

Basin 11 Tactical Basin Plan Public Comment Session

8/11/21 at Townshend Town Hall and via Zoom (hybrid meeting)

Name of those in attendance:

Marie Levesque-Caduto, DEC

Cory Ross, Windham NRCD

Chris Campany, Windham Regional Planning Commission

Clinton Begley

Jeffery Cavagino

John Bennett

Karl Dzjura

Charles Wallbridge

Erin Rodgers

Ray Collings

Clinton Begley

Karl Albert

Julia Khorana

Robert Nasdor

Sarah Cunningham

Scott Mabel

Tom Prunier

Martin Plante

Mary Nitschke

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Mary Therese Durr

Fhar Meiss

Bill Hearn

Frank Mooney

Bob De Siervo

Abby Hill

Dana Warner

Lora Fulton

Kerry Whalen

Ann Gillard

Richard Melton

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Public Questions and Comments

Will there be a link to this presentation to view later?

Does DEC help with outreach to private landowners to find more of those unmapped dams?

Slide 14: are these instances of septic system nitrogen loading based purely on models, or is there data to back up that modeling?

The Draft Basin Plan exhibits an obvious hostility toward whitewater boating on the West River. The 2015 Basin Plan rated the West River as "HIGHLY IMPORTANT for boating¹, nationally known whitewater releases, national team trials site Put In: USACE Ball Mountain Dam Take Out: USACE Townshend Dam." Yet the draft plan excludes whitewater boating as an existing use in the table. Please explain whether the draft plan considers whitewater boating to be an existing use on the West River and explain why it has been eliminated on the existing use table in the Draft Basin Plan.

Many people in the whitewater community only became aware of this meeting to discuss the plan for the West River in the last few days, so please consider my comments representative of dozens, perhaps hundreds of paddlers, and if we include commercial rafters, thousands of paddlers. I have been a whitewater enthusiast for several decades who has enjoyed the West River releases countless times and their absence would be a great loss to me and other whitewater enthusiasts. The report has minimal mention of recreational releases and those mentions are all negative. The basis for the negative statements comes from bias, not substantiated facts. The comment about the illegality of recreation releases on page 228 is a misreading of the law. If this misreading is applied to the ACOE shutting off water after flood control releases, then those operations would be illegal, too. And on the subject of flood control releases, these happen with equal suddenness

My internet is bad. I just want to be sure we are looking at supporting recreational use of the rivers. This includes swimming, boating, fishing, and habitat

Question about ditch maintenance

This summer's event was the biggest since Irene, and in some place bigger than Irene. The stone helps reduce the sediment loading by taking some of the energy out of the water. WRC hopes to work with more private landowners about maintaining vegetative buffers along their stretch of stream, maybe can work with WC NRCD on this. These are not just a water quality issue, but a property value issue, can save house. Hope we can do more outreach and education to average home owners. Maybe working with master gardeners, extension services. Maybe more neighbor to neighbor outreach.

Our three generation family rafting business, Crab Apple Whitewater, Inc., has rafted and kayaked on the West River since 1991. Approximately 12,000 rafters have joined us in that time! these users fill local lodging and food establishments each spring and fall. Boating is clearly a critical component of the West River basin. We enjoy the river with hundreds if not thousands of whitewater enthusiasts. It is disheartening to read this Basin Plan which seems so obviously tilted negatively towards whitewater boating and its community that have enjoyed scheduled whitewater releases below Ball Mountain Dam since the 1970's.

Does the report address the economic impact of outdoor recreation and is there and coordination with VOREC? For example a 2-day whitewater release generates \$440,000 in economic activity according to a study of whitewater releases on the West River.. How does the plan address these positive impacts?

The social equity portion of the plan identifies themes and focus areas for underserved communities and "serving" those communities through the implementation of this plan. Can you comment on how impacted communities have been involved in the development of this plan or will be involved in helping co-manage or co-create implementation?

Speaking of economic impact, read an article about how much fisherman contributed to the local economy. The West River was once a decent trout fishery, but it is no longer a decent fishery due to the lack of consistent depth of the water. If the USACE would pay more attention to the depth of the water, we might have improved fishing and fishermen activity.

The website says the comment period closes August 27th