

**Merrymeeting Bay Salmon Habitat Recovery Unit Report and Summer Plans**  
**February 26, 2021**  
**9:00 am-12:00 pm**  
**Virtual Meeting via Teams link**

**Meeting Purpose:** To bring together stakeholders to develop the 2020 MMB Report and 2021 Workplan.

**Meeting Objectives:**

- 1) Share Project Updates from 2020
- 2) Identify Emerging Issues and Priorities
- 3) Identify items to include in the 2021 Workplan

**AGENDA**

8:45 am Log-in for tech check

9:00 am **Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review**

In attendance: Paul Christman, Jen Noll, Matt Buyhoff, Chris Meaney, Keith McGilvray, Cassidy Bigos, Emily Zimmerman, Bill Bennett, Adam Brown, Eric Ham, Matt Leblanc, Ruth Indrick, Justin Sweitzer, Maranda Nemeth, Graham Goulette, Landis Hudson, Matt Bernier, Shri Verrill, Justin Stevens, John Burrows, Steve Heinz, Max Tritt

Land **2020 Report Updates**  
*Purpose: Provide brief updates from the 2020 plan to include in the 2021 report.*

**Sheepscot**

- Branch Pond Passage Improvements- AFS
  - Shri Verrill: Working towards finalizing engineering designs of the fishway. Designs should be ready in 2021 and groundwork starting 2022.
  - Trout Brook: Bank stabilization for 2021

## **Kennebec**

- Togus Pond Fishway- MDMR
  - Paul Christman: Fishway is in place and ready for 2021 season. Only thing left to determine if for DMR fish counts for sustainability.
- SPP at Hydro Projects- NOAA
  - Matt Buhoff: Four mainstem Kennebec dams waiting on SPP now in 2022
- Temple Stream Passage Improvements- AFS
  - Maranda Nemeth: Final designs are completed with construction starting summer 2021. Cummings Brook culvert replacement starting summer of 2021 on Temple Stream as well. Clover Mill Rd culvert was replaced in 2020. Will try to work with the town of Temple to replace more culverts on tributaries on Temple Stream.

## **Androscoggin**

- SPP at Hydro Projects- NOAA
  - Matt Buyhoff: Expected consultations on SPP in 2020 but going to happen in first quarter of 2021.
- Sabattus River Passage Improvements- MDMR
  - Paul Christman: Tentative funding for removal of two dams. Plan will be removing Upper Town Dam in 2021 and remove Farwell in 2022. Fishway will also be installed at Farwell for fall 2022.

## **Emerging Issues**

*Purpose: MMB SHRU Team to discuss topics to include as emerging issues in the 2021 workplan*

- Covid-19
  - Maranda Nemeth: Culvert replacements on Cummings Brook were delayed due to getting funding and equipment needs.
  - Landis Hudson: Economics in Maine have impacted restoration abilities with project costs increasing. Difficult to
  - John Burrows: Cost of projects have been steadily increasing in last two years.

Exacerbated more so this year with COVID.  
It will take us more time to implement  
projects and be more selective on projects.

- Shri Verrill: Had more organizations  
contact me with requests to assist them to  
get their projects ready to start.
  
- Kennebec Management Plan (Hearing March  
15th)
  - Nick Bennett: If your organization can  
attend hearing on March 15<sup>th</sup> that would  
be very important. Document that  
recognized the cumulative impacts of  
hydro dams on the Kennebec. Plan has  
taken a good stand on what fish passage  
would have to happen at each site to make  
fish reach the Sandy River. Roadmap for  
work for all in the SHRU.
  
- Maine Climate Action Plan
  - Justin Stevens: Sea Grant is active on the plan  
and is interested on the state level with how  
this effects MMB SHRU salmon recovery. Early  
stages of self-assessment at Maine Sea Grant.  
We are trying to figure out where there might  
be conflicts and identify said conflicts with  
green energy production/ how it is defined.
  - Shri: Outreach to towns will result in more  
towns looking for more project assistant with  
culvert replacements and green work. We  
would be well served to figure out how to  
handle restoration projects in term of the  
action plan.
  - Emily Zimmerman: Group needs to be aware  
with the plan that there is a strong emphasis  
on renewable energy sources. Watershed  
protection will be important to asses,  
especially with wind/solar energy sources. DEP  
is seeing increased applications for these types  
of projects.

- Nick Bennett: We need to be careful with solar energy sources. We could move from dam energy to solar.

- New Items?

-Matt Bernier: Atlantic salmon funding due April 12<sup>th</sup> with salmon dollars. Link below:

NOAA's Atlantic salmon funding opportunity (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/atlantic-salmon-habitat-restoration-partnership-grants>).

### **Stakeholder input**

*Purpose: MMB SHRU Team to discuss process for contributing to this section of the 2021 Workplan*

\*Looking for a draft my Mid-March. This is your chance to get your voice to the implementation team and management board. We need volunteers to help with this in order to pick top few things that are issues you want to get the management board.

- Identify volunteer(s) to develop the section
  - Justin Stevens: Does the management board want feedback from the workplan, report, or CMS process? Paul: They left it more open ended. What stakeholders think are priorities that need to be relayed to management board. Something we aren't capturing that should be.
  - Lanids Hudson: Offering to create something meaningful/forward looking to pass along to management board.
- Brief discussion of ideas
  - Shri: Saltmarsh restoration and monetary request would be something I would like to see added.

10:20  
am

### **Proposed 2021 Work (excel 5-year plan)**

*Purpose: To review plans for expected 2021 implementation based upon the MMB SHRU 5yr workplan*

Priority focus areas identified in 5yr Workplan:

- Sheepscot

- Shri: Taylor Road Bridge (talking about this in 2021), Trout Brook (culvert replacement 2021), and Branch Pond has engineering finalized for start this year. Also add on outreach component on culvert replacements (SHP estuary and other areas). Water quality work will happen 2021 as well.
- Eric Ham: Large culvert being replaced on Rt. 194.
- Kirstin Underwood: Total station work at Taylor Rd. and conversations with landowners.

- Kennebec

- John Burrows: Conversations are ongoing on Lemmon Stream. We collectively have tried to work with this landowner on the Sabattus and is willing to have fishways installed but not necessarily dam removal. Community support is there for dam removal. Also, will be addressing culverts in Temple for 2021, along with four other towns in the Sandy.
- Eric Ham: Farmington Falls Bridge replacement will be advertising this year with construction starting 2021. Bridge over the Lockwood facility will also be replaced in the future. Bridge downstream of Waltons Mills dam will be addressed in 2022-2023.
- Landis Hudson: Cobbasssee feasibility report was just produced. It is a continuing topic of discussion with stakeholders.

- Androscoggin

- Steve Heinz: Conservation objectives with Lewiston Falls relicensing? Matt: Would be a good idea for the FERC committee to address in first meeting. Also, Town of Oxford removing dam on Little Androscoggin and replacing with a grade control system in 2021.
- Bill Bennett: Two culverts in West Paris were completed in 2020.

- SHRU Wide

- FERC Committee (Matt Buyhoff): Will be sending out an email next week to distribution

list of interested stakeholders to start planning meetings.

- Chris Meaney: Habitat subgroup talked about data availability and is it accessible to everyone as a theme. Habitat spatial analysis work that was discussed seemed to be consistently brought up to prioritize work as well. Should we have a group put together to figure out how to complete these two topics in the workplan?  
→ Chris: Will make a work group to determine how to tackle these two items.

\*If there are any other projects that are being worked on for the master list please reach out to a member of the SHRU team to add said item to the list.

11:55  
am

### **Next Steps and Closing**

Paul: Atlantic salmon assessment committee (ASCOM) starts next week. As a committee we will be pulling the report together and reaching out for clarification if needed with stakeholders.

-We will send out the draft afterwards for comments.  
Report due to management board by Marc 18<sup>th</sup>.

- Tune in for announcement on the April the public meeting.
- Need to take on collaborative part of what we are doing soon. Start talking to committee in April about how this will get projects done and move forward as a group.