



**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**



Meeting Date	02/03/2021	Department	City Council
Agenda Item	4.d Consider Endorsement for Letter of Support/ Fish Passage on Cobbossee Stream		
Est. Cost	n/a		

Background Information	<p>Tina Wood, Upstream Representative, will be present to ask the City Council for a fish passage support letter to the Maine Department of Marine Resources.</p>
	<p>A proposed letter is attached. The proposal details the urgency as the Cobbossee Trail is also working through completion and funding. According the support letter, there will be no additional financial burden to the city, yet the city could expect some harvesting revenue.</p>
	<p>Also attached is the support letter from the Gardiner Board of Trade.</p>

Requested Action	' I move to support sending a letter to the Department of Maine Resources regarding fish passage on the Cobbossee Stream.'
City Manager and/or Finance Review	The City Manager recommends the above action.
Council Vote/ Action Taken	
Departmental Follow-Up	

City Clerk Use Only	1 st Reading _____	Advertised _____	EFFECTIVE DATE _____
	2 nd Reading _____	Advertised _____ w/in 15 Days	
	Final to Dept _____	Updated Book _____	Online _____

Christine Landes

From: <'\}\}\}\}\> <upstreamcobbossee@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2021 7:07 AM
To: Christine Landes; Patricia Hart
Cc: Upstream Cobbossee; Tracey Desjardins
Subject: Letter of Support for Fish Passage for City review
Attachments: Letter of Support City of Gardiner 1-21-21.docx; GBoFT Letter of Support.pdf

Dear City Manager Landes and Mayor Hart,
Please see the draft Letter of Support for Fish Passage for the Maine Department of Marine Resources. It is written with the goals of the city in mind and includes understanding that no additional financial burden for the construction of fish passage be placed on the city for this project, along with the understanding the city is expecting harvesting revenue. It is also written with a sense of urgency in order for the city to complete the Cobbossee Trail and obtain DOT funding.

Please edit as you wish. If you require additional information or have questions Upstream is happy to help.

I am also including the Gardiner Board of Trade's Letter of Support for Fish Passage for your reference. Thank you for all your valuable work in our lovely river city.

Tina Wood

Upstream

Do one small thing for fish passage a day.

Dedicated to restoring sea-run fish passage and ecological health to Cobbossee Stream.

582-0213

PO Box 352

Gardiner, Maine 04345

<https://sites.google.com/view/upstreamcobbossee/home>

facebook.com/alewivesupstreamcobbosseecontee

January 25, 2021

Mr. Sean Ledwin
Director of Sea-Run Fisheries and Habitat Division
Maine Department of Marine Resources
21 State House Station
Augusta, Maine, 04333-0021

Dear Mr. Ledwin,

The City of Gardiner is actively revitalizing the Cobbossee Corridor following its Master Plan that was first developed in 2005, updated in 2014 and is being revised in 2021.

In 2005, the plan outlined the cultural and economic development of the Cobbossee Stream Corridor, citing the removal of Gardiner Paperboard Dam and in subsequent revisions of the 2005 plan, envisioned a recreation destination on the stream with unique multi-use streamside trails.

Since then, on three separate occasions in 2016, 2017 and 2018 the Gardiner City Council has voted in support of fish passage at Gardiner's three downtown dams, Gardiner Paperboard, American Tissue and New Mills and the city has continued work developing the Cobbossee Multi-Use Pedestrian Path and has supported community efforts on the Harrison Avenue Nature Trail to create the vision of a revitalized corridor on Cobbossee Stream. With the support of Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) and the completion of fish passage at Gardiner Paperboard Dam this long term goal can be realized.

In April 2017, the City of Gardiner submitted comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on the relicensing of the middle dam, American Tissue Hydroelectric Project, in support of fish passage and public recreation on Cobbossee Stream which resulted in the construction of downstream fish passage in 2020.

On January 13, 2021, the Greater Atlantic Region Division of NOAA published a newsletter featuring Cobbossee Stream:

"The City of Gardiner, NOAA Fisheries, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and a local conservation group are exploring fish passage options at the Gardiner Paperboard Dam. They have started conversations with the current owner. If fish passage at the dam can be improved, NOAA Fisheries can use its authority to require upstream fish passage at the American Tissue Dam. In addition, a fish passage analysis at the New Mills Dam has been initiated."

NOAA shares the City of Gardiner's vision for Cobbossee Stream and has indicated funding may be available to help with trail construction in conjunction with fish passage construction.

Restoring fish passage on Cobbossee Stream would be a historic event, returning the millions of alewives and blueback herring to the stream and watershed for the first time since the 1700's. Since Cobbossee

Stream flows through downtown Gardiner, once fish passage is achieved it would become a unique showcase and an important recreation destination in our state, leading to direct economic benefit for the city and region. It is also our understanding that a harvest of the returning fish could lead to substantial revenues for the city.

The City of Gardiner, in numerous Cobbossee Stakeholders meetings beginning in 2019 has been assured the funding for fish passage at Gardiner Paperboard and New Mills Dam would be through state, federal grants and private sources and would not add to the economic burden of the city.

The City of Gardiner supports the Maine Department of Marine Resources efforts to restore fish passage in downtown Gardiner and urges (DMR) to seek an immediate solution for fish passage at Gardiner Paperboard Dam, as this is the first impediment to returning fish and is a necessary step in fulfilling the vision outlined in the Cobbossee Corridor Master Plan of a vibrant, walkable, engaging recreation destination that brings cultural and economic significance to our lovely river city.

Sincerely,

The City of Gardiner



November 19, 2019

To: Whom It May Concern

The Gardiner Board of Trade recognizes the importance of the Cobbosseeconte Stream (Cobbossee) to the vitality of the city of Gardiner. The waterway has deep cultural significance, as well as being a valuable natural resource, a point of civic pride, and a key component to past economic growth. The Board of Trade also recognizes that many of the dams built to harness the Cobbossee for early industrial development are no longer relevant in the way they once were.

Before being dammed the stream hosted extraordinary numbers of sea-run (anadromous) fish that were an abundant asset to the region. Millions of alewives and other species would return each May and spawn in the large lakes accessible from the Cobbossee. Currently, three dams prevent these species from making this journey and are hindering the re-growth of the fishery resource; Gardiner Paperboard Dam, American Tissue Dam, and New Mills Dam.

The Board of Trade lends their endorsement to the non-profit corporation Upstream and their efforts to restore anadromous fish migration from the Cobbossee to Pleasant Pond. The Board of Trade approves of the work Upstream has done with community stakeholders, and their priorities that consider public and private interests. Currently solutions involve finding a way to get-past the dams through fish passages or other solutions.

The Gardiner Board of Trade wholeheartedly backs the efforts of Upstream and urges city leaders and stakeholders of the 3 downtown dams to work collaboratively so the people and businesses of Gardiner can benefit economically and ecologically from the return of sea-run fish to the Cobbossee Stream.

Gardiner Board of Trade

Matthew R. White, Pres.

Christine Landes

From: <'\}\}\}\}\> <upstreamcobbossee@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 4:14 PM
To: Christine Landes
Cc: Patricia Hart
Subject: City Letter of Support for Fish Passage

Dear City Manager Landes,

Thank you for attending Cobbossee Restoration Stakeholders meeting, January 7th and your kind invitation to the Cobbossee Trail Extension meeting on Wednesday. I have a break at 10:00 am at school and I have put the meeting on my schedule.

Since funding for the Cobbossee Trail will likely receive funds from the fish passage work we are currently engaged in, it would be helpful for Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to receive a letter of support from the City of Gardiner for fish passage on Cobbossee Stream. Upstream is also supplying a letter indicating our support for passage in downtown Gardiner.

Is this something the City can provide to Sean Ledwin, Director of Sea-Run Fisheries at DMR?

Thank you for your good work in our lovely river city.

Tina Wood

Upstream

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Dedicated to restoring sea-run fish passage and ecological health to Cobbossee Stream.

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Cobbossee Stream Fish Passage Restoration Stakeholders Meeting

January 7th, 2021 via Zoom 3:00-4:30 Hosted by the City of Gardiner. Facilitated by Mayor Pat Hart

Cobbossee Stream Fish Passage Restoration Stakeholders Meeting via zoom 1/7/21 3:00-4:30
Hosted by the City of Gardiner and facilitated by Mayor Patricia Hart.

Mission statement: Restoring sea-run fish by enabling free-swim passage through Cobbossee Stream into Pleasant Pond and the 10 miles of stream available above New Mills Dam.

Invited Parties:

Acadia Civil Works, Joseph McLean PE

City of Gardiner, Christine Landes, City Manager

Patricia Hart, City Mayor, Tracey Desjardins, Economic Development Director/Planner

City Council, Colin Frey, Timothy Cusick, Amy Rees, Maryann White, Terry Berry, Penny Sargent, Marc Rines, Patricia Hart

Cobbossee Watershed District, Bill Monagle, Executive Director, Wendy Dennis, Limnologist

Friends of Cobbossee Watershed, Tamara Whitmore, Executive Director

Kennebec Land Trust, Theresa Kerchner, Executive Director

Kruger Inc, Lewis Loon, General Manager, American Tissue Hydro Dam

Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Dr. Barry Mower, Biologist III, Division of Environmental Assessment

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Jason Seiders, Regional Biologist

Maine Department of Marine Resources

Sean Ledwin, Director, Sea-Run Fisheries

Dr. Gail Wippelhauser, Fisheries Restoration and Enhancement

Maine Rivers, Landis Hudson, Executive Director

New Mills Dam Committee, Dave Kamila, chair, Rev. Jack Daniels, Jon Ault, John Beane, Patricia Hart, Amy

Rees, Pat Sirois, David Smith, William Brooks Jr.

NOAA Restoration Center, Orono, Me

Matt Bernier, Civil Engineer/Fisheries Habitat Restoration Specialist

PaperRoute LLC, Carter Becker, owner of Gardiner Paper Board Dam

Town of Litchfield, Kelly Weisenfels, Acting Town Manager **Selectboard**, Gary Parker, Rayna Liebowitz, Mark Russell

Town of Richmond, Adam Garland, Town Manager

Selectboard, Robert Bodge, Chair, Andrew Alexander, Randy Bodge, David Thompson, O'Neil LaPlante

Upstream, Tina Wood, Chair, Steve Brooke, Richard Behr

AGENDA

Goals of today's meeting: Update stakeholders on fish passage progress on the stream, create next best action steps and hear comments or questions ahead of the January publication of Fish Passage Analysis at Gardiner Paperboard Dam and New Mills Dam by Acadia Civil Works.

1) Welcome, Introductions and review of the agenda.
Additions/Amendments. (5 mins)

2) Updates: Maine Department of Marine Resources, Sean Ledwin (5 mins) followed by any brief updates on fish passage from invited stakeholders. (5 mins each)

3) Discussion on next best action steps for fish passage. (20 mins)

4) Questions/Clarifications/Comments about upcoming publication of Cobbossee Stream Fish Passage Analysis at Gardiner Paperboard Dam and New Mills Dam (2 mins each organization)

5) Follow up meeting:
Date: