

ARROWSIC FISH COMMISSION  
22 MAY 2025  
MINUTES

**PRESENT:**

Karen Robbins  
Jeff Pinnette, Deputy Fish Warden  
Mike McMahon, Deputy Fish Warden  
Angel Braestrup, Commissioner  
Wendy Van Dyke, member of the public  
Vince Capone, member of the public

Karen Robbins called the meeting to order.

- I. **Approval of the Minutes:** The motion to approve the April 24 minutes as presented was passed by unanimous consent.
- II. **Public Comment:** There were no comments from the public at this time.
- III. **Sewell Creek Project update:** Karen Robbins reported that the workshop on the Sewell Creek project included two members of the SWCA team that had conducted the survey and made recommendations in their report which all of the commissioners had a chance to review. The SWCA team agreed that it is the tidal nature of the creek all the way to the pond that affects both fish passage and defining solutions.

The two possible solutions to the problem of ensuring fish passage were to (1) remove the remnants of the old impoundments (relic dams) to reduce the opportunity for fish to be stranded in them during high tide events and (2) address the problem of encroaching vegetation (mostly cattails) by restoring hardwood habitat that would in turn create sufficient shade to discourage marsh reeds from growing.

It was agreed that an informal vegetation assessment would be worth undertaking. Drone footage has been used in other projects for and might be useful here. There was also some discussion about the best ways to accomplish removal of the old impoundments – mechanical or by hand, and the types of permits that would be needed.

- IV. **Monitoring:** The overall in-migration numbers exceed those of the 2024 season. At the same time, the count has been variable with days of under 25 fish being counted (if any) and days with over 2000 fish being counted. Karen reported that other runs have either not been opened this year or have had very low numbers of in-migrating alewives, so the Arrowsic run seems healthy by comparison

The number of adults schooling to leave has been relatively small and so removal of the trap is likely to be left until after the Memorial Day weekend.

The SWCA team had suggested that monitoring of juvenile outmigration and the conditions of the creek when they were migrating would improve the design of any improvements to the fish passage. It was agreed that Karen would design a framework for that monitoring and permission to place a photo post so that a photo could be taken by volunteers from the same position each time. She plans to report back at the June meeting.

She said that zooplankton levels continue to be monitored by the Conservation Commission as part of the overall assessment of the health of the pond.

It was agreed that recruiting additional volunteers for monitoring of both in-migration and out-migration

- V. **Celebratory Harvest:** Jeff Pinnette reported that the weather on May 10<sup>th</sup> was very rainy and windy, and very few fish were in the trap. Karen Robbins suggested that it be called off after the first hour for safety reasons.
- VI. **eDNA Sampling:** The March sample from Sewell Pond showed that brook trout were present, but did not show any of the other species that the commissioners have seen or caught in the pond. The report on the more recent sample taken in the creek in May will likely come at the end of July. It was agreed that no further sampling would be done this year if that report did not offer more information than the first one.

Mike McMahon reported that the conditions for the conductivity testing at the 1 a.m. peak tide were dark and poor weather. The conductivity testing was undertaken to help decide where monitors should be installed should outside partners choose to place them further out in the pond than the culvert.

- VII. **Other:** Karen Robbins reported that the Town's Annual Report had been sent to the printer for the Town meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the Fire House. It includes the amendments to the founding ordinance for the Fish Commission that the Commission approved earlier in the year. It also includes the budget request of \$1000 for the upcoming year.
- VIII. **Next meeting:** 6PM June 26, 2025 at the Town Hall.