

**Fish Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**March 22, 2018**

Approved by Committee April 3rd, 2018

**Location:** Due to inclement weather, the meeting was moved at 8:05 am from the Fishway to Crooker's home. The location of the new meeting place was posted on the swimming hole sign, along with an invitation for the public to attend.

**Participants:**

Committee members: Jay Crooker, Karl McLetchie, Slade Moore

Others: none

**New Business:**

1. Decision-making: This meeting marked the first business meeting of the Committee with its new members. The meeting began with a discussion of the Committee's decision-making process. All members agreed that a consensus approach would be used.
2. Leadership: McLetchie and Crooker volunteered for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Moore discussed some of the anticipated tasking of the Chair and Vice Chair, which based on past experience was likely to include: addressing the selectmen or other Town bodies as needed, ensuring hours expended are logged and categorized, submitting an Annual Report to the Town, ensuring equipment and materials needs are met and tracked, and ensuring that the Committee's fish passage procedures are implemented. Hours and types of work conducted are already tracked by Moore and he will provide the worksheet to members.
3. Fish Passage Procedures: The Committee discussed the lack of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for fish passage . The absence of an SOP has in the past led to confusion regarding responsibilities of Committee members and also undermines clarity on the type and timing of specific fish passage measures to implement each year. The Committee agreed to develop written "Fish Passage Procedures" that incorporate the most effective practices developed by past Committee members (e.g. Rick Poland) and notable refinements that over the past five years have led to marginally improved passage. The Procedures will be reviewed annually, but updated as needed to ensure the safety of people involved and to improve passage efficiency. Moore will provide technical expertise and knowledge of the Pemaquid alewife run to facilitate development of the Procedures.
4. Charter: The Committee discussed the lack of a Committee Charter, which means there is no written statement of Committee purpose, broad responsibilities, and description of more specific tasking. This is problematic for a few reasons. First, the Committee donated about 200 hours of time last year, despite being severely understaffed. Much of those hours are concentrated into a two-month long period, which is challenging for volunteers juggling other responsibilities. The Committee agreed that a charter or mission statement approved by the Town will help them avoid misunderstandings of their roles and responsibilities that

could lead to inefficiencies and undermine the positive impact of the hours they donate. The Committee agreed to develop a Charter and present it to the Town for approval.

5. Request for immediate inclusion in Town discussions focused on activities that can influence alewife passage: The Committee discussed how the historical record shows a clear pattern of waxing and waning Town support for the alewife run for at least the past 200 hundred years. At times, the lack of demonstrated commitment to the run has left alewife passage to native spawning grounds impaired or blocked for decades. Given the recent Dam Feasibility Study, we're currently in a period of somewhat increased awareness of the run's needs. However, there is still a lack of understanding of the Fish Committee's role and expertise. Consequently, when people who are largely unfamiliar with the history of the run or the Committee's work proceed with new plans that are relevant to fish passage, they sometimes do not include the Fish Committee in initial discussions.

The Committee agreed that they would ask the Selectman to immediately notify Town officials, employees, committees, commissions, or other Town bodies of the requirement to integrate Fish Committee consultations in any discussions, planning or review process related to activities that could influence alewife passage and habitat. Some examples of relevant processes include, but are not limited to:

- Any construction work in or adjacent to the Pemaquid River or other activities that could affect habitat quality
- Repairs to the Bristol Mills dam and improvements to bring it into compliance with spillway capacity safety standards
- Designing and selecting a type of improved fish passage for Bristol Mills
- Road crossing maintenance and improvements on the Pemaquid River

6. Dam Flashboards: The group discussed the need to address issues associated with the flashboards.

- a. *Safety*.- Operation of the flashboards requires walking directly atop the dam's spillway. This practice has some inherent danger for at least two reasons:
- The lack of proper restraining devices means there is little to prevent people on the spillway from falling onto the jagged rocks and dam debris over 12' below, except for a wobbly fence made of lobster trap wire. Former Fish Committee member, Rick Poland, reported that prior to installation of the trap wire fence, both he and his daughter had fallen off the dam on separate occasions. Somehow they escaped life-threatening injury. There are also unverified reports of more recent instances where children using the swimming hole were injured on the dam.
  - Operation of the flashboards requires standing directly on top of the spillway, in the flow, which brings with it the danger of being swept off the dam or having a body part pinned against the dam by the flow, especially under high flow conditions during storms or normal spring runoff.

The Dam Committee endorsed installing measures to make operation of the dam's flashboards safe for the personnel involved. If the flashboards are to remain a

feature of the current dam, the Fish Committee will request that the Selectman immediately hire a firm with professional dam safety experience to provide recommendations for enhanced safety measures and that those measures be implemented by the Town as soon as possible.

- b. *Procedures and responsibilities* - There is currently no written procedure for when to install or remove the flashboards. When Rick Poland was on the Committee and for at least the past five years, he operated the flashboards, with occasional assistance from Slade Moore. This task fell to the Fish Committee as a result of disagreements between the Committee and other Town bodies on when and how to operate the flashboards, which sometimes led to hindered alewife passage. It is clear that a brief, written procedure is necessary to consistently address not only fish passage needs, but those of dam safety, especially considering well documented problems with the dam's spillway capacity and the current situation with the flashboards. The Fish Committee will provide basic language for inclusion in the fish passage procedure document that is developed.

7. Upcoming meeting with the Selectmen - Crooker and McLetchie agreed that they could attend on the meeting date requested (4/4/18), although Moore could not. [Note: Since then, the Town Manager (Hall) asked Moore for a date that would work for him and the other Committee members. March 28th was identified as the date that worked for all.]