

BoFEP Working Group on Salt Marsh and Restricted Tidal Systems (SMaRTS)
Draft Minutes of 3rd Meeting
October 11th, 2001, CWS Headquarters, Sackville, NB

Present:

Tony Bowron (Ecology Action Centre)
Jonathan Carr (Atlantic Salmon Federation)
Janice Harvey (Conservation Council)
Peter Hicklin (Environment Canada)
Charles LeBlanc (Environment Canada)
Daniel LeBlanc (Petitcodiac Riverkeepers)
Zsofi Koller (Conservation Council)
Jeff Ollerhead (Mount Allison)
Sarah Townsend (St. Mary's)
Danika van Proosdij (St. Mary's)
Brad Walters (Mount Allison)
Peter Wells (Environment Canada)

Morning Chair: Jeff Ollerhead, Mount Allison University

1. Welcome and Introductions

Participants each introduced themselves. New committee members: Brad Walters (assistant professor at Mount Allison) and Sarah Townsend, (honours student at St. Mary's under the guidance of Danika van Proosdij)

2. Approval of Minutes and Action Summary

Minutes from the last meeting (June 7th, 2001) were circulated and approved. The Action Summary from the June 7th meeting was also circulated and approved.

3. Tidal Barriers Audit -Zsofi Koller and Tony Bowron

1. New Brunswick Tidal Barriers Audit Summer 2001 - Zsofi Koller, Conservation Council

It was stressed this is a subjective analysis of the tidal barriers in the area. Suggestions and alternative points of view are encouraged in the interpretation of data.

Summary of results and action plan:

-of the 32 sites surveyed, 17 were restrictive

-6 unrestricted sites had downstream obstructions. These were considered "affected" sites.

-therefore, total # of restricted and affected sites was 23 out of 32.

Because of the extensive agriculture in the area, realistic restoration goals could include enhancement of restricted areas, such as promoting estuarine conditions in a contained area. Also, a list of recommendations with respect to future repairs will be given to Dept. of Transportation. A site in New Horton was recommended as a potential, large-scale restoration project. This would be aided in part by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which owns much of the land adjacent to the barrier.

2. Nova Scotia Audit 2001 -Tony Bowron, Ecology Action Centre

Tony found four sites with restoration potential. He plans on working closely with Dept. of Transportation to emphasize salt marsh restoration and increased water flow. One of Tony's sites, in Cheverie Creek, has good restoration potential. It's a small, wooden culvert in disrepair, with 40 ha of land behind it. This site will be the focus of restoration work in the immediate future.

4. Working Group Mandate: Terms of Reference

Jon Percy (not present) prepared and circulated via email a draft copy of the terms of reference (TOR) for SMARTS, based on a merge of the TORs of the two previous working groups. Janice Harvey volunteered to modify the draft TOR, based on the following suggestions from the group:

- include a socio-economic reference
- each term of reference should have a defining key-word for clarity
- reference #3 should emphasize the role and participation of citizens.
- item 2c should be removed, and 2b should be modified to include both enhancement and restoration.

5. Research and Monitoring Needs-Danika van Proodsi

Danika passed out a handout to focus the discussion.. NB: As this is the time when grant proposals are written, it is important to communicate and built upon our existing strengths as a group.

A. Bridging the gap between scientists and citizens:

- ✍ Review existing BoFEP factsheets on barriers and dams. Are they sufficient for current SMARTS purposes? If not, a new one should be written and distributed. Peter Wells said the cost for this could be incorporated into his 2002 budget.
- ✍ Hold public meetings around certain ideas. eg. Restoration project in New Horton.
- ✍ Update Wells 1999 publication “Environmental Impacts of Tidal Barriers” and redistribute it
- ✍ Outreach on tidal barriers using audit reports and presentations (possibly combining the 2 audits at times, if applicable)
- ✍ update Gulf of Maine Database to include NS and NB barriers, which could prompt funding
- ✍ GIS capability for audits could be obtained through student projects/graduate students, DFO, or DOT
- ✍ BoFEP Science Workshop might be an opportunity to invite members of the public
- ✍ Habitat Stewardship Project-this has a public education component

B. Site-specific restoration projects that have potential for being implemented where monitoring, research or other cooperative projects could be carried out:

- ✍ Petitcodiac (Daniel LeBlanc) [Note: 3-yr, \$2.9 mill EIA announced for Petitcodiac Nov. 30]
- ✍ Memramcook River (Denis Haché, Claude Robichaud)
- ✍ Newfoundland Creek (Ducks Unlimited, Andrew McInnis)
- ✍ New Horton (Zsofi Koller, Peter Hicklin, Nature Conservancy)
- ✍ Cheverie Creek (Tony Bowron)
- ✍ Windsor Causeway (Tony, Sarah Townsend)

C. Future of the Tidal Barriers Audits

Nova Scotia might need more work done on it with respect to gathering baseline information for the audit. Tony suggested that the audit information can be collected in a lot less time, potentially by doing a watered-down version of it to at least give a heads-up to obvious problems. New Brunswick, next summer, may focus less on gathering data, and more on following through with the action summary of this year’s audit, although they could finish the coastline from Alma to St. Stephen. This will be discussed with Environment Canada.

D. BoFEP information exchange and networking

The idea of an e-newsletter was vetoed. Instead, using the Fundy Forum website for quick SMARTS updates was approved. The BoFEP website could be the area for more descriptive explanations of restoration work. This could provide links to more detailed sites from the host organizations responsible for each project.

Environment Canada’s salt marsh restoration website (www.ns.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/salt_marsh/) is a

self-maintaining website, good for linking researchers and bringing ideas together. The value of this site depends on how well-used it is. We should emphasize use of this site. Zsofi will motivate this process by providing easy question sheets for researchers to fill out to post the information. At the next meeting there should be a presentation on how to use the site (given by Charles LeBlanc or Al Hanson).

E. Sites for fundamental research

The term “fundamental” research was rejected by the group as being value-laden. It is difficult to plan research around government project sites due to political and management dimensions which make project time lines and so on unpredictable. Prospective and existing areas for research:

- ✍ Cumberland Basin (Danika)
- ✍ Windsor Causeway (Sarah/Tony)
- ✍ Existing sampling sites (Al Hanson/Gail Chmura)
- ✍ Petitcodiac (within EIA context?)

Afternoon chair: Janice Harvey, Conservation Council of New Brunswick
(Jeff Ollerhead and Brad Walters left the afternoon session)

5. Research and Monitoring Needs, con’t-Danika van Proodsj

F. Funding for research

Peter Wells suggested that an NSERC strategic grant focused on modeling changes and cumulative effects in the upper Bay should be proposed for a doctorate or post-doc student. He and Danika will get together on this.

If the NB tidal barriers audit is to continue, funding is needed for 2 people (coordinator and field assistant). Also, it shouldn’t remain a CCNB-only venture. Perhaps it should be institutionalized in a government framework. NSERC isn’t a good funder for restoration projects. Potentially MEC, or private foundations

6. Updates from Participants

Danika would like to sample at least one site for suspended sediment samples, which could potentially be the Memramcook causeway. Understanding the dynamics of sediment deposition is important in the Upper Bay, especially considering the effects from dyking and causeways.

Peter Wells suggested we might start inviting speakers, such as Tim Milligan could speak about sedimentation hydrology. Danika will contact Geoff Howell from Environment Canada about providing sediment monitoring equipment.

Peter Wells passed out an invitation to participate in the 5th Bay of Fundy Science Workshop from May 13-16th, 2002. A subcommittee could put together a SMaRTS contribution to the workshop. BoFEP Management and Steering Committees are now receiving submissions for abstract proposals. The deadline set to submit them by is Nov.30th [since extended to January 15, 2002]. It was agreed that a poster of the group activities in SMaRTS would be a good way to display our information. Zsofi will submit a proposal to Environment Canada to fund the poster.

Jon Percy (not present) is looking for slides on tidal barriers in the Bay of Fundy, if anyone has any to send to him.

Janice Harvey reported on behalf of Peter McLaughlin (not present) that the NBDELG was convening several parties to visit tidal crossings in southeastern NB this fall with a view to identifying possible rehabilitation projects next spring. Specifically, DFO, CN, Agriculture and Transportation departments are involved. At this point, it is an internal initiative.

7. Next Steps

- a) Janice proposed to hold a conference call about agenda item #6, “Valuation of coastal/ estuarine/ wetland landscapes and ecosystems in building a case for protection/restoration”, which was skipped because the leader of this discussion, Denis Haché, could not attend. An email about participation for the call will be sent out.
- b) A meeting to determine future directions and funding for the tidal barriers audit will take place in each province (Peter Wells, Janice Harvey, Zsofi Koller, Tony Bowron)
- c) Janice will modify the draft terms of reference
- d) Zsofi will follow up on the NB government initiative to engage in restoration activity.
- e) Danika will submit an equipment proposal to EC for sediment sampling.
- f) Peter Wells will arrange for and print the new fact sheet on tidal barriers.
- g) Zsofi will submit a funding proposal to EC to fund the SMaRTS group poster for the BoFEP Science workshop.
- h) Individuals are reminded to submit abstracts to be involved with the BoFEP workshop [new deadline: January 15]
- i) Individuals will follow up on their specific potential restoration projects.
- j) BOFEP should develop clear mandate for using the BoFEP funds. It shouldn't be a “first-come, first-serve” policy.

8. Next Meeting

Should include a presentation on the Salt Marsh Conservation web site. Will be in winter, anywhere between mid-January to mid-February. Zsofi will canvass everyone by e-mail on available dates.