

# **Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee**

**Police Station, Milford New Hampshire**

**September 16, 2021**

In attendance were members Cory Ritz (New Ipswich), Bill Mahar (Wilton), Celeste Barr (Milford), Peter Howd (Wilton), George May (Merrimack), Marshall Buttrick (Greenville), and Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich).

**Approval of Minutes** -August 2021 minutes approved.

## **New Business**

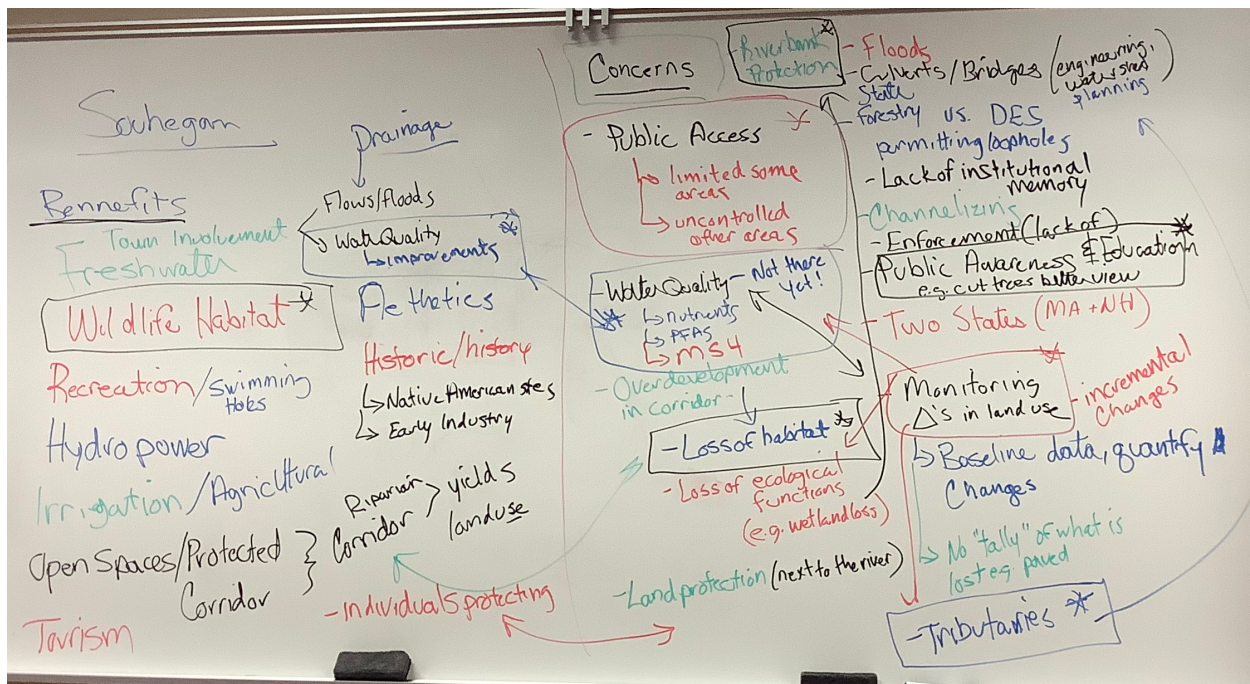
**River's Edge, Wilton-** Saturday September 2 there was a site walk of this proposed development. A Shoreland and AoT permit will be needed. We feel SoRLAC cannot comment on this project until have been given permits to review. Cory did write a letter with comments which is included at the end of these minutes. Peter will forward Cory's site walk report to individuals in Wilton and add a comment to explain that we will comment later when we have been presented plans and permits to review.

**NHDOT- Nashua-Manchester, #40818** (Capitol Corridor Rail) The project proposes the extension of MBTA commuter rail services from Lowell, MA to Manchester, NH. The majority of work will be within an existing rail line/embankment. Preliminary design of the project is ongoing and impacts have yet to be identified. It is anticipated that impacts may result from vegetation clearing, bridge/culvert rehabilitation and/or replacement, grade crossings, and track upgrades.

Nelson contacted Cory noting that the NHDOT was working on the rail corridor. Discussion followed on how expanding the rail corridor might affect the River. It is proposed that there will be 2 stops in Nashua, 1 in Bedford and 1 or 2 in Manchester. Marshall noted that for those in the western part of the Souhegan's watershed, we have always had rail service to Boston available to us from Fitchburg, MA.

**Watershed Management Planning**-We had a brainstorming session discussion addressing the benefits of the River and our concerns about the future of the River. The purpose was to determine where we wanted to focus our Management Plan.

A picture is worth a 1,000 words



There was a short discussion on who owned which easement on Rt. 31 South between Highway 101 and Greenville. Cory told the group that in a discussion with Tracie, she had mentioned that we could apply to Antioch University for help with mapping using some of DES's monies. Discussion followed on what that mapping would entail. They also discussed the importance of protecting adjacent properties in tributaries that would most likely be outside of the State's protected shorelines.

We want our Management Plan to be something that we can enforce and therefore need to have towns incorporate it into their Master Plans. We will need to identify the stakeholders in the plan.

**NHDES instream flow study of Cold River**- There will be a presentation held Monday, September 27, 2021 at 7:00p.m. at Alstead Town Hall. Background information can be found in the [video about the New Hampshire Instream Flow](#)

Program. Additional information is available on the NHDES Instream Flow Program webpage.

**Nisa Marks** has joined the Rivers Management and Protection Program as the Rivers and Lakes Programs Assistant. And in case you missed it in the agenda that Cory sent out, Nisa comes with experience working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as a legislative aide with the Massachusetts House of Representatives, as a co-founder of not-for-profit organizations supporting community activism, and with an expected Master's degree in Government from Harvard University Extension School.

## **Local Updates**

**Souhegan Watershed Association**-The website is up and running.

Souheganriver.org

Peter Z the young man who facilitated this has moved to Maine but has continued to assist in getting the website up and running. Water quality data information will be posted, and new ideas are welcome. George stressed the need to revitalize the organization.

**New Ipswich**-nothing to do with River but Conservation Commission is looking at properties they would like to see protected.

**Greenville**-Nothing to report

**Wilton**-Already covered

**Milford**-A fish analysis was done on the River stretching from approximately the Veteran's Bridge down to where the Fletcher's Paint Works was located on August 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Data will be available in a few months on EPA webpage. Celeste has asked that results be mailed to her. Celeste noted the new Amphitheater that has been built on the old Fletcher's Paint site. She also noted that she had discovered a "secret" viewing platform hidden near the cemetery with an excellent view of the river. She surmises it was probably built as a boy scout project, but it has a very substantial set of steps to the tiny platform.

Celeste forwarded articles of archeological interest which I have included at the end of these minutes.

**Amherst-** They are doing additional e-coli testing on Beaver Brook and another unnamed stream.

**Merrimack-** Sidewalk proposals have been reviewed and approved.

Next Meeting is **October 21, 2021 at Milford Police Station**

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, sec. Sept. 20, 2021

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*Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SoRLAC)*

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**TO:** Town of Wilton Planning Board, Michele Decoteau

**FROM:** Cory Ritz, SoRLAC chairman

**DATE:** August 28, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Requested SoRLAC review of River's Edge subdivision

SoRLAC is providing these comments per your request on the River's Edge Subdivision. As you are likely aware, the Souhegan River is a designated river and a major activity of SoRLAC is to advise municipalities within the Souhegan River drainage area on matters pertaining to the management of the river. In addition, SoRLAC will review and comment on permits for actions within a quarter mile of the Souhegan River. This review is preliminary and may change as more details are relayed to SoRLAC through a permit application.

SoRLAC met on August 19 and discussed this project. SoRLAC briefly reviewed plans but did not complete an in-depth review of the project during the meeting. These are broad perspective and some brainstormed insights. SoRLAC identified areas for further consideration and concerns given the size of the project and proximity to the Souhegan River. These include:

- Alternations to drainage
- Site management issues
- River / riparian corridor management



The proposed alterations to drainage are substantial. The hilly terrain (Figure 1), presence of intermittent streams, and wetlands indicates the Souhegan River will be receiving modified flows.



Figure 1 Detailed terrain of approximate project area

These altered flow volumes should be addressed in the stormwater management plan. However, given the amount of excavation and changes SoRLAC is concerned about storm flows and runoff management relocated into the hillside above the river. The proposed road and houses will bisect a relatively steep slope and be constructed near wetland buffers. Water concentrated due to the management of impervious surfaces and the influx of urban runoff such as salt, fertilizers and pesticides have the potential to degrade water quality. SoRLAC also noted the lack of a snow management plan to effectively plow to into areas where snowmelt is not a direct flow into the river.

SoRLAC also discussed the changes to the riparian habitat and the potential harmful effects development in the riparian zone can have. This is demonstrated in

Figure 2 where every additional foot can provide ecosystem services to help maintain a healthy river and riparian corridor. The project will place structures and development within areas known to help contribute to a healthy river.

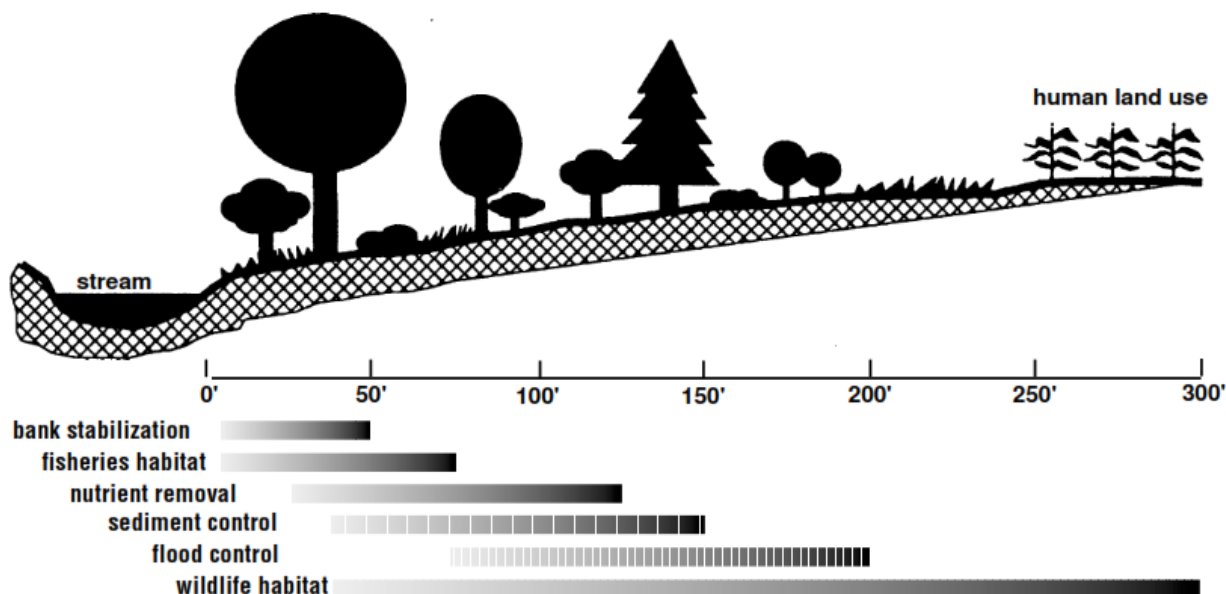


Figure 2 Buffer widths and benefits (adopted from Introduction to Riparian Buffers for the Connecticut River Watershed)

Lastly, SoRLAC would like to request a site visit tour for September with the hope to address and inquire about some of these concerns with town officials and/or the site owners and project leads. SoRLAC remains committed to help protect the Souhegan River and its shorelands through our local partnerships with watershed towns and their citizens.

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# Native Americans buried here

First documented site in New Hampshire off Elm Street in Milford

By Debra Thorblad

The first documented Indian cemetery in New Hampshire and one of only a few in New England for several years lay tucked behind the Hayward Farms restaurant in Milford, flanked by the Hayward Trading Post and the Crazy Teepee, a secondhand store.

It would be interesting to theorize that the business names came from half-remembered stories about what existed on that site when The First People met the European colonists. Now the site is expected to provide a great deal of information to archaeologists and historians wanting to learn more about the Indians who inhabited this area and about the period known as the "contact."

Archaeologist Wesley Stinson, with the N.H. Division of Historical Resources, lives in Milford and recognized the possibility that the site might have been an Indian campground. When the topsoil was removed in preparation for the proposed Hayward Commons shopping mall, Stinson walked the site and found "artifacts strewn over the surface."

In the late summer and early fall of 1989, Stinson was allowed by John Roberts, president of the landowner, Perimeter Associates, to come in with volunteers and evaluate and test the site.

That fall, stains, called "features," and some artifacts were found, most in the "plow zone" of the lot.

A large feature was identified, and archaeologists began to suspect that there were Native American burials there. That fall, in the presence of Native Americans, the grave was exhumed and the skeleton of a child 3- to 4 years old was discovered and removed.

The skeleton is in the N.H. Division of Historical Resources' lab waiting to be analyzed and documented. Archaeologists are hoping it will provide more information about the time period and reason for death, after which it will be reburied.

An agreement for further work was reached with Roberts,

and more study and testing began last spring. Four more grave pits were discovered in a tight cluster around the first one. All of them are essentially the same size, shape and orientation, Stinson said. A row of river cobbles was found around the grave sites.

The burial pits are rectangular, European grave size, although no evidence of coffins was found. Stinson says this may reflect the contact and influence of Europeans.

The tribe these Indians might have come from is not known. The orientation of the pits is from northeast to southwest, which suggests some affiliation with the southern New England tribes.

After the additional grave pits were discovered, work was put on hold and negotiations reopened with the owner. According to N.H. law, if the site were to be destroyed the owner would have to pay for the re-

moval and reburial of the remaining bodies, an expensive proposition.

Over the summer an agreement was reached with Roberts to preserve that corner. But the subsequent auction of the property and purchase by the mortgage holder, Bank of New England, last Friday, Oct. 19 (see separate story), could force a reopening of negotiations.

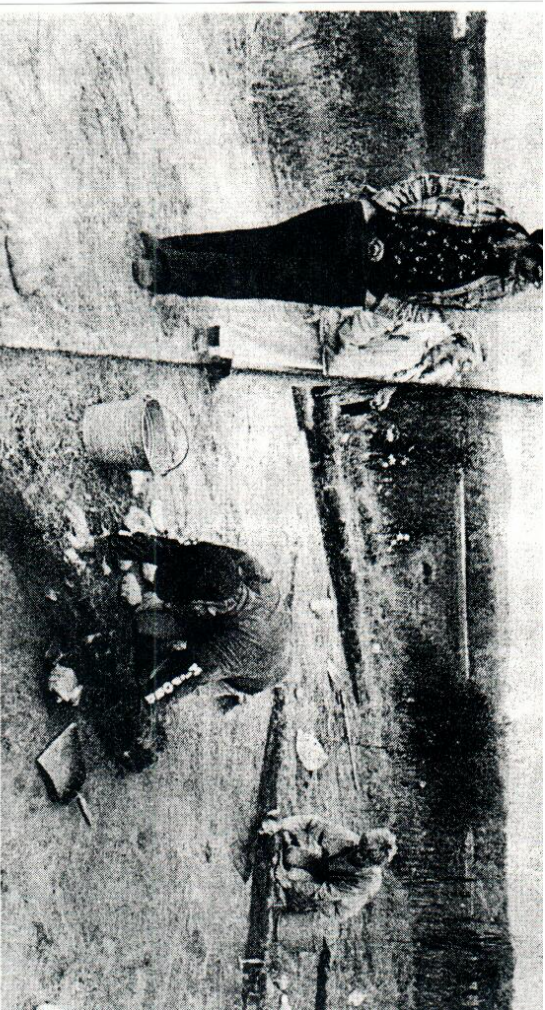
As part of the testing done in the spring, other features were discovered. One was of a pit, possibly a fire pit, and others were identified as "post molds," marks left in the soil after wood rots, Stinson said.

Excavation continued over the summer and archaeologists now have enough information to indicate a late prehistoric to contact period structure. Because of the amount of domestic refuse found and the stain indicating a fireplace, they are fairly certain they have a house.

## Native Americans

Continued from Page 1





**WATCHING THE DIGGING** are Native Americans William Bolding and Bishop Beverly Bolding of the Mother Earth Indian Church. The Boldings (far left) were notified by the N.H. Division of Historical Resources when it was discovered Indian remains were on the site.

# Respect remains, say Native Americans

By Debra Thorblad

Native Americans at the Milford dig last week agreed their major concern was to insure the graves there are treated with respect.

"We ask no more or less than how they would treat any human being," Native American Charles Lafoe, from Belmont said. "If they're treated with respect, we have no problem."

William Bolding Jr. (Chief He Who Walks Tall) of the N.H. Indian Council and Bishop Beverly Bolding (Shamen, Pee-Mee) of the Mother Earth Indian Church, Gorham, were present at the site Thursday and were also there when the skeleton of the child was removed.

"We blessed the burial before it was opened, and we'll assist in the reburial," Beverly Bolding said. They hope that will be back in the original grave.

"We're not against education. We have no problem with studying, as long as they are treated with respect and returned to the ground when done," William Bolding said.

But in the past Indian graves have not been treated with the same respect as those of the Europeans. The Boldings tell of Indian skulls made into ash trays, skeletons hung over fireplaces and put on public display, all actions that would not be permitted if it were a white

person's grave.

"If they can't accept it for their own ancestors, they shouldn't accept it for ours," Lafoe said.

The Boldings said they believe things are slowly improving.

They had high praise for the N.H. Division of Historical Resources. "The state archaeology department doesn't do anything disrespectful. They treat us like human beings."

Unlike other native burial sites, nothing of value to collectors has been found on this site, said Wesley Stinson, an archaeologist with the Division of Historical Resources. Few artifacts like arrowheads have

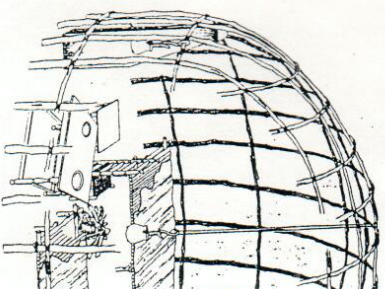
been found, and no metal or jewelry was with the burial that was opened. Metal detectors and radar have turned up nothing, he said.

What has been found, items like burnt bone and shards of pottery, is of value to archaeologists. It will give information about what seasons the Indians used the site, what animals they hunted and what plants and wood they used.

Consequently they and the Native American community have a tremendous concern about looters.

"It would destroy a fragile record and would yield them nothing of value," Stinson said.

The Boldings and other members of the community will make sure the remains are treated with the archaeological process.



**NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSE**---Archaeologists have taken from "The Handbook of Native Americans," closely resembles an at the Hayward site. The drawing c





WATCHING THE DIGGING are Native Americans William Bolding and Bishop Beverly Bolding of the Mother Earth Indian Church. The Boldings (far left) were notified by the N.H. Division of Historical Resources when it was discovered Indian remains were on the site.

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Debra Thornblad photos

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NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSE---Archaeologists believe this drawing, taken from "The Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 15, Northwest," closely resembles an Indian dwelling once located



# Bank buys Hayward property

By Debra Thornblad

The owner of the Milford Hayward's site and the N.H. Division of Historical Resources had reached an "agreement in principle" to set aside and not develop the portion of the lot identified as a Native American Indian cemetery, but the Oct. 19 auction of the property negates that agreement, state archaeologist Gary Hume said.

The state historical division now hopes it will be able to work out a similar agreement with the new owner, the Bank of New England. The bank bought back the property from Perimeter Associates, John Roberts, president, for \$378,000 on Oct. 19.

Information given out about the property at the auction did not include anything about the archaeological excavations going on there.

Archaeologist Wesley Stinson and Native American William Bolding both spoke to bank officials after the sale about the archaeological activity on the site. The officials did not appear to be aware of the agreement that had been reached between the state and Roberts, but said, "We don't want to create a fight if there isn't one."

The Cabinet attempted to reach bank officials, but phone calls had not been returned as of press time.

Hume said he was optimistic something would be worked out.

"The Milford community knows, and the Native American community knows about the site. There will be extreme moral pressure on them to agree to (preserve the site)," he said.

But regardless of whether or not an agreement is reached to preserve the site, state law will require the owners either to preserve it or to make arrangements for and pay for the removal and reburial of the remains.

State RSA 227-C:8 was a bill the Historical Resources division and members of the Native American community worked hard for. It delineates the responsibilities, including financial, of all the parties involved, who should be notified and



**NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSE**—Archaeologists believe this drawing, taken from "The Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 15: Northeast," closely resembles an Indian dwelling once located at the Hayward site. The drawing of an 18th century Western Niantic (a southern New England tribe) wigwam includes European furniture and traditional sleeping platforms because archaeologists believe the structure was from the European-Indian contact period. The drawing was based on 1761 notes and sketches by Ezra Stiles and represents a dwelling 17.25-by-12 feet.

The dark circles running up the middle of the excavated area, photo below, are post molds, marks left in the soil when wood rots. The regular pattern of molds show there was a structure on the site, which archaeologists believe might have resembled the house above.

