

# ARROWSIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

January 17, 2023

Present: Phine Ewing (Chair), Karen Robbins, Angel Braestrup, Mark Spalding, Karin Sadtler, Jeff Pinette, Priscilla Tucker, Clark Cooper, Jody Jones, Jack Witham, Carla Weeks (guest considering joining ACC), Jessie Nankin McMahon, Jenna Howard, Mike Brown (Maine DMR)

The meeting, held in person, was called to order by Phine at 5:00 PM.

**1. Minutes:** The minutes of December meetings were formally accepted.

## **2. Alewives**

Mike Brown from Maine DMR presented an update on Arrowsic's alewives and provided information on the potential of future harvests. He shared two handouts, the 2017 Proposed Sewall Pond River Herring Fisheries Management Plan to the Atlantic States Fisheries Management Commission to create a 5-year pilot project that would determine whether a small pond fishery could be added to Maine's commercial river herring fishery and 2008-2022 data collected alewife on sex ratios, ages, proportion that spawned the previous year, total of fish counted, and quantity of bushels/year. The 2022 data suggest Sewall Pond alewife population is 12,428 fish.

Mike answered several questions from the Conservation Commission members. Karen asked whether there was the possibility of "too many fish" in Sewall Pond if they remain unharvested. Mike said that the system would regulate itself (food supply, etc) but it is unclear what the effects would be on other species in the pond of a particularly abundant alewife population.

Carla asked what an Arrowsic commercial harvest would look like. Mike said it is up to the town, but it could take a number of different forms. He mentioned that most towns do not allow recreational fishing, but others allow residents to take 25 fish/day on four designated days/week for a specified amount of time. Some of the ideas he shared were:

- The existing trap could be used for commercial harvest, either by members of the town or a contracted harvester, for a permitted amount. The harvester could count the fish and samples could be collected for analysis.
- A ceremonial annual harvest by the Town/Conservation Commission could serve as a signal of success in restoring the fishery with the sale of the fish benefitting the restoration project.
- Engagement of local youth in harvesting some fish, even smoking the fish, with any revenue going to the town's education fund.

*Some notes in this section were kindly recorded by Angel Braestrup.*

**3. Alewife Working Group:** The Conservation Commission decided to receive the Working Group's recommendation regarding this spring provisional harvest at February's meeting and take action on closing or harvesting in the coming years.

#### **4. Climate Resilience Committee report**

Jody Jones, committee co-chair, came to our meeting to describe the committee's roles, their kickoff meeting, membership, impressive participation, and sub-committee assignment structure. The committee seems to be meeting targets and seeing enthusiasm from our community. Jenna and Jesse are the ACC members who attended the kickoff meeting and will continue to report back on the Climate Resilience Committee work.

#### **5. Water Access**

Ongoing efforts to identify water access were discussed. An update may come at our February meeting.

#### **6. Picture Posts**

Rte 127 Picture Posts are scheduled to be maintained, especially those at the north end causeway.

#### **7. Nips Bottles**

We received an email from Jon Biehler regarding small plastic bottles.

#### **8. Mail**

Bruce Zwilick's annual gift was received and was to be deposited in the designated Alewife Account.

#### **9. Nature Notes**

The commission noted that warm days throughout our winter so far have caused irregularities for ice on Sewall pond. Priscilla noted coyote tracks near her home.

Meeting adjourned after 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenna Howard