



Rushing Rivers Institute
River Science for River Conservation

March 30, 2012

Board of Selectmen
Lancaster Town Hall
695 Main Street
Lancaster, MA 01523

To the Board of Selectmen of Lancaster:

As the chair of the Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI), I am writing to convey our support of the Wekepeke rehabilitation efforts at the Bartlett Pond Dam site in Lancaster, MA. Once funded, such a project would correspond well with the Initiative's mission to restore the ecological integrity of the Wekepeke Brook.

The WWRI, recently formed in November 2011, is a watershed-wide group of town and state officials, residents, professionals and conservation organizations who are concerned about the current health of the Wekepeke Brook Watershed. A wealth of information on the ecological status of the Wekepeke Brook has come out of Nestlé Waters North America's study on the area's water resources. Since the company made this information freely available to the communities of the watershed last September 2011, WWRI has utilized this knowledge to discuss and explore options for restoring the cold-water system.

From an ecological standpoint, removing failing and unused infrastructure along the brook is a key method in improving habitat for cold-water species, while also increasing the connectivity within the watershed as a whole. The Wekepeke is a valuable water resource as it supports high densities and diversity of aquatic species including brook trout and a vibrant population of eastern pearl mussel – both of which indicate good ecological health. The proposed restoration actions will open about five miles of stream habitat to the Nashua River, thus reconnecting and improving the health of the entire river ecosystem. Thereby, the WWRI supports the Town of Lancaster's decision to remove rather than replace the Bartlett Pond Dam in order to benefit the ecology of the Wekepeke Brook Watershed and the communities it serves.

WWRI looks forward to following the progress of the Bartlett Pond Dam project and the resulting ecological improvements for the overall watershed. If the WWRI can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at piotr@rushingrivers.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Piotr Parasiewicz
Director, Rushing Rivers Institute

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