



**TOWN of CENTER HARBOR
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 140
CENTER HARBOR, NH 03226**

**Tel: 603-253-4561
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November 11, 2015

Page 1 of 2

Mr. Gino Infascelli
Public Works Permitting Officer
NHDES Water Division
Wetlands Bureau
29 Hazen Dr., P. O. Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095

Re: Waukewan Rd. Bridge, Project # 24579; Bridge # 080/040

Dear Mr. Infascelli,

On October 27, 2015 NHDOT met with the towns of Center Harbor, New Hampton and its respective Select Boards to discuss the potential replacement project of the bridge located at the mouth of the Snake River and the inlet of Lake Waukewan on Waukewan Rd. This bridge is locally known as Mosquito Bridge. At that meeting, DOT requested a letter be sent from the municipal Conservation Commissions to you expressing our environmental concerns regarding NHDOT's plan to replace the bridge, make changes to the roadway in the bridge area and impact the Snake River Prime Wetland Complex and associated wetland buffers.

Recognized for its high value habitat, important water quality function, uniqueness and unspoiled character, the town of Center Harbor voted in March 2011 to place the Snake River Wetland Complex into Prime Wetland status. In turn, on March 15, 2012, NHDES designated the Snake River wetlands a Prime Wetland Complex, thereby affording it the highest level of protection under state regulation (File # 2012-00595). In her approval letter, Mary Ann Tilton, Assistant Bureau Administrator, NHDES Wetlands Bureau, expressed that "the Snake River wetlands serves an extremely critical water quality attenuation function as it serves as the largest filtering wetland upstream of the Lake Waukewan (public drinking) water supply. The Snake River wetland traps sediment and transforms road salt and other pollutants from the associated roadway run-off. The Snake River deepwater habitat is very high for migratory waterfowl. Overall the Snake River wetland provides excellent wildlife habitat with a rich and diverse array of invertebrates and vertebrates".

November 4, 2015
Mr. Gino Infascelli
Re: Waukewan Rd. Bridge
Page 2 of 2

According to Center Harbor's Natural Resource Inventory, the Snake River in its entirety is considered a SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA. The Center Harbor Conservation Commission, following RSA 36-A: 2, "for the proper utilization and protection of the natural resources and for the protection of watershed resources...", and with the intent of upholding the goals of the town of Center Harbor's Master Plan i.e., "to protect water quality, significant wetlands and wildlife habitat", is adamantly opposed to any replacement plan of the Snake River Mosquito Bridge on Waukewan Rd. or changes to the bridge area roadway. We believe there will be irreparable damage to the function and value of the Snake River Prime Wetland Complex and associated wetland buffers based on foreseen and unforeseen consequences to this fragile, unspoiled wetland area. Specifically, we oppose any removal or replacement of the granite abutments, any changes to the bridge opening (stream crossing), changes to the width or span of the bridge and any change in footprint, and/or any changes or disruption of the wetland and wetland buffer topography.

We acknowledge that the Snake River Mosquito Bridge is in need of maintenance. In order to maintain the integrity of the Snake River Wetland Complex, we expect NHDOT will utilize the utmost caution and care when performing repairs to the bridge.

Sincerely,

Harry Viens, Chairman

Karin Karagozian, Commissioner

Gwendolyn Bronson, Commissioner

ENC: Letter from Former Center Harbor Conservation Commissioners

CC: William Cass, Assistant Commissioner NHDOT
Christopher Waszczuk, Director Project Development NHDOT
Ronald Crickard, Chief, Project Management NHDOT
L. Robert Landry, P.E. Bureau of Bridge Design NHDOT
Mary Ann Tilton, Assistant Bureau Administrator, NHDES Wetlands Bureau
Lori Sommer, Mitigation Coordinator, NHDES Wetlands Bureau
Joseph Kenney, Executive Councilor District 1
Valerie Fraser, State Representative District Belknap 1
Board of Selectmen, Town of Center Harbor
Board of Selectmen, Town of New Hampton
Town of New Hampton Conservation Commission