace Lake stocking policy.**

Chairman Quarles reported that they found all the RTPW sites without issue & that no site cried out for immediate attention.

Chairman Quarles reported that he felt the real take away from the field trip was the need to get signage posted to indicate where roads to public water begin. He reported that he contacted Rebecca Martin of DOT, who indicated that the Bureau of Traffic had signs available. Without getting into the issue of who would place the signs, being that RTPW are state roads, the maintenance responsibility lies with the Towns. **He reported that he wanted to proceed slowly & stated that he would be recommending that the Town place the signs; however, he would have that conversation with a Selectman from Henniker he knows.**

Representative L'Heureux requested that any new signage being placed should be perpendicular to the roads, not parallel, as people are not able to see/read the signs while passing by.

Chairman Quarles reported that he asked Gene Porter to look into the possibility of access to the Merrimack River at Pennichuck Water Works. Gene reported that Pennichuck's property has lower banks than the Town's treatment plant, however, you are not able to put a ramp within 500 feet of water intakes and Pennichuck only owns 300 feet from the intake pipe. Chairman Quarles reported that the board would not be telling the town of Merrimack where to put their site, however, encouraging them to do what makes most sense and what's most economical. "The Town is very motivated about this and we should feel optimistic about them putting in some sort of trailer boat access."

Chairman Quarles reported that he asked Garret Graaskamp, Boat Access Coordinator, to look into Fish & Game's Horace Lake stocking policy. Garret reported that the Town's ramp at the east end of the lake is not a road to public waters. Fish & Game will not stock bodies of water if there is not adequate public access. If there is no way to get to a

waterbody, no stocking would take place. There is a bridge at the west end of the lake that theoretically provides fishing access. **Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries, informed Garret that he would be looking into the Horace Lake Stocking Policy in the next few months.**

Glenn Normandeau, Executive Director, stated, "I used to ice fish there throughout my childhood and it was a popular spot."

#### **4. Legislative Issues**

Chairman Quarles reported that there was previous discussion amongst the board to ask for a study committee on non-motorized boaters not paying anything into the access program. It is too late in the legislative process to submit any new LSR's this year. This topic will be addressed at a future meeting concerning options for the 2018/2019 legislative session.

Director Normandeau reported that Representative Manley has a bill in to charge a 9% rooms & meals tax to canoe & kayak rentals, which would go to the department. "I am not exactly sure as to how we would receive it at this point." In addition, Director Normandeau reported that there was discussion of another try at a decal/something similar that would benefit mostly search & rescue.

Joe Goodnough inquired as to whether there was any discussion/notion of people voluntarily adding a sticker to their kayak/canoe? It could catch on & encourage others to follow suit. Director Normandeau stated, "We can look into that, although it would still require some legislation."

Joe Goodnough informed everyone that the NH Lakes Association is watching a piece of legislation to increase dock length from 40 ft. to 50 ft., due to water levels going down in the fall & people having difficulty floating their boats. It is also suspected that the legislation is in response to wake boats, which people are now commonly buying. They want docks that are further out to float them.

Representative Christensen responded that the proposed bill's 10 ft. extension applies to temporary seasonal docks, and that you would still have to go through the permit process otherwise.

#### **5. Lake Sunapee – Wild Goose and Governor's Commission**

Chairman Quarles gave an overview of what's happened since the last PWAAB meeting. He reported that Representative Peter Hansen was present at the current meeting and offered him an opportunity to speak after his overview.

- October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Lake Sunapee Boat Access Development Commission. Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, Fish & Game Department, attended on behalf of Director Normandeau.
- In June, the legislature reviewed the capital budget and there was an issue with the NHFG's bonding request being too large, so the request failed. This put the whole project in doubt.
- August 28<sup>th</sup>, wetlands permit was expiring & DES regulations allow for a 1-time, 5-year renewal of a wetlands permit if DES agrees the permit meets certain criteria. Major wetlands projects have to be approved by G&C and that did happen in the past. The statute that calls for an extension of the wetlands permit is separate from the major projects section that requires G&C approval, however, DES has historically asked for G&C approval for extensions. DES made the finding that this project qualified for the wetland permit renewal and asked for G&C approval.
- Governor refused to put the permit renewal request on the G&C agenda.
- August 28<sup>th</sup>, a few sportsmen's groups and a few members of this committee, along with Sullivan County Sportsmen's Association, became plaintiffs in a lawsuit to ask a court to intervene and not let the permit expire.
- By Executive Order, The Lake Sunapee Boat Access Development Commission will study possible access sites on Lake Sunapee and report back to the Governor by March 1, 2018.
- Chairman Quarles reported that he spoke with the Chair of the Lake Sunapee Public Boat Access Development Commission (Neil Levesque) about whether the Wild Goose site was still under consideration to be an access site. The Chair Levesque informed him that it was, and that the general charge is to find the best solution for access to Lake Sunapee.

Representative Peter Hansen introduced a bill to appropriate money to Fish & Game to build the access facility at Wild Goose. "I introduced this bill for a few reasons, to address the manner in which it was handled, which I thought is not how we do business in New Hampshire, and the fact that I was confused about the funding. I don't know why we went the bonding route. I was told that it was not clear to the Capital Budget Committee that the federal government would be paying 75% of bond and project and that played a factor in the bond being rejected."

Director Normandeau responded that the bond was a way to fund the construction of the project with essentially a 20-year pay back. This would have allowed the department to build this project. He stated, "I saw this as a way to get the job done now & pay it back over time."

Chairman Quarles reported that the definition of public access was discussed at the October Lake Sunapee Public Boat Access Development Commission Meeting. Bill Gegas, Department of Natural & Cultural Resources stated, "From observation, a good number of the members on that commission were trying to wrap their heads around the definition of public access." He reported that Tom & Paul did a great job defining it.

Representative Hansen reported that 54% of Sunapee waterfront property tax bills are sent out of state.

Chairman Quarles stated, "That's where we are at right now. We will have to wait & see what progresses."

#### **6. DRED/DNCR-LWCF grants – Bill Gegas**

Bill reported that LWCF stands for Land & Water Conservation Fund, and that these funds come from the National Parks Service to the states for acquisition and development of public recreational property. The LWCF is funded by offshore gas/oil leasing fees and licensed through the Department of the Interior.

He reported that they were between grant rounds at this time. In the previous grant round, 8 projects were approved, 4 directly related to public water access. Two of those grants went to projects that the PWAAB has reviewed and supported:

- 1) Nissitissit River, Brookline – shorebank trail and accessible fishing pier.
- 2) Merrimack River, Nashua – reconstruction by the City of the Greeley Park boat ramp.

#### **7. Fish & Game's Pocket Ranger Mobil App – Jason Philippy**

Jason Philippy provided a brief power point presentation for the board informing them of the Pocket Ranger app. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, in partnership with Parks by Nature Network, has launched the official New Hampshire Fish & Wildlife Pocket Ranger® Smartphone App for iPhone and Android. This app was developed and published at no cost to the Fish & Game Department. You can find information on the app on the Fish & Game Website [www.wildlife.state.nh.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us), at the very bottom of the page click on "The Official NH Fish & Wildlife Guide Pocket Ranger".

#### **8. Franklin Pierce Lake – Hillsboro – Garret Graaskamp**

Garret Graaskamp reported that Fish & Game would not pursue a long term lease with the town to renovate the existing ramp on that site. The Town has internal funding from a bequest (trust fund) dedicated to maintaining the site for the public as a boat ramp.

## **9. Completed Pine River/Ossipee Lake Access – Garret Graaskamp**

Garret Graaskamp reported that the boat access project was finished this past June. Fish & Game installed a double ramp, seasonal dock & upgraded the parking. The dock is now ADA compliant. There was discussion as to shorebank homeowners being responsible for removing down trees from the channel of the Pine River, so that boats launching at the site can travel down the river to access Ossipee Lake.

## **10. Fish & Game Boat Access Site Rules – Garret Graaskamp**

Garret reported that he tried to keep the rules practical as way of supporting clear public understanding and straight forward enforcement at sites. A few wordsmithing recommendations were made to the rules for consideration.

The below items from the proposed agenda were not discussed due to time constraints and are deferred until next meeting.

- Fish & Game Draft 2016 Annual Report -Garret
- Fish & Game Project Update and Matrix - Garret
- Merrimack River, Litchfield – Proposed car top access – Gene Porter

### **New Business**

None at this time.

### **Old Business**

None at this time.

### **Public Comment**

None at this time.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m. Motion to adjourn was made by Representative L'Heureux and seconded by Joe Goodnough. The Board unanimously approved.

### **Next Meeting**

Next meeting is set for Thursday, **January 4, 2018, at NH Fish & Game HQ, East & West Conference Rooms**, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301 beginning at 9:00 a.m.