

MacNeil, Jami

From: MacNeil, Jami
Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2019 10:06 AM
To: Kinne Stires
Subject: RE: public comment

Dear Mr. Stires,

Thank you for your comments regarding the construction of a boat ramp and pier system in Alna as proposed by Jeffrey Spinney. The Department is currently reviewing the application under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. The Department accepted the application for processing on September 9, 2019. The statutory deadline for the Department to reach a final decision on the application is January 7, 2020; however, the goal date for a decision is November 15, 2019. Written comments will be accepted until a decision is issued.

Your comments will be added to the file and your concerns will be considered during the review of the project. The Department's record, which includes the application of specific interest to you, is available to be viewed at any time. Feel free to contact the Department's File Room at (207) 287-7843 to request a day and time that is convenient for you to view the record.

You may contact me with additional concerns, questions, or comments. I can be reached at (207) 446-4894 or via email at jami.macneil@maine.gov.

Sincerely,

-Jami MacNeil
Environmental Specialist III
Bureau of Land Resources
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
(207) 446-4894 | jami.macneil@maine.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Kinne Stires <stires@nnei.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2019 6:00 PM
To: MacNeil, Jami <Jami.MacNeil@maine.gov>
Subject: public comment

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jami MacNeil
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Resources
Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Dear Ms. MacNeil,

I wish to file a public comment in response to the permit application of Jeff Spinney (126 Golden Ridge Road, Alna) for a recreational boat ramp/pier/float facility. Although his club members would like to have a more convenient place to launch their boats and other recreational craft, this section of the river is completely wrong for such use. I'll try to paint

a picture of the area in terms more in keeping with its use over the past 10,000 years or so. I canoed on this stretch of the river as a boy in the late 50's and was accompanied by one of the few pairs of eagles still around after DDT had worked its disastrous magic. Salmon were in the river then, but suffered a decline shortly thereafter. The stretch of the Sheepscot river to which I am referring is the 3-mile portion from just north of Sheepscot village to the beginnings of Head Tide village (Puddledock, to be specific). That section of the river, in my youth, was as wild as any river in Maine's wilderness, due to the fact that it lies between the falls at Sheepscot Village and Bass Falls. It is remarkable that, with the exception of a small float for canoe launching and a single house that can be seen through dense trees due to its courteous setback, it has remained seemingly wild. The trees have replaced the fields after the farming of the late 1700's through the early 1900's and the river has returned to its pre-1600's glory, something only experienced by the true natives of those times.

Four points (of many) to consider:

- 1) The salmon have come back, the striped bass have, too. As a result, funds from Atlantic Salmon Federation, together with federal funds, are financing a large project to reconfigure the Head Tide dam to allow all fish species to migrate to spawning grounds at the appropriate time in the spring. I have genuine concerns that motorized boat traffic in the shallow waters of the Sheepscot River in the proposal area would be the beginning of the end to the wildness now enjoyed by humans, and would cut off a necessary path for anadromous fish.
- 2) The region upriver from the proposed facility is navigable only by canoe and kayak, except at very high tides. At low tide, it is necessary to get out and walk the canoe through the rocks at Bass Falls. Being at the most northern extreme of navigable water (before encountering Bass Falls), as well as its being grossly out of character with the wildness of this stretch of river, makes this proposed site unsuitable for its intended purpose—a recreational facility for at least 25 members of a club.
- 3) Downriver about ½-mile from Jeff Spinney's site is Juniper Hill School. The school exists for the education of its students in the natural world. They spend a large portion of every day outside, and depending on the age group, that could be all day, for the preschool, to half of the day, for older kids. The students learn from being in the natural world. To have boats traveling past their otherwise wild environment would be an off-putting distraction, and major conflict of the worst kind.
- 4) Boats launched into the river, at this site will be floating in water that may be quite fresh (as opposed to saline) depending on the runoff. Those boats may carry fresh-water organisms never seen in this river—organisms from other bodies of water. Speculation, to be sure, but certainly possible.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
A. McKinne Stires (Kinne)