

**International St. Croix River Watershed Board  
Board & Partners Meeting**

**Thursday, June 10, 2021**

**10:00am to 12:30pm ATLANTIC (9:00am to 11:30am EASTERN)**

**Meeting Notes (FINAL)**

<b>Atlantic Time</b>	<b>Eastern Time</b>	
<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>MS Teams and Meeting Logistics</b>
<b>10:05 am</b>	<b>9:05 am</b>	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b>  <i>Rene Savoie, St. Croix Board, Canadian Chair</i>  <i>Colonel John Atilano II, St. Croix Board, US Chair</i>  <i>Henry Lickers and Lance Yohe, IJC Commissioners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land acknowledgement, opening remarks and introductions led by Canadian Co-Chair, Rene Savoie.</li> </ul>
<b>10:10 am</b>	<b>9:15 am</b>	<p><b>Meeting Participant Roll Call</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of participants (see Annex 1)</li> </ul>
<b>10:15 am</b>	<b>9:20 am</b>	<p><b>Update of St. Croix Board Activities 2020-2021</b>  <i>Rene Savoie, St. Croix Board, Canadian Chair</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Board activities, including compliance with IJC Orders of Approval for Milltown, Grand Falls, Vanceboro and Forest City dams and water quality target, current status of Board funded projects, and other activities/issues the Board is tracking provide by Canadian Co-Chair, Rene Savoie</li> <li>• No questions.</li> </ul>
<b>10:25 am</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<p><b>Update on 2020-2021 IJC International Watershed Initiative (IWI) Projects</b>            Digital Library (<i>Elizabeth Hyslop, Director, St. Croix International Waterway Commission</i>)            Youth Engagement (<i>Elizabeth Hyslop, Director, SCIWC</i>)            Fish Counts at Milltown &amp; Fish Telemetry (<i>Elizabeth Hyslop, Director, SCIWC</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The St. Croix International Waterway Commission (SCIWC) has undertaken a project to catalogue, digitize and make documents more accessible online to the public. To date, 468 texts and 723 maps have been logged into the online public access library on Librarika. For more information got the SCIWC website at <a href="https://www.stcroix.org/sciwc-library">https://www.stcroix.org/sciwc-library</a></li> <li>• SCIWC program staff have developed a new Youth Engagement Program aimed at connecting elementary school students with the natural wonder of the St. Croix. To date, the program has hosted sessions for Grade 4/5 students on “Story and Place: Indigenous and Settler Relations” and “Tree Detectives and Carbon Sinks”.</li> </ul>

- SCIWC conducted fish counts at Milltown dam again in 2021. Approximately 553,000 fish have been counted to date. It is also worth noting that the first fish arrived approximately 2 weeks earlier than normal.
- A fish tracking project is also underway to complement the fish counts. Over 470 fish were tagged. Of these fish, 360 have currently been tracked above Milltown dam, 65 were tracked below Woodland dam and 20 have passed above the dam, while 3 were tracked passing through Grand Falls dam. None of the tagged fish have been tracked at the other dams, yet.
- Questions:
  - What are you finding from fish scale samples? Response: Full results will be in end of season report but current indication is that fish sampled this year are mainly older.

**Water Stress Index (Michelle Gray, William Miller and Colin , University of New Brunswick, Canadian Rivers Institute)**

- The Canadian Rivers Institute at the University of New Brunswick has undertaken a project to create a St. Croix/Skutik Water Stress Index (WSI). This project is a pilot to develop a tool for determining and visualizing potential stressors affecting the overall health of the watershed.
- The WSI is a computer-based Geographic Information System (GIS) and data mapping exercise to assess variables with linkages to stress on water quality and watershed health
- Twelve stressor variables, with mechanistic linkages to water quality and watershed health, were selected for the project. Data availability from both Canada and the U.S. and interoperability of this data also influenced the selection of variables.
- Variables were analyzed for 50 sub-watersheds within the study area. Initial results identified five sub-watersheds experiencing more stress. This increased stressed was linked to variables such as urbanization, roads, aquatic barriers, and nitrogen and phosphorus leaching.
- The project also outlines limitations and data gaps encountered, as well as potential next steps.
- Comments:
  - The Water Stress Index (WSI) helps to indicate areas where higher or lower stress could be expected. Model results can be validated with on-the-ground water quality monitoring data.
  - A flow model would help improve WSI assessment/results

**Water Quality Monitoring Coordination (Christine Garron, Environment & Climate Change Canada and Nick Stasulis, US Geological Survey)**

- Project is just getting underway.
- Initial step is creation of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC includes Canada and US representatives from departments, agencies and organization conducting water quality monitoring in the watershed.
- The purpose of the TAC is to share information on current water quality monitoring activities and discuss opportunities to share information and strategically coordinate water quality monitoring.
- Results of Water Stress Index (WSI) will also help to inform TAC discussions on strategic/coordinated water quality monitoring

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions or comments.</li> </ul>
11:10 am	10:10 am	<p><b>Update on Partners Projects</b></p> <p>Skutik River Next Steps Working Group (<i>Erica Stuart, Fisheries &amp; Oceans Canada</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skutik River Next Steps Working Group includes partners from the Passamaquoddy Tribes and Peskotomuhkati Nation, Canadian Federal Government, and US Federal Government as well as new partners from US Dept. of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Services and Maine Dept. of Marine Resources. The Working Group is also exploring potential of NB joining as a partner.</li> <li>Key topics of discussion include: fish passage concerns, watershed restoration and barrier removals, fish outing and sampling activities</li> <li>Currently finalizing an amended version of the Skutik River Statement of Cooperation to include new partners.</li> <li>No questions or comments.</li> </ul> <p>Fisheries &amp; Oceans Canada (<i>Harvey Miller &amp; Erica Stuart, Fisheries &amp; Oceans Canada</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DFO currently has broad national priorities related to Indigenous reconciliation and Fisheries Act priorities for fish passage and habitat protection. Specific to the St. Croix, DFO has priorities around restoration of Salmon Falls (Milltown dam removal), fish passage at Milltown and upper fishways, fish counting and sampling at Milltown, and supporting habitat restoration projects.</li> <li>Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From a DFO and other partner perspective, there is some concern about current low flow rates at Milltown for fish passage resulting in fish having difficulty accessing the fish ladder.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Milltown Decommissioning (<i>Pam MacKay, NB Power for Danny Kane</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted proposal to decommission the Milltown Hydroelectric Generating Facility to New Brunswick Environmental Impact Assessment in December 2020, which is currently under review by an NB EIA Technical Review Committee.</li> <li>Filed permit application with Maine Dept of Environmental Protection in March 2021, which is currently under review.</li> <li>Filed permit application with US Army Corps of Engineers in May 2021 and are currently waiting for confirmation.</li> <li>Links for the NB EIA and ME DEP application can be found on the NB Power web page (<a href="https://www.nbpower.com/en/about-us/projects/milltown-decommissioning/">https://www.nbpower.com/en/about-us/projects/milltown-decommissioning/</a>). USACE link will be posted once available.</li> <li>Will be conducting archaeological field testing on the NB Power property in the US later in June and in Canada later this summer. Also conducting a freshwater mussel survey for Maine DEP.</li> <li>Pending approvals, the plan is to start Canadian decommissioning in July 2022 and after that proceed with decommissioning on the US side.</li> <li>No questions or comments.</li> </ul>
11:40 pm	10:40 am	<p><b>Other – Update on Forest City Dam Status</b></p> <p>FYI on current FERC status (<i>Barbara Blumeris, St. Croix Board Secretary</i>)</p> <p>Potential transfer of ownership proposal (<i>Elizabeth Hyslop, SCIWC</i>)</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State of Maine and Premier of New Brunswick submitted a letter to FERC expressing support for seeking a 3rd party owner of the dam.</li> <li>• The request to remove FERC regulatory authority over the structure and pursue 3rd party ownership of Forest City dam is still pending FERC decision.</li> <li>• SCIWC has formed a subcommittee to begin preliminary discussion on the potential to assume ownership of Forest City dam and the responsibilities/requirements of the owner.</li> <li>• No questions or comments.</li> </ul>
11:50 am	10:50 am	<p><b>Other - Fish Passage Studies</b>  Status of LimnoTech &amp; Dillon studies (<i>Rene Savoie, St. Croix Board</i>)  Discussion - Next steps and collaborative opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the Board's mandate to facilitate and support studies to better understand conditions in the watershed, and to provide information and tools to support decision-makers, the Board, with funding from the IJC's International Watershed Initiative, contracted LimnoTech to conduct a study exploring the opportunities and constraints to maintain or improve fish passage at Woodland and Grand Falls dams.</li> <li>• The report outlines a tiered screening process that was conducted to identify potential fish passage technologies appropriate for target species and configurations (alternatives) of technologies applicable to the specific sites. The report also offers conceptual designs and ballpark costs estimates, and well as recommends information gaps and recommended studies to fill key data needs for further conceptual planning.</li> <li>• The contract is now complete and the final report will be posted on the Board's website, shortly (<a href="https://www.ijc.org/en/scrwb">https://www.ijc.org/en/scrwb</a>).</li> <li>• Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment was made about the need to look at the long-term fish passage picture. Current fish passage conditions and existing carrying capacity will not support the goal of restoring fish numbers into the 10s of millions. Extensive work and significant resources will be required and the Board's support in developing and implementing this long-term vision for fish restoration is welcome.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:10 pm	11:10 am	<p><b>Other - 2021 Water Conditions in the St. Croix</b>  Update on current and forecast conditions (<i>Nick Stasulis, US Geological Survey</i>)  Discussion - Issues, challenges and needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, water conditions in Maine are currently below normal. In Washington County, water levels are approximately 3 inches below normal.</li> <li>• Below normal precipitation from December 2019 to December 2020 (latest data available), below normal snowpack for winter 2021, and lower amounts of precipitation so far this spring are contributing to the current lower water level conditions.</li> <li>• At the Baring, ME gauge, the normal spring peak for run-off occurs in mid-to late-April but this year occurred in early April. It appears the recession into summer conditions is also happening earlier this year and Baring is currently consider to be at below normal water level conditions. The gauge</li> </ul>

		<p>at Vanceboro is also currently showing water levels on the low end of normal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If low precipitation and warmer temperature conditions persist, the St. Croix could experience another summer with below normal water level conditions.</li> <li>• Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many concerns in the watershed over drought conditions and low water levels in 2020 and so far in spring 2021.</li> <li>• Low water level conditions are currently affecting fish passage at Milltown dam and partners asked if there was a role the Board could play in helping to address this issue. The Board indicated it could raise the issue with Woodland Pulp and encourage efforts to coordinate water needs and managing existing water availability and permitting requirements.</li> <li>• The idea was raised about a special communications plan for the watershed that could share information on water level conditions during unusual situations in order to raise awareness and avoid misunderstanding/conflict associated with managing available water for different permitting requirements and user needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>12:25 pm</b>	<b>11:25 am</b>	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b>  <i>Henry Lickers and Lance Yohe, IJC Commissioners</i>  <i>Colonel John Atilano II, St. Croix Board, US Chair</i>  <i>Rene Savoie, St. Croix Board, Canadian Chair</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing remarks led by Canadian Co-Chair, Rene Savoie.</li> </ul>
<b>12:30 pm</b>	<b>11:30 am</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>

## **ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **International Joint Commission (IJC)**

Henry Lickers, Canadian Commissioner  
Lance Yohe, U.S. Commissioner  
Adam Greeley, Advisor, U.S. Section, International Joint Commission  
Rob Phillips, Advisor, Canadian Section, International Joint Commission

### **IJC St. Croix Board - Canadian Section**

Rene Savoie, Co-Chair, Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Chief Hugh Akagi, Peskotomuhkati  
Don Fox, New Brunswick Dept. of Environment & Local Government  
Vincent Mercier, Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Robert Stephenson, Fisheries & Oceans Canada and Local Resident

### **IJC St. Croix Board - U.S. Section**

Colonel John A. Atilano II, Co-Chair, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Jackie LeClair, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### **Presenters**

Colin Wesley Boynton, University of New Brunswick, Canadian Rivers Institute  
Christine Garron, Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Michelle Gray, University of New Brunswick, Canadian Rivers Institute  
Elizabeth Hyslop, St Croix International Waterway Commission  
Pam MacKay (for Danny Kane), NB Power  
William Millar, University of New Brunswick, Canadian Rivers Institute  
Nick Stasulis, U.S. Geological Survey  
Erica Stuart, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

### **Observers**

Ed Basset, Passamaquoddy at Pleasant Point  
Johnathan Bumgarner, US Geological Survey  
Josh Cummings, US State Department  
Kevin Dean, Woodland Pulp LCC  
George Guimond  
Nathalie Lavoie, Global Affairs Canada  
Felicia Minotti, Global Affairs Canada  
Harvey Miller, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Lita O'Hallaran, Peskotomuhkati Recognition Group Inc.  
Michael Sears, InnovaSea  
Madonna Soctomah  
Rick Scribner  
Doug Walker  
George Wallace, St. Croix International Waterway Commission  
David Whittingham, St. Croix International Waterway Commission  
Lesley Wilbur, NB Dept of Natural Resources and Energy Development representative St. Croix International Waterway Commission

**Board Secretaries**

Barbara Blumeris, U.S. Secretary, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Kathryn Parlee, Canadian Secretary, Environment and Climate Change Canada