



Memphremagog Basin Water Quality Council

Thursday, November 2, 2023 9:00am - 11:00am

Attending: Beth Torpy, Meg Carter and Jess Colby, Ted Sedell, Gabryel Gianoni, Eric Pope, Sam Mayne, Kerry O'Brien, Doug Moron, Patrick Hurley, Ben Copans, Bill Dell'Isola, filling in for Karen Freeman

Meeting Minutes

Public Comment

- None

MWA Alternate Designation:

- MWA has proposed having Gabryel Gianoni to replace Mary pat as the MWA alternate. Doing lots of assessment and project development work with MWA. Ted Sedell motioned, Meg seconded to approve Gaby as the MWA alternate.
All voted in Favor - Patrick recused for MWA

Review and adoption of 9.14.23 BWQC minutes:

- **Sam Motioned, Kerry seconded to approve minutes as shared**

CWSP Program Updates:

- We recently hired a Clean Water Program Manager to oversee our work (CWSP and GLFC) in the basin. Nathanael Johns will start on November 29th. He most recently worked at the Orleans County NRCD as a Conservation Specialist. Prior to that, he was with NRCS in Newport and worked in Montana for the Farm Service Agency and the Gallatin County Conservation District. He has a Masters in Land Resources and Environmental Science from Montana State University. Nathanael and his wife live next to Bluffside Farms and he will mostly be working remotely from the basin. I will be sending an announcement out to partners; I wanted to connect with Sarah Damsell before I did which happened yesterday. Thanks to Ben for being a valuable member of the second interview team!
- MWA and OCNRCD are both approved as program managers, and NorthWoods as a contractor. Thank you all! A Master Agreement with MWA has been executed with an agreement with OCNRCD going to them this week. I think we should have a rolling process for accepting program manager applications that item is at the end of the agenda.
- The new Memphremagog Watershed Basin TBP was finalized in September.

Presentation and Discussion of Project Applications



- **Beatty Riparian Buffer Planting** - proposed planting a 35' buffer. Planted with shrubs in area that is brush hogged - focused on pollinator and bird habitat - a total of 0.5 acres 150 shrubs. Benefits are water quality stabilization, filtration, and wildlife and will connect with a buffer downstream. In addition, honeysuckle removal 0.36kg/yr. Doing upstream landowner outreach as well. Challenge with reed canary grass. Total costs are \$4,970 and all would be done in house due to this being a small project
- **Comes-O'Brien Floodplain/Stream Restoration** - on the same small tributary with the Beatty project. MWA is focusing on this to make an impact on this small stream and look to create some neighbor support. Private hobby farm - 30 cows - pastured in a very wet meadow with the stream that is eroding in a rapid way. Significant dredging and berming on the lower wetland before the stream goes into a cedar forest. 8 acres of the property being enrolled in CREP to fence out and provide an alternative water source. CREP paying for tree buffer. Probably was not a stream in the past so proposing to do a SGA analysis to implement a property sized culvert and restore to a more natural wetland system. There is an upstream farm contributing nutrients and NRCD is working with them. Looking for design funding. Total estimate of 9 kg/yr. of potential P reduction. Budget - asked for \$18,960 for the design, and an estimated \$50k for the implementation. Reporting - how do we plan to avoid double counting with CREP p reductions? CREP p reductions are tracked and accounted for though a separate and fixed process, so we would need to exclude this though p reduction calculations.
- **Velco Property Restoration and Gully Stabilization** - in Newport off Clyde Street. Gully stabilization project. Some clear-cutting upstream may have driven erosion which is now running alongside the VAST trail causing a lot of erosion. VAST may do some of this work in the fall and is working with a wetland ecologist. MWA is requesting funds for a more long-term solution. Also a trail washout causing lots of sediment on the VAST trail reaching the wetland and stream below. Several other VAST trail issues may also be looked into to determine if these can be connected into the wetlands and stream. There is a large gully off East Main St. and a small one near Clyde St. Design would look for treatment options. Looking at designing beaver dam analogs where there are historical beaver dams. P reduction - conservatively estimated at 1.5 acres going from low to moderate floodplain connectivity Estimated 1.17 kg and 6.5 kg p reduction for the gully at the VAST trail and near East Main Street. Total costs of \$8,716 for the design. Estimated total costs of implementation of \$30k with a target to implement in 2024. Velco is supportive of the project.
- **Valley Brook Restoration Phase 2-** proposing to design 5 culvert upgrades and buffer plantings. Huge amount of buffer planting. Privately owned road by Shippee - design a private crossing. Daylight buried culvert that ran under the barn. VAST replaced culvert with a bridge. McNamara - proposed NR improvements. Robert Dupres - supportive of improving Fish and Wildlife - improve buffers and woody structures. Holland town structure

that blew out in July and caused lots of damage and adjacent floodplain. Also considering a design for a private road fix just uphill from this culvert.

Doing design of wood additions on the main stem of Valley Brook. P reduction estimates are 42.5 kg - based on the conceptual design excluding the private road estimate. Have some initial culvert design estimates of \$50k for between a 70% to 100% design. May be able to get some fish passage funding. Will seek private contributions to offset the costs for culverts. Need to design before the fundraising can be done and the timing of culvert replacements may be spaced out over years. Design costs of \$72,900 with roughly \$700k for the total costs but this is uncertain due to potential costs for culverts and other funding that may be available. Culverts provide an important public safety benefit

- **Palin Farm Road Stream Channel Restoration-** MWA has put together a conceptual proposal and OCNRC is working directly with Nelson Farms. Proposed VAST trail culvert replacement. Stream has been ditched but looks to have been a cedar swamp previously. Enters an area near the barn with just limited buffer planting opportunities. Below the town culvert, there are some opportunities for BDAs to trap sediment and increase floodplain capacity. VAST culvert replacement will end farm access (reduce wetland tractor impacts). Working to get landowner support for the adjacent property. Final design estimates total \$80k in costs with \$12k of engineering costs. Total estimated p reduction of 17.6. Question about the VAST conversations with Steve Dalp – they are possibly going to replace the culvert with a timber bridge. Talked to Shannon and Sacha who will be engaged in permitting and AAFM was supportive.
- **Lacross Farm** - stepping back from the design presented at the last meeting to develop an alternatives analysis to identify the best approach for restoring this stream and removing the dam. Fitzgerald Engineering is pretty well equipped to set up a survey and would help to address uncertainty about redirecting a stream to its historical channel as it has started to stabilize. There is uncertainty around how the historical channel will respond to these flows after dam removal Costs - \$80 K for the dam removal with an approximate p removal of 13kg. Landowner has sold a portion of the property and while the property is for sale it is not clear that this will be sold in the near term and the landowner is supportive of continuing to move along with the project design and implementation if they still control the property.

Project Prioritization & Selection by BWQC

- **Beatty:** Sam and Kerry - motion to approve - approve all except MWA recusal
- **Comes:** Ted and Kerry motion to approve - approve all except MWA recusal
- **Velco property:** Ted Eric motion to approve - approve all except MWA recusal
- **Valley Brook:** - Kerry Ted motion to approve - approve all except MWA and Northwoods recusal
- **Palin Farm:** - Sam Kerry motion to approve - approve all except MWA and Ted recusal



- **LaCross Farm:** Patrick - Kerry motion to approve - approve all except Ted recusal

Project Pipeline Updates

- MWA is working on a project development effort on forested headwaters in upper Clyde and Barton. Several potential projects may be proposed through the block grant or formula grants. Ben encouraged MWA to consider the formula grant first if there is a significant P reduction potential.
- MWA and Fish and Wildlife have acquisitions moving forward - Bennett property in Bebee plain that has double digit P reduction potential
- OCNRCD has a possible project on Young property in Barton working on a RCE to be held through VRC with a 17 acre floodplain restoration opportunity with lots of gullies - pretty good P reduction potential - some challenges with getting landowner support
- LWAPS plugging along slowly so not sure if any projects will come up in the near term but some potential over the longer term.

Project Manager & Subcontractor RFQ's

- Karen Freeman will follow up with the group about timing of grant finalization

2024 Project Solicitation & Selection Schedule

- Schedule was reviewed and there were no comments. As Nathaniel is hired at the end of November, he should be able to support these efforts.

Ted motion and Eric second to adjourn. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:45

Minutes submitted by Ben Copans