

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting

DATE OF CONFERENCES: February 9, 2023

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Zoom Meeting

ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT

Timothy Dunn
Jill Edelmann
Jon Evans
Marc Laurin
Dzijeme Lazares
Vince McCants
Kerry Ryan
John Sargent
Leah Savage
David Scott
Jason Tremblay
Hans Weber
Trent Zanes

NHDHR/NHDNCR

Laura Black
David Trubey

ACOE

Michael Hicks

FHWA

Jamie Sikora

McFarland Johnson

Stephen Hoffman
Christine Perron
Samuel White

Hoyle Tanner

Deb Coon

City of Keene

Brett Rusnock

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

Alex Bernhard
Kent Hackmann

NH Rails and Trails Coalition

Dave Topham

PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

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February 9, 2023

Keene 40653 (R & C 14512)

Participants: Stephen Hoffmann, Christine Perron, Samuel White, McFarland-Johnson; Brett Rusnock, City of Keene; Leah Savage, Jonathan Evans, NHDOT; Michael Hicks, ACOE

Stephen Hoffmann introduced the proposed project involving the replacement of Bridge No. 142/092 carrying George Street over Beaver Brook in Keene, New Hampshire. The proposed project is being managed by the City of Keene and is funded through the State Bridge Aid Program. The existing bridge was originally constructed in 1923 and was determined to not be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The existing span is 13 feet, and the proposed bridge structure consists of a 23-foot single span structure. A Request for Project Review (RPR) was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) and a response was received from NHDHR in December 2022. The NHDHR response include the following comments:

1. Project area is considered archaeologically sensitive. Survey may be necessary depending on final design.

2. Recommend APE is expanded to account for potential visual effects.
3. RPR should include information and clear photos of bridge and all four quadrants.
4. Note that while the bridge is not eligible for the NR individually, it may contribute to a larger resource that has been identified before but not yet inventoried or evaluated - Keene Historic Water Management System. Inventory appropriate for the project will need to be determined.

Mr. Hoffmann explained that the goal of this meeting was to provide additional project information and clarification to address the NHDHR comments in the RPR response, and to obtain additional information from NHDHR regarding the Keene Historic Water Management System.

The APE was expanded to include areas in the vicinity of the proposed bridge and roadway work and included portions of the parcels directly adjacent to the proposed project.

Samuel White discussed the limits of work and impacts from the proposed project. The approximate limits of excavation were depicted on a figure in the PowerPoint presentation. The proposed bridge replacement will require the installation of riprap bank stabilization in three of the bridge quadrants that extend approximately 30-50 feet upstream and downstream from the bridge structure. The northeast quadrant contains an existing gabion wall that will be realigned to accommodate the longer bridge span. The banks along this segment of Beaver Brook are very steep and require stabilization to protect the proposed bridge structure and minimize erosion and scour. Additional excavation would be required within the footprint of the existing roadway for the proposed bridge replacement and associated utility work.

Mr. Hoffmann provided additional slides containing pictures of all four quadrants, including the structures on the adjacent parcels and discussed the existing conditions in greater detail.

Mr. Hoffmann requested additional information from NHDHR regarding the Keene Historic Water Management System. Mr. Hoffmann explained that no additional information was found on EMMIT or a web search for this system. It is unclear what the components of this system are. Mr. Hoffmann explained that there are concrete flood channels that have been constructed along Beaver Brook, but these are located approximately 2,800 feet south of the proposed bridge project between Beaver Street and Harrison Street. These concrete flood channels were constructed around 1969. Mr. Hoffmann also explained that there was a pipe crossing the stream with a concrete cap approximately 200 feet upstream from the bridge, that is not visible from the bridge, and asked if this could be part of the system in question. Brett Rusnock with the City of Keene explained that this was a sewer or water line that served the linen service facility. Based on a field review of the site, there does not appear to be any other components of a Water Management System located in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Laura Black indicated that all types of impacts need to be considered including visual and atmospheric, and that photos of all four quadrants need to be included in the RPR including photographs of buildings within the APE. Ms. Black explained that the Keene Historic Water Management System has not been previously inventoried and therefore, does not show up in EMMIT. This potential resource has been identified in previous projects and is an expansive system consisting of multiple components including a reservoir outside of town. Ms. Black

indicated that the Keene Historic Water Management System is mentioned in the write up for the Historic Bridge Inventory (HBI). Ms. Black also indicated that this was discussed previously during the Roxbury Street bridge project in Keene.

Jill Edelman referenced the US Army Corps of Engineers Beaver Brook Local Protection Project webpage that indicated that the Beaver Brook Local Protection Project was built between May-November 1986 and involved the construction of a concrete dam and spillway located at Three Mile Swap. The purpose of this project was flood control improvements. Based on the dates of construction for the project above, it would not be considered potentially historic.

Ms. Black indicated that it would be up to the lead federal agency and NHDOT to determine if an inventory needs to be completed for the Keene Historic Water Management System.

An updated RPR addendum will be prepared and submitted to NHDHR to review the above ground inventory in more detail, with additional photographs and a summary of the proposed impacts to adjacent properties, including preliminary plans.

David Trubey indicated that based on his review and the limits of work/excavation discussed in the meeting, that it is his opinion that archaeological Phase IA/IB surveys would be warranted. Mr. Trubey indicated that he would need to review plans depicting the limits of work prior to making a final decision. Mr. Trubey indicated that the amount of excavation required for the bank stabilization, proximity to the river, and presence of stacked stone bank revetments, gave him cause for concern. Additional information regarding excavation and limits of work, including updated plans will be included in the RPR addendum.

Jamie Sikora confirmed whether the sewer and utility work is associated with the proposed project or part of a separate project. Mr. White indicated that the utility work discussed was directly associated with the bridge replacement project.

Andover 20650, X-A002(084)

Participants: Timothy Dunn, Marc Laurin, Dzijeme Lazares, Vince McCants, Kerry Ryan, John Sargent, David Scott, Jason Tremblay, Hans Weber, Trent Zanes, NHDOT; Alex Bernhard, Kent Hackmann, Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County; Dave Topham, NH Rails and Trails Coalition; Deb Coon, HTA

Continued consultation, following the previous February 10, 2022 meeting, on the proposed roadway and bridge improvements to NH Route 11 at its crossing over the Northern Rail Trail (former Northern Railroad corridor) and over Sucker Brook, in Andover. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss updated effects.

Hans Weber presented the project. The NH Route 11 bridge over the rail trail is now on DOT's red list and there is an advisory down posting of 40MPH across the bridge. He confirmed that the rail trail bridge over Sucker Brook will not be impacted by the project. DOT has gone to a public informational meeting in Andover and received feedback that the public and Town

officials prefer that the southern alternative be pursued. This alternative would consist of one large bridge that would span both the rail trail and Sucker Brook.

Hans presented the impacts of this preferred alternative. The southern alternative would have about 1.9 acres of impacts to the 75 acre Individually Eligible Koron property (Halcyon Farms). The area of impact would be to forested hillside, a forest road, and a maple syrup collection operation. The existing NH Route 11 bridge over the rail trail and the culvert over Sucker Brook would be removed. The Northern Railroad Historic District impacts would consist of the removal of the NH 11 bridge over the rail trail, the grading associated with the new bridge and abutments, and would likely occur to the retaining wall located along the south side of the rail trail with the new bridge abutment tying into this wall. Potential mitigation for these impacts would include marketing the bridges, repair of the eastern tell-tale that has been knocked into a ditch, the relocation or reestablishment of both tell tales at appropriate locations, stamping Northern Railroad on the coping of the new bridge, and providing an interpretive panel along the rail trail. A Public Hearing is scheduled for June 27, 2023.

Laura Black questioned if the existing retaining wall has been determined to have been constructed during the period of significance of the District. Hans replied that this has not yet been determined, but he suspects that it is a contributing structure. Laura implied that this could be a research/mitigation component. Regarding the Koron property Laura stated that the boundaries shown in the presentation could potentially be smaller. The Determination of Eligibility identified that the historic parcel's period of significance ends in 1970. It was her opinion that since the eastern part of the Koron property was bought in 1986 it should not be identified as part of the eligible property. She suggested that the DOT clarify and confirm the boundaries. This would reduce the impacts and help in determining if the impacts would be adverse. For the project, if effects are determined to be adverse DOT would need to mitigate impacts to the Northern Railroad District, the Sucker Brook bridge and the Koron property.

Alex Bernhard expressed concern with proper water management to control runoff down the slopes and proper ditching be designed to prevent water crossing over the rail trail, the surface of which consists of only one inch of stone dust. Alex mentioned the stone retaining wall located on the north side of the trail along a ditch east of Sucker Brook, which was installed in 1847. It is the best stonework on the trail, though the existing ditch has filled in and not much is visible. He suggested that excavation of the ditch to expose more of the stonework would be good mitigation and would help with control of runoff. He agreed that the tell tales should be restored and would prefer that they remain where they originally were located to protect their historic location. Tim Dunn replied that DOT would look into this to see how the new bridge would impact that area and if this mitigation could be done.

Laura stated that the tell tales could be left in their historic locations but could also leave a marker if not feasible and the interpretive panel could describe the functions of the tell tales providing a holistic picture on how components relate to the rail corridor. Jill Edelmann stated that the panel will talk about all the smaller elements associated with the Northern Railroad.

Jamie Sikora asked about coordination how the recreational use of the trail would be impacted. Hans detailed the discussions DOT has had with the Bureau of Trails. There will

need to be a short-term 3-to-4-week closure of the trail for the erection of the steel girders for this lengthy bridge. The current plan is for this closure to be done during the off-peak season for recreation along the trail, which is anticipated to be early Spring after the snowmobile use is no longer possible. There will also need to be temporary closures for up to a half hour at a time during the construction for the safety of the public. Access through the work zone will be accommodated as practicable.

Laura confirmed that in the Inventory Form the parcel for the historic farm did not include the parcel to the east. She suggested that DOT submit a narrative to the DOE Committee to formalize the historic boundaries do not include all of the current Koron tax map property. She will confirm with Megan what would be needed. Jill agreed to provide a map and a short narrative to resubmit the boundaries to the DOE Committee. [Laura coordinated suggesting revising the historic resource boundary with Megan and the original DOE reviewer. It was agreed that the boundary could be revised.] Laura mentioned that Effects Sheets for the impacts to the resources are still needed. Jamie agreed that the effects will need to be determined and that an alternative analysis for the 4(f) evaluation would be needed. The public hearing on June 27th is not that far. Jill will move forward with completing the effects sheets.