

February 18, 2020

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Dear Jami and Jay:

I have read through the draft permit DEP issued Jeff Spinney and note the important conditions it lays out. Thank you for them and any additional clarifications that can be made. Still, as I reflect on the conversations over the last four and more months, I find the DEP's conclusions of this draft based on faulty assumptions, assumptions long pointed out as faulty, and faulty assumptions left unaddressed, for reasons I don't understand. At the very least, addressing these assumptions – there still is time -- would help to overcome the unfortunate impression that this draft leaves, that is, that the decision on this application had been made long ago.

The draft falsely assumes:

1. **That the Sheepscot River from the village of Sheepscot to Head Tide is uniform and can be considered a unit.** Based on this assumption, then, a photo of a boat at a dock is taken as evidence of current motorboat traffic and of the existence of other docks, even though both photo of dock and boat are from well down on the river. Similarly, on the basis of this assumption, evidence submitted of dock structures comparable to Mr. Spinney's proposed pier is accepted as accurate, even though those referenced are in and around the village of Sheepscot and its wide and deep waters and open valley, not up here. As has been pointed out many times, by many people, this stretch of the river is not that stretch; there are no structures above the powerlines; those living on and along the river, now, see and long have seen few if any motorboats here and consider the proposal an unjustified and unnecessary intrusion on a wild, quiet, and undeveloped river. Most of the draft permit's arguments collapse when this assumption is recognized as false. Moreover, anyone who knows the area sadly has to ask how the DEP conducts its research, whether the DEP knows the territory on which it is issuing judgment, whether it has any understanding or appreciation of that area, or, even more sadly, whether it even cares.

2. **That a large, deep-water pier installation and boat launch on a narrow, shallow stretch of river without any structures can “blend in” with the surroundings.** There is no way it can fit in, and those going by can only wonder who gave approval for it and on what grounds.
3. **That the impact of one person on this stretch of river is no different from that of 25 and perhaps many more.** We start with 25, significant in contrast to a family, and serious enough. But should the club grow in membership, as is more than likely, there could be yet more boats at the pier, with parking in the field, maybe at river’s edge. And then there will be “guests,” “friends,” those claiming to be guests of members or friends, and those simply showing up. Who will verify appropriate access to and at the pier and proper behavior there? What will be the consequences to the river, esthetically and ecologically? Perhaps there someday will be a public boat launch and campground there?
4. **That 7.5 miles of highway is too far to go for a boat launch, even when Wiscasset’s is on deep, wide open water, not onto a narrow, shallow speed-limited river at the bottom of a long and difficult dirt access road.** Even if the arbitrary setting of 7.5 miles from a member’s home to Wiscasset were to be granted, people here regularly drive that far and farther, to school, work, and the supermarket and think nothing of it. It’s hard to imagine advancing such an argument in the first place, much less anyone accepting it.
5. **That the applicant’s representations can be accepted at face value.**

As issued, the draft does not fully correspond to the time and labor the DEP and others have invested in this application over the last five months. As noted above, the unfortunate impression, which is hard for me to understand, is that approval of the application was ensured, from the start.

Sincerely,

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