

## **Attachment E: Potential Impacts to Recreational Users.**

In response to the request for more detailed viewshed analysis for the outstanding river segments, we have developed the attached maps and computer model overlays for the Kennebec River near the Wyman Hydro, the Lower Kennebec River above the Williams Dam in Solon, Cold Stream in Johnson Mountain Twp, Moxie Stream in Moxie Gore, Carrabassett River in North Anson, Sandy River in Farmington, the Androscoggin River at the crossing location in Auburn, the Androscoggin River between Livermore and Livermore Falls, the Androscoggin River adjacent to the Riverlands State Park, and the West Branch of the Sheepscot River. For each area, the existing and proposed transmission line structure and conductor visibility has been evaluated separately so any increase in visibility as a result from NECEC is shown. Also included are a sampling of the computer model overlays produced in 3D Studio Max and Google Earth used to determine likely visibility from waterbodies evaluated for the Visual Impact Assessment.

In order to collect more specific user data for these river segments, we contacted representatives from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Fisheries Divisions: Scott Davis, Region B Biology Specialist, and John Perry and Elizabeth Thorndike, Rangeley Lakes Region. John Boland, Former Director of the ME IF&W Fisheries Division and Director of the Bureau of Resource Management, provided additional information for resources with which he has extensive knowledge. We also contacted Chris Russell at Kennebec River Anglers in Caratunk and Dag's Bait & Sporting Goods in Auburn. A common theme throughout all these these conversations and previous research was that anglers are generally more focused on the quality of the fishery and access when selecting where to fish as opposed to the quality of the surrounding environment.

Areas such as the Kennebec River below the Wyman Dam are heavily used with anglers standing below the existing transmission line because of the high quality of the cold water fishery. Maintaining and or improving access to certain locations may mitigate any slight impacts to the recreational users in this locations.

Streams such as Cold Stream are sought out because of their unique cold water fishery and the 'remote' feeling of the experience. However, anglers often access the stream via Capital Road and are accustomed to traveling through active timber harvesting areas.

The following are notes from TJD&A conversations on fishing locations and the potential affect the Project may have on fishing the rivers and streams.

### **UPPER KENNEBEC RIVER**

#### ***Scott Davis, IF&W Regional Biologist***

Hard to account for anglers below Harris Station because of the curving nature of the river. Moderate to high use below Harris Station, typically see 20-30 people right at the base of the dam.

#### ***Chris Russell from Kennebec River Anglers***

Typically takes clients to Harris Dam/Upper Kennebec River – clients interested in the Dam. Last year he took approximately 200 clients on fishing trips from the Harris Dam to Route 201 in the West Forks.

## **LOWER KENNEBEC – BELOW WYMAN DAM**

*John Boland, Former Director of the ME IF&W Fisheries Division*

Lower Kennebec River is a cold water fishery. Anglers typically fish from shoreline, some drift boaters, or float trips in canoes and kayaks. Prime time to fish is May to September, but extends into October if weather and flows permit. Primarily fishing for Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, and Landlocked Salmon. Anglers need to be aware of releases and changes in water level – experienced anglers use the changes to their advantage.

*Scott Davis, IF&W Regional Biologist*

Below Wyman Dam is a significant and popular fishing location with anglers accessing both sides of the river. Anglers fish under the power lines now. Anglers care about the quality of the fishing and don't seem to care much about the existing transmission lines and substation. The additional transmission lines shouldn't affect the use of the area. Anglers are very aware of water releases from the dam and fluctuating water levels. Species present include wild Rainbow Trout, Whitefish, wild Landlocked Salmon, wild Brook Trout. Decline of Whitefish fisheries is due to presence of Smallmouth Bass. Whitefish creates a unique fishery opportunity. Most anglers are after trout and salmon.

This section of the river is navigable from the Route 16 bridge in Bingham north to the Wyman Dam. Considered a high use area, year-round use, smallmouth bass, warm water fishery, the Dept is not managing bass – allow harvest as many as possible. Water fluctuation, minimum flow is 1200-1500 cfs. In general if 5,000 cfs or less - people fishing by wading.

Tributaries to this section of the Kennebec River are important for Rainbow and Brook Trout spawning and for fishing. This section of river is not stocked but some species come through from Moosehead/Indian Pond and even through Flagstaff/Dead River into the Kennebec. Wyman Lake is stocked with Splake and Brook Trout. Multiple guides use this area. When water levels drop less people use. Austin Stream can have 15-25 people where it connects to the Kennebec.

### ***Kennebec River Anglers***

Biggest area of concern about Project in this area of the Kennebec River below the Wyman Dam is access – both during construction and afterwards. He typically accesses from the west side of the river in Pleasant Ridge Plt. Anglers in this area would appreciate if CMP would maintain and potentially improve the access road and boat launch, and provide parking. Additional amenities like restrooms and a picnic area in that location would also be appreciated but would need to be vandal resistant. His clients are interested in seeing Wyman Dam and understanding the larger fishery issues, like having fish ladders at dam.

## **LOWER KENNEBEC - ABOVE WILLIAMS DAM IN SOLON**

*John Boland, Former Director of the ME IF&W Fisheries Division*

High use area, people go there to fish. Cannot see the existing transmission line now due to an esker on the west side of the river. Doesn't think seeing tops of a couple of structures would affect the use of the area. The impoundment area is important, accessible with the right kind of boat, great rises, dry fly fishing, bass fishing present because of Deadwater. The section between Rte 16 and the Deadwater has a lot of boulders and riffles – need to be experienced boater to navigate, don't see motor boats on this section and don't generally see people run the river, accessible by wading, fly fishing, canoers, kayaks, and tube.

### ***Kennebec River Anglers***

The impoundment area above Williams Dam is the most braided section of the river and there are many nice channels to fish. The areas surrounded by farmland, which has nice scenery, but because the fishery isn't what it used to be – he doesn't take clients there often.

## **COLD STREAM**

### ***Scott Davis***

The Cold Stream Forest Parcels was purchased by State because it is a significant fisheries tributary to the Kennebec River. Cold Stream is a cold water refuge with high angler use. There are numerous access points to Cold Stream off logging roads. Capitol Road is used for access, very accessible, people camp off the side logging roads and walk into Stream. Cold Stream has high summer use in particular when other streams get warmer. Area below the bridge/culvert has a deeper pool and is popular to fish.

### ***Kennebec River Anglers***

They take clients to Cold Stream often – typically 10 to 12 times a year. There are three good ways to access the stream: Lower Stream Road, Upper Stream Road and Capital Road. Typically fishes in the 1.5 mile section above Capital Road near Cold Stream Falls and where Cold Stream meets the Kennebec downstream of Capital Road. His bigger concern was again related to access and whether the Project would prevent access around Capital Road. He typically accesses the lower portion of the stream via Wilson Hill Road and isn't thrilled about having to drive under the proposed transmission line to get there, however, he will still continue to bring clients to Cold Stream even if the Project was in place.

## **MOXIE STREAM**

### ***Scott Davis***

Overall it has low use for fishing. Some people access off Fish Pond Road (adjacent to where the Project will cross). The Dept does not have a lot of user data – difficult stream to gather information.

### ***Kennebec River Anglers***

They do not fish in Moxie Stream. He knows locals who will float the stream a few times a year in a canoe.

## **MOXIE POND**

### ***Scott Davis***

Moxie Pond is warm water fishery that gets low use.

### ***Kennebec River Anglers***

They may fish Moxie Pond once a year just to see how the fishing is but doesn't bring clients. Used locally by people who have camps on the pond. Not a popular fishery.

**OTHER PONDS** used by *Kennebec River Anglers*: Big Berry Pond, Lang and Little Lang Pond. (None of which will have Project views). He does not bring clients to Rock Pond or Parlin Pond.

## **CARRABASSETT RIVER, BELOW THE NORTH ANSON GORGE/FALLS**

### ***John Boland***

The status of Atlantic Salmon is an ongoing concern. The river is stocked with Rainbow Trout. The Madison stretch of the Kennebec River located south of the confluence with Carrabassett River is moderately fished and has a fair amount of guide activity. Some anglers like views but good fishing is more important.

### ***Scott Davis***

People use the hole below the falls to fish for Smallmouth Bass mostly. A lot of duck hunters and anglers use the boat landing access off Madison Street, which is north of Savage Island and in proximity to the existing transmission line crossing. Anglers often use the back channels (logans) for fishing and hunting. High use areas for kayakers, canoers, rubber rafts, and inner tubes. Anglers after wild Landlocked Salmon, Brown and Brook Trout, Smallmouth Bass. It is difficult to bring boats up to the hole below the falls, so anglers often drag their boats up below the powerlines and walk up to the hole. The existing powerlines do not affect the use of the area by anglers. Most duck hunters do not hunt near power lines because the birds can be confused and hesitate not knowing whether to go over or above. However, it can be an opportunity for an experienced hunter. There are other areas available for hunting in the back channels of the Kennebec and near Weston Island. Most duck hunters use the main channel of the Kennebec and not this area of the Carrabassett River.

## **SANDY RIVER**

### ***John Boland***

Meandering low water river, not great habitat. Low use for fishing, would expect the peak to be spring time. He wasn't sure about stocking. There maybe Brook Trout, Atlantic Salmon. Seems like there is more paddling and fiddleheading use.

### ***Scott Davis***

Low use for fishing, used in April, too shallow. Seems like good area for duck hunting, People fish for Smallmouth Bass and Salmon. Most commonly fished area of the Sandy River is closer to Madison.

## **ANDROSCOGGIN RIVER**

### ***John Boland***

This general area of the Androscoggin River is used for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. Most of the section of river has wooded riverbanks that screens the existing transmission line from view. The section of the river near the existing transmission line crossing is a warm water fishery with primarily bass, northern pike, and smallmouth bass. The river is no longer stocked with cold water species because the returns were too low. This section is primarily fished from May to September with peak in summertime. The area gets light to moderate use depending on water flow (people don't fish during high spring flows), water turbidity (people don't fish after a big rain event), water temperature (warm water fish are more active when 60 degrees or higher) and general weather. Because the Androscoggin was once one of the dirtiest rivers, there is minimal development on the edge of the river so anglers can fish close to urban areas but feel like they are in rural areas.

### ***Dag's Bait & Sporting Goods***

The area near the existing transmission line crossing isn't used for fishing because it is too shallow. The better fishing is south of the crossing closer to Lisbon and from the Gulf Island Dam north to the Center Bridge Road in Turner. (This is the area adjacent to the Androscoggin Riverlands State Park.) This area is moderately used with anglers mostly fishing for pike when the water is warm enough between May to late September. Ice fishing is typically Jan through early March. Other places visited for fishing include the Nezinscot River from Turner to the Androscoggin River, which is stocked with trout, typically for fly fishing, and Allen Pond.

### ***Androscoggin Land Trust – from website, <https://androscogginlandtrust.org/events/>***

The ALT supports the Androscoggin River Source to Sea Canoe Trek (3<sup>rd</sup> annual), which traverses the entire length of the river (and crosses under the transmission lines), leads events in the Androscoggin Riverlands State Park all times of year like snowshoeing event coming up, leads Learn to Fish programs through the summer, directs river clean ups (mostly in Auburn/Lewiston area), programs after hours paddling south of Lewiston Auburn and fall foliage paddle trip along the shoreline of State Park. The area along the State Park appears to be used more for programming than the area near the existing transmission line crossing south of Lewiston- Auburn.

## **WEST BRANCH OF THE SHEEPSCOT RIVER**

### ***Scott Davis***

Atlantic Salmon project is ongoing for this tributary so the river is not stocked. The river is a significant tributary producing Brook Trout. He was unsure about use by anglers because there hasn't been a lot of data collected. Seem to be low use numbers, more of a local resource.

## **VOLUNTARY ANGLER DATA**

John Perry and Elizabeth Thorndike from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Fisheries Division - Rangeley Lakes Region provided additional voluntary angler data for the Sandy River, Carrabassett River, Cold Stream, and Moxie Stream from 1991 to 2016. Their general comments and timing of use are summarized below.

*The Sandy River data, although not broken down, is likely comprised of mostly Farmington and Strong based on the Brown Trout and Smallmouth Bass numbers. It is a popular fishery in the Farmington area and as documented has a 41 percent success rate among anglers. Anglers reported use from April to October.*

*The Carrabassett River angler use is spread throughout the river and occurs primarily along reaches in close proximity to populations and road crossings. The most common time of use by anglers was May and June and the most commonly caught species was Brook Trout.*

*Moxie Stream and Cold Stream have little representation in our database due to their remoteness and access. They are both unique Brook Trout fisheries however the anglers participating in keeping fishing records don't concentrate their fishing efforts there. The few anglers reporting on Cold Stream were there in June and September. The few reporting on Moxie Stream fished during April, May and June.*

*It should be noted for all waters that voluntary fishing data is not an accurate reflection of use. We use this data primarily for catch rates in efforts to better understand the fishery and properly manage regulations and or stocking rates.*