



September 11, 2008

Mr. Michael Johnson
National Marine Fisheries Service
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

SEP 12 2008

Re: Town of Durham
Wiswall Road Bridge over the Lamprey River
CLD Reference No. 07-0118

Dear Mr. Johnson:

On behalf of the Town of Durham, CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc. (CLD) is preparing an engineering design and environmental documentation for the replacement of the Wiswall Bridge, which carries Wiswall Road over the Lamprey River, in Durham, New Hampshire (see location map). This two-span bridge was overtopped during May 2006 storms and was replaced by a temporary Bailey Bridge. The proposed bridge type is a single 108-foot bridge span using precast concrete beams. The substructure will consist of new concrete abutments and wingwalls in the location of the existing easternmost and westernmost abutments.

As you know, the existing stone abutments are considered eligible for the National Historic Register. As we plan to remove these historic structures, historic mitigation shall be provided. It has been determined through discussions with several interested agencies that the mitigation shall consist of construction of a stone façade along the face of the existing west abutment and southwest wingwall. The façade shall consist of the existing abutment stone. The mitigation shall also include an exhibit dedicated to the historic nature of the bridge and site to be constructed near the bridge, tinting the bridge concrete, and formally expanding the historic area.

This project will be classified as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) pursuant to 23 CFR 771.117(d)(3) "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures – Categorical Exclusion." Documentation in the form of a Categorical Exclusion, Non-Programmatic, Environmental Impact Summary, developed by the NH Department of Transportation for CE projects, is currently being prepared for this project.

One of the outstanding issues remaining for this project is confirmation from your Agency that there are no concerns related to this project's impact on Essential Fish Habitat within this portion of the Lamprey River. It is our understanding that the Lamprey River is considered to be an Essential Fish Habitat for Atlantic Salmon and a habitat for other anadromous fish. The waterway opening of the replacement bridge will be permanently increased, and there are obstructions present immediately downstream of the subject bridge (Wiswall Dam is located several hundred yards downstream).

The project proposes to remove the center pier from the river, resulting in permanent improvements expected within the river. Temporary impacts are expected along the banks and within a limited offset from each of the bridge abutments. In addition, there is the potential that



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the Project Contractor - not yet selected, may need to create a temporary access route from one of the river banks. This work may be required to allow construction vehicles (e.g., a large crane) to get close enough to set precast concrete beams in place and remove the center pier. We are proposing to remove the center pier in a wet condition instead of placing cofferdams to remove the center pier in the dry. These efforts will be completed using best management practices to protect water quality.

As mentioned in your previous phone conversation with Jamie Paine last year, the area has had extensive reviews for fish habitat concerns related to a potential fish bypass channel, proposed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, around the east side of the Wiswall Dam located immediately downstream. To satisfy federal requirements for construction projects within a river considered an Essential Fish Habitat, we completed an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment for this project. Attached is a revised copy of the report for your review incorporating comments we received from you on September 4, 2008.

We have received input from NH Fish and Game Department's Marine Division in regard to the dam drawdown during construction. This correspondence has been previously sent to you. We have also contacted FEMA, the lead federal agency, who is expected to request a consultation from you on this project. We need to advertise the project for construction in January of 2009 at the latest and, therefore, respectfully request as expedited a review as possible.

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact me immediately at (603) 668-8223, Ext. 122.

Very truly yours,

John P. Byatt, P.E.

Project Manager

JPB:jt

Enclosures

cc w/encl:

David Cedarholm, Durham Public Works
Cheri Patterson, NH Fish and Game Department
John Kanter, NH Fish and Game Department
Peter Thomas, FEMA
Jack Sullivan, FEMA