

**Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge
Transcripts of Formal Public Hearing on Draft CCP/EIS
Hadley, MA; November 9, 2015**

*[Transcript of Comments Recorded from R09_0019.MP3]
[A total of 10 speakers provided comments]*

Speaker # 1, Larry Bandolin

[9:59 start]

My name is Larry Bandolin. I live in Belchertown. I am unaffiliated. I have left a written document with Nancy McGarigal.

I congratulate Project Leader Andrew French, Natural Resource Planner Nancy McGarigal, all of Andy's staff, and all of the people who had input into this superb document. As the Conte refuge's first planning team leader and the first manager, I know how difficult it is to put together such a comprehensive document. I had the honor to meet Congressman Conte; to work with Tim Chaise, his aide who was the primary drafter of the Conte legislation; with Steve Rideout, who had input into the legislation that was eventually signed by President George H. W. Bush. I also had the opportunity to consult with Mrs. Conte and with his Pittsfield staff after the Congressman's death.

The 7.2 million acre Connecticut River Watershed is very complex from both an environmental and socioeconomic standpoint. A mix of land acquisition and conservation partnerships is the best way to accomplish the intent of the law. The balance set forth in alternative C in this document also continues our initial vision. If there is additional emphasis on enhancing fish species' access to the full range that they need, I can fully support alternative C as the preferred alternative. I will communicate some of my reasons in my oral testimony. There will be more information in the written document I have given to Nancy.

The law authorizing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish the refuge clearly includes all native species. Issues about providing fish access to the full range of their needed habitat was a big part of my professional career. I have 30 years of fish management experience, much of it in the Connecticut River Watershed and other New England waters and at the National level. I was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative on the Connecticut River Anadromous Fish Technical Committee, as well as those for the Merrimack River and the Maine Rivers. I was also acting chair of the Connecticut River Anadromous Fish Technical Committee and held a position in Washington as a National Fish Passage Coordinator. When I worked in Connecticut, I was involved in fish passage issues.

I cannot think of a single species of fish that does not migrate to fulfill some portion of its life cycle. We are all aware of the great migrations taken by salmon, shad, American eels, and lamprey eels. However, migration for even short distances is critical, particularly for spawning. Beginning with the early European settlers, flowing water habitats were fragmented as small dams were built to power grist and saw mills. As technology progressed, larger dams were built

to provide direct mechanical power and eventually hydroelectric power. In addition to dams, culverts – whose bottoms are above the streambed – also block fish migration. I suggest that, on refuge lands, a survey of culverts be done with an eye towards determining the need for fish passage. With the addition of more emphasis on enhancing fish access to native habitats, I fully support alternative C.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and the great work you have done.

[14:47 end]

Speaker #2, Mike Leonard

[14:56 start]

I'm a consulting forester. I own my own business, North Quabbin Forestry, Petersham, Mass. I've been a practicing forester for almost 30 years. I manage thousands of acres across the state, private landowners.

I'm growing very concerned with the amount of acreage owned by Federal and State agencies that is not being managed. Some years ago, Harvard Forest published a research paper called "The Illusion of Preservation." Americans consume a lot of forest products. We only produce part of what we consume. We're importing a lot, some of which comes from countries that don't have our high environmental standards. So when you lock up land that precludes any forest management, that increases our imports and also increases environmental degradation in other countries. Hence, the illusion.

In Massachusetts, we only produce a paltry two percent of what we consume, but we could be producing much more. The very small percentage of acreage that would be managed in the refuge is a good example of this, but even this small amount of acreage would be threatened with litigation from groups who oppose all forest management. So I'm against any expansion of the refuge. Better to keep the land in private ownership, where we – consulting foresters – will do a much better job managing it.

[16:37 end]

Speaker #3, declined to speak

Speaker #4, Andrew Fisk

[16:53 start]

My name is Andrew Fisk, and I am here representing the Connecticut River Watershed Council. I live in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight on behalf of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan, as well as the expansion of the Conte refuge. The Watershed Council has been around since 1952, working on behalf of the entire four-state watershed - all 11,000 square miles. We count it as a very proud part of our heritage that we helped to found the Conte refuge. We gave the Conte its first piece of land, Third Island. We're proud to say that the first land holding in the Conte refuge came from the Watershed Council. We most recently also donated a 0.5-acre island,

Saddle Island in Bath, New Hampshire. We have worked long and hard to support the refuge in many ways beyond just land acquisition.

We note that the purposes of the refuge are one of its important features. It's a unique refuge – four states - the entire boundary of the watershed – and it is founded on partnerships. It recognizes that it is not just the Federal government who has an oar in the water, but it is local, regional, and national organizations, as well as municipalities and states. Its purposes are devoted to conservation, recreation, and education, and we fully support that fact.

We actually like to note that the refuge here, as well as the Refuge System nationally, has many tremendous examples of active management. The Refuge System, as well as the staff of the Conte, should take great pride in that. Right here in Hadley, we point to the Fork River Division and how the refuge has done a tremendous amount of work to, in terms of recreation and education, establish a fully-accessible boardwalk in the Fork River Division that allows a tremendous number of people to access really terrific wildlife habitat and also has worked very hard to restore the natural hydrology and improve wetland habitat. So the refuge is very capable of good, sophisticated, and restorative management which we fully support.

We'd like to note that the Comprehensive Conservation Plan notes that the land will be acquired by willing sellers. An important part of this conversation is the fact that landowners also need willing buyers. At the Watershed Council, part of our work is to provide resources and technical expertise to private landowners who are seeking to maintain their investments and productive forestlands. We use financial resources from agencies, like the Natural Resources Conservation Service, that bring money and expertise to help. For example, farmland along the Connecticut River no longer wash down shore.

We also think that another important tool for landowners is having a willing buyer. To provide the opportunity to expand the refuge for people who seek to voluntarily put their land forward is an important tool for the private landowner.

I would also note that, in terms of management, there are some very good recent examples of acquisitions within the refuge that are easements and maintain working forests. There is a very recent deal in New Hampshire that exemplified how private landowners can have easements acquired by the refuge that maintains property in a working forest.

We also note that the refuge has a very big mission. We look to the Fish and Wildlife Service to support the staffing, as well as the land acquisition and management goals of the refuge. And know that as the refuge goals, its staffing also increase commensurate with that.

We'll be submitting written comments that provide a little more direction on some of our comments. They echo what Mr. Bandolin said. We would like to see more narrative and descriptions about how the existing fisheries program that operate within the refuge and river coordinator's office relates to the refuge. The refuge is the entire watershed, its fish and wildlife, and it is contingent upon the Fish and Wildlife Service to strategically meld all the resources from different programs in order to meet the refuge's vision and that means Fisheries, Ecological Services, Science Applications being able to provide resources toward that mission.

Finally, the Watershed Council, we prefer alternative B, although we are happy with either B or C. We find that is a very coherent expansion of the refuge. We're only at 35,000 acres; we can still reach 96,000. We feel that acquisitions focused on easements would be responsive to communities' concerns about how the refuge expands. Thank you very much.

[21:39 end]

Speaker #5, Jonah Keane

[21:52 start]

Good evening. My name is Jonah Keane. I'm from Greenfield, Massachusetts. I work for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. I'm the Sanctuary Director for the Connecticut River Valley. I'm here to represent this statewide organization.

We will be submitting a more detailed, written comment. I just want to briefly voice our support for alternative C here and thank you for the opportunity for it.

We just completed a large, strategic planning process at Mass. Audubon that involved numerous aspects of our organization. Members, professionals in the community, and various folks from around the state that have put together a document that represents what we feel are priorities for protecting the nature of Massachusetts. It's a pretty comprehensive document that includes input from many stakeholders from around the state. That document highlights, in my opinion, many of the same aspects of what is proposed in alternative C, and in our written comments we'll go into more depth as to what those are specifically. Quick note would be some of the expanded environmental education that is mentioned in there, as well as some of the expanded, active habitat management are two key notes.

As for the active habitat management, that's something that's a real priority for us and we're happy to see that in alternative C. We've seen, though our "State of the Birds," that there's been an incredible decline on bird species that rely on early successional habitat and that active management of the habitat we see as essential. So something that we're doing on our properties, and that's something we're happy to see as proposed expansion on Fish and Wildlife properties.

Lastly, specifically the Mill River Conservation Area – the proposed expansion there – includes our Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. The land around that Sanctuary and the Sanctuary itself, we consider to be highly valuable - ecologically valuable - properties. We prioritize that land around Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary as some of the most important property we see to protect in that area, so we're very happy to see that in alternative C in that expanded Mill River Conservation Focus Area. We look forward to working with Fish and Wildlife in protecting that additional land. Thank you.

[24:34 end]

Speaker #6, Noah Pollock

[24:46 start]

Hello, this is Noah Pollock from Vermont's River Conservancy and Friends of Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail and a resident of Sharon, Vermont. The Vermont River Conservancy is a small land trust that works statewide in Vermont - sometimes in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut if folks convince us to go down that way but mostly in Vermont - serving mostly land along the waters of the state. The Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail is a multi-partner effort to foster non-motorized recreation along the Connecticut River with a focus on campsites for paddlers and adequate access.

I want to express my strong support for the Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge and the conservation work that they do in the region. We have been fortunate enough to be able to partner with them on several projects, from access projects to conservation projects. Their approach to conservation through a partnership approach is really a model for how I believe the Fish and Wildlife Refuge System should work.

We express our support for both alternatives B and C, and - a few additional comments. Particularly, we are excited by the potential to work closely, to partner with the refuge, to expand the Paddlers' Trail on and off lands that are owned by the refuge. However, we would like to see more details on what that could look like. Perhaps it would be a good exercise to come up with a more - bit of a planning process for how that could look, and what kind of parameters would be in place before we put campsites on to land that is owned by the refuge.

I'd also like to - we do a lot of work up in the Nulhegan River, and the Nulhegan Basin is a real gem in the Refuge System. A lot of our work is focused downstream where the refuge boundaries officially ends, and I encourage the refuge to consider expanding the boundaries of that Focus Area to include further down in the watershed - the last 3 or 4 miles - so it's actually the whole Nulhegan Watershed, as opposed to stopping abruptly about 3 miles upstream. There are several landowners we have been working with who are excited by conserving the River and that stretch, and we'd be excited to partner with the refuge to protect the rest of that important corridor.

I would also like to suggest that the refuge consider adding flood resiliency to their goals in terms of protecting floodplain forest and restoration. It is a goal that is compatible with the other goals that the refuge is working on, but it is worth adding into the lens of focus.

I'd also like to emphasize the need for adequate funding for staffing and managing these lands. The refuge does an amazing job with the resources they have, but I do want to make sure that they are fully able to deliver on the conservation that they are setting out to do and that is worthy of. Thank you very much.

[28:07 end]

Speaker 7, Kim Lutz

[28:16 start]

Good evening. My name is Kim Lutz. I live in Northampton, Massachusetts. I am the Chair of the Friends of the Silvio O. Conte Refuge. For those of you who are not familiar with Friends groups, Friends groups across the country support refuges in all the important activities that happen in and on refuges. In the case of Friends of Conte, we're a little bit different in that we represent 70 organizations basin-wide. Those organizations span the gamut of small local watershed groups, land trusts, groups that focus on outdoor recreation, museums, nature centers, groups that focus on education, and groups that focus on conservation. We span really the gamut of all different kinds of groups across all four states – large groups representing large, national organizations to regional organizations to local groups.

The vision of the Friends is that we live, work, and play in a watershed where vibrant and engaged communities and healthy natural environment and ecologically sustainable economy are valued. I think that vision dovetails very nicely with the tenants of the Conte refuge. Therefore, we appreciate this opportunity to comment on the plan and endorse the great work of the Fish and Wildlife Service in putting together the plan.

The Conte refuge is both an environmental and economic success story here in Massachusetts, as well as in our neighboring states where the refuge extends. The Connecticut River and its tributaries are ribbons of irreplaceable habitat that wind through every community and shelter countless species. Protecting these areas for future generations will have a lasting impact on the character and quality of our natural environment and strengthen our tourist economy.

The draft CCP is consistent with the vision, mission, and purpose of the Conte refuge. Further, we support the four refuge goals as outlined in the plan: habitat conservation; education; recreation; and, most notably especially as it pertains to our group, developing partnerships.

We believe that Conte refuge plays an important role in the life of the Connecticut River Valley, providing unique opportunities for people to enjoy the beauty and recreational opportunities of the region, along with protecting vital wildlife habitat in strategic locations. We also applaud the fact that refuges are open to the public and there are countless recreational opportunities that provide people recreational opportunities and benefit the economy of local areas. It's a place where wildlife enthusiasts, hikers, paddlers, hunters, anglers can visit each refuge and enjoy all that the Connecticut River has to offer.

We will be submitting written comments, but we really appreciate this opportunity to be here tonight to support the Conte refuge. Thank you.

[31:31 end]

Speaker #8, Markelle Smith

[31:40 start]

I live in Williamsburg. I'm here representing The Nature Conservancy.

The four chapters of The Nature Conservancy representing the Connecticut River appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Silvio O. Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement. We commend the entire staff of the Conte refuge, lead conservation planner Nancy McGarigal, as well as staff from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 5 for producing a well-considered plan, which carefully plans for conservation of the natural resources in the Connecticut River Watershed. The CCP was an enormous undertaking, and the Service has done an exceptional job representing the biological diversity of the region through the plan and emphasizing the vital role of partnerships.

The Conservancy concurs with the Fish and Wildlife Service and strongly endorses alternative C as the preferred alternative.

We would specifically like to acknowledge the work of the Service on the following areas:

- The criteria and considerations for selections are clearly described.
- The plan is inclusive of important partners in the watersheds and actively promotes partnerships and collaboration.
- Thorough research and detail regarding the composition and structure of forests and the desired condition is admirable
- The Biological Integrity, Biological Diversity and Environmental Health section is particularly important as a framework for thinking about conservation and educating the public about the particulars and nuances involved in conserving species and ecosystems.

Regarding the land protection plan, we are fully supportive of the effort to consolidate land acquisitions in Conservation Focus Areas surrounded by Conservation Partnership Areas to maximize efficiency and conservation effectiveness, knowing full well that this approach leaves some of the smaller, high biodiversity sites leaves out of the Service's scope. We are hopeful that, we and other conservation organizations with the capacity to conserve and steward these smaller sites, will be able to do so.

We think the CCP would benefit from more definition as to the role of the Fish and Wildlife Service in CPAs. Will the Service acquire land? When not acquiring land, what types of support will the Fish and Wildlife Service offer to partner with the landowners?

Regarding parts of the plan that touch down here in Massachusetts, we would like to commend the Service for your focus on the Dead Branch and Westfield River CFAs. These areas consistently rank highly as some of the best places in southern New England to protect both intact forest and high quality tributaries to the Westfield River. There are just a couple of suggestions we had related to these CFAs:

- A suggested expansion of the Dead Branch CFA south to include additional land south in the Town of Huntington and adjacent to the east branch of the Westfield River and land owned by the Army Corps.
- In the Westfield River CFA, another suggested expansion south to incorporate some additional land in Beckett and Chester that contains frontage on the Westfield River. That's the longest free-flowing reach in Massachusetts and one that the refuge already owns land.

All of these suggestions have been included in our written comments and are reflected in maps for those.

We have new data from the U. Mass. Critical land project, which confirms the importance of keeping critical pathways between larger areas of protected land in natural cover to facilitate the movement of wildlife species. We are pleased to note that the area Westfield River CPA encompasses many of these important pathways that connect both the Dead Branch and Westfield River CFAs.

Just a couple of additional points:

- The Connecticut River and its tributaries have been a priority for The Nature Conservancy since the late 1960s, when the Conservancy protected a portion of Burnham Brook in the lower Watershed. Since then, we have protected important places from the headwaters to the mouth of the river with the help of excellent conservation partners, like Conte.
- Refuges are open to the public and are popular recreation sites known for their hunting and fishing, paddling and hiking, environmental education programs, and wildlife observation. For every \$1.00 appropriated to the Refuge System, an average of \$4.87 is returned to local economies.
- Partners are working with the Service on restoration projects, such as dam removals, culvert replacements, and riparian restoration. Not only are these projects good for the environment, they are good for the economy. In a recent study, it was determined that the average economic output of a restoration project generated a 75 percent return on investment and created 12.5 full-time equivalent jobs for every one million dollar spent.
- The Conte is unique among refuges for its focus on the entire watershed and for its focus not just on conservation but also on environmental education and recreation for the more than 2.3 million residents who call the watershed home.

Thank you for already making such positive contributions to the conservation of key ecosystems throughout Massachusetts. We thank you for writing this plan and look forward to working with you in years ahead.

[36:43 end]

Speaker #9, Kristen Sykes

[36:55 start]

Hi, my name is Kristen Sykes. I live in Florence, Massachusetts. I'm here representing the Appalachian Mountain Club. The Appalachian Mountain Club, which I will refer to as the AMC, is the country's oldest conservation and recreation organization in the country. We actually have had folks who are members of ours paddling on the Connecticut River and its tributaries since the late 1800s. In fact, the AMC was said to have popularized the sport of canoeing and paddling in America. Supposedly, the J-stroke was invented by the AMC, probably in these parts. We have deep roots in the Connecticut River Watershed.

The AMC and myself and also members of the Friends of Conte and also co-chairs of the Friends of Conte Recreation Education Committee, and we fully support the mission and goals

of the Conte refuge and are very appreciative of all the staff for all the time and due diligence put into the CCP.

We also appreciate the support of regional waterways trails initiatives and opportunities, such as the Paddlers' Trail; regional land-based trail initiatives and opportunities, such as the New England National Scenic Trail, which is pretty much wholly encompassed in the Conte refuge; and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, which is in various parts of the watershed and the four states. All three action alternatives allow public recreation.

We do have some feedback and comments for the refuge with regards to the Paddlers' Trail and New England National Scenic Trail. The CCP demonstrates, in most of the alternatives and a lot of the text, the need to get people outdoors and connected to places. I think a lot of the conservation goals of the CCP will be served by getting more people out on the river. We feel that the plan is a little bit vague as to how that recreation is actually going to be implemented, especially the non-wildlife dependent recreation like paddling and hiking.

Some suggestions, which we'll also put in writing, include:

- The development of a map that shows potential trail connections to the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail and the New England National Scenic Trail, the trails with lands within the refuge.
- Identification of areas within the refuge for the development of Connecticut River Paddler's Trail, New England National Scenic Trail, and primitive camp sites.
- Evaluating opportunities for new trails or trail connections that can be made to local or regional trails as lands are acquired. I do know that in some of the CFAs, it does delineate when new lands are acquired it will be looked at for water trails, kayaking trails, land trails, but we would like to see a little bit more specifics and we'd love to sit down with the refuge staff to identify out some of those opportunities.
- Delineating potential river access points within the refuge, particularly in urban areas such as Hartford and Springfield. I know there's a lot having to do with urban wildlife refuges and being able to connect with some of these communities further downstream that sometimes see the river but can't even really get out to see the river.
- We would love to work with the Conte refuge on the development of online and hardcopy outreach materials, such as Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail and New England National Scenic Trail. We see those as a few places where it could be a little bit more delineated in the CCP.
- With regards to the educational goals, we suggest that the Conte coordinate educational programming with other significantly natural resources, such as the "Trails to Every Classroom," which is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's been working on with the Appalachian Trail. Also, the AMC is working on that with regard to the New England National Scenic Trail.

Again, thank you so much for all the good effort. We look forward to working with you all to getting more people out on the river.

[40:33 end]

Speaker #10, declined to speak

Speaker #11, declined to speak

Speaker #12, Kristin DeBoer

[40:56 start]

Good evening. My name is Kristin DeBoer. I am the Executive Director of Kestrel Land Trust. We are the land trust serving the heart of the Connecticut River Valley, based in Amherst, serving Hadley, Northampton, and many of the towns that is covered by the Conte refuge at large. We are very proud to be a partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create the Conte refuge and to expand it into the future.

We're very supportive of alternative C overall as the preferred alternative of the refuge. We are an organization, a land trust that does working forest conservation, working farmland conservation, as well as creating public lands. I am particularly pleased to see all the partners in the room supporting this vision and also working in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create that patchwork that our Valley needs to maintain the rural quality of life and the ecological integrity of this region, which is farmlands, forest, and public lands. I think a lot of people tend to think of conservation as keeping people out, but I think the Conte refuge is a great example of inviting people in. Finding ways to realize that living here, in this place as we do, is not just about having good houses, good jobs, good schools, but also having places to experience the natural side of the Connecticut River Valley. I thank you for providing that opportunity with the Conte refuge.

Specifically, I think we are often referred to as the "boots on the ground" - land trust that's working with the refuge - so we are actively engaged with landowner contacts for acquisitions in the Fort River in particular. In that particular proposal, the alternative C I think is great in a lot of ways - to expand it to 1,662 acres. There's also an opportunity to connect the Fort River Division to the Mount Holyoke Range, and that's another area that's, of course, a statewide priority. If it is possible to add additional partner conservation focus areas in the area between the Fort River and Mount Holyoke Range, I think that would be wonderful. If not, working in partnership on the opportunity to work with landowners who want to conserve farmland, of course, is another great option.

We're also supportive of the Mill River expansion and the Dead Branch expansion, which also serve our region.

As other speakers have referred to before, I think the emphasis on willing sellers is very important and having willing buyers, of course, is part of that equation. I noted as the CCP - which is very comprehensive and visionary - has it has come out, we've also lost the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I think presenting this vision in a way that helps reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund is something that Kestrel will be working towards.

We're also very grateful that the Conte refuge has been supportive of other Federal investments and state investments in farm and forest conservation, including forest legacy and the APR program.

As far as the education and outreach goals – Kestrel also has gone through a strategic planning process and defined for ourselves a need to connect with the urban communities in this area - particularly perhaps not just urban people but people who feel disconnected to nature. I think there are a lot more folks out there who are experiencing that, especially of all ages. We're very much looking forward to working with the refuge to expand those opportunities through our grassroots connections, particularly in Amherst and Northampton and East Hampton.

I also liked Kristen's comments earlier regarding the recreational aspects of Conte refuge, particularly finding the synergy with the Paddlers' Trail and the National Scenic Trail.

Finally, today we were out on the Conte refuge at the Fort River Division on the ADA-accessible trail. I think that is really an amazing pilot program that could be replicated in many areas as a method of really engaging the public with our special natural areas in the Valley.

I thank you for your support, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you to make this work.

[45:48 end]

[Hearing Officer made opportunity for anyone in audience to speak]

Speaker: Curt Heidinger

[46:21 start]

Hello, my name is Curt Heidinger. For the last four years or so, I've been writing a blog called "The Ripple" for "Hilltown Families," which serves the moms and dads of the valley with all kinds of educational events that they can go to. I am also the Director of the Biocitizens School in West Hampton.

I would like to say something about the Dead Branch as an outdoor classroom. It is an extraordinary resource, and I think that's why it's been mentioned a couple times by other folks. The east branch of the Westfield River is a very special living river; it's a Wild and Scenic River. From what I can see in your proposal C would protect a lot of the uplands, wetlands, the small brooks that are very cold, that are prime cold fishery habitat. Presently there is a great interest on the part of the people who read Hilltown Families and also who take part in some of the stuff that Biocitizen does, and also the Westfield River Watershed Alliance and *et cetera*, and amongst the landowners for this land to be pulled together because the folks know that it is something very special. What you're doing is amazing from what I can see by the map on the table back there. It would be a perfect time to bring a management focus to this amazing area. You have the Federal level – the Army Corps – pretty much just controlling the flood aspects down in Huntington, and you've got the DEP with a whole bunch of other properties scattered within that area, and then you've got the state holding on to some properties, and then you've got private landowners who have put stuff into conservation, and then people who would like more stuff put into conservation. This move by the Fish and Wildlife Service would really organize things and bring a lot of attention that's coordinated at the same time.

It was very interesting to hear the gentleman talk about forestry management and how maybe an emphasis too much on pristine lands makes it so that – well, for instance food can't be produced - that Indian Hollow area that's just really part of this whole mini biome has fields that were used for centuries that aren't used - that could be used - but get cut like lawns. The forests were certainly much more productive for food making, and I'm thinking of that book written "1491" written by an Amherst author, who said there's the "melpa" management technique that's really kind of an Aztec or Mexican way of looking at the forest as a food resource. It's kind of ironic that the valley is called Indian Hollow that the Nonotauks went into that area to continue the type of agriculture that was done pretty close to this building for a few thousand years. The kind of interesting project and thinking that I think is going to be possible with that type with what I see in proposal C because this is a great opportunity to have recreation and also to use an entire valley as an educational resource.

The entire Westfield Watershed seems like it would be a great place to divert anadromous fish considering what's going on in Holyoke and up at Turner's Falls. The fish don't seem to be getting up over those dams. Here you have three rivers that are in pretty good shape. I would like the Dead Branch to be prioritized with that type of really large Connecticut River biome because like I said the cold water brooks are cold.

[51:48 end]

[End of Hearing]