

December 2, 2008

Memo to: Rob Belue

From: Mayor Richard Soluri

Re: Comments for submitted projects

NFTA - Outer Harbor Bell Slip Stabilization

Very worthy project with Greenway consistency

The Research Foundation of SUNY

It appears to be an interesting study with a total cost of \$71,865 including salaries. I defer to the Greenway Ecological Fund

Boundary Waters Treaty

Outstanding proposal for an extension patent Bi National event reaching across several standing committees. This activity will focus much attention to the Niagara River and the "Greenway Corridor"

City of Niagara Falls – Gill Creek Park Lighting

Consistent with Niagara River Greenway and an excellent project

Tuscarora Nation

Sound ecological enhancements program and consistent goals

Niagara River Greenway

DEC Comments re Consistency, 7th Round Projects

NFTA Outer Harbor Bell Slip Stabilization Project

This proposal seeks to enhance and protect ecological aspects of the recently completed Outer Harbor Greenbelt Project. This project, constructed with over \$13 million of Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) dollars through the DEC, provides 6400 feet of public walking/biking path and 18.4 acres of associated greenspace. The project included significant investment in improving habitat in the inlet from Lake Erie known as the Bell Slip. Recent storms have damaged these improvements and threaten its viability. This proposal is clearly consistent with the Greenway Plan. Because DEC has already approved \$500,000 from the ERP for this proposed enhancement and staff will continue to provide assistance and input to NFTA should the project be implemented, however, we are recusing ourselves from voting on consistency.

Ecological Enhancement, Wetland Restoration, and Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project on Tuscarora Nation Land Within The Niagara River Greenway Corridor

This project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway goals and seeks to restore lost biological diversity and enhance ecological function of the headwaters of Gill Creek. Particular aspects of the project will need to be reviewed by the Ecological Standing Committee in order to determine just how hydrology and stream flows have been affected and surveys done to determine the presence of rare wildlife species in the wetland. The cost of the project may also require further review by the Standing Committee.

Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial Celebration

This proposal is to allow the Greenway communities to share in the upcoming binational celebration of the historic Boundary Waters Treaty, widely considered the first environmental treaty between the US and Canada. Since the Niagara River is such a critical piece of this international boundary,

it is fitting that it be a major focus of the celebration. The project will help to promote the assets of the entire Greenway community and is clearly consistent with the goals and vision of the Plan.

Muskellunge *Esox masquinongy* Genetic Structure, Reproductive Ecology, and Interaction with the Fish Community: Acquiring Information Needed for Successful Management

This project is consistent with goals of the Niagara River Greenway and will seek to provide much needed information on an important game fish in the Niagara River ecosystem. Project will also be receiving matching funds from other sources. This fisheries resource is of both local and out of state importance as anglers from Canada, New York and other states have a keen interest in this species and will travel to pursue it, thus bringing additional money into the region. Since the DEC has had staff involved in the formation of this study we will recuse ourselves from voting on this project proposal.

Niagara Falls - Gill Creek Park Lighting

This proposal seeks to provide funding for enhanced lighting of an existing City Park. By improving the lighting, the City expects to increase the safe use of the Park by residents and to reduce the levels of vandalism and damage to existing Park structures. This will further allow it to make future investments in the Park with increased confidence that they will be worthwhile. While the Park is clearly within the Greenway corridor and will clearly benefit neighborhood residents, it is not as clear that the Greenway as a whole will significantly benefit. We will support a vote of consistent, then, but expect that the Standing Committee may have similar questions.

<i>Niagara River Greenway</i> ROUND SEVEN, vote 1/20/09	NFTA: Outer Harbor Bell Slip Stabilization Project	Tuscarora Nation: Restoration Projects	Boundary Waters Treaty Celebration	SUNY Research Foundation: Information for Successful Management	City of Niagara Falls: Gill Creek Park Lighting
Excellence / will meet world class standards			The event would highlight the global significance of protecting shared waters.	--	--
Sustainability / long-term viability & effectiveness	This is really the reason for this project; project would provide a long-term solution for stabilization.	Restoration and enhancement would promote ecological sustainability.		The project would identify needs for sustainable management of muskellunge.	--
Accessibility	--	Gill Creek Headwater/channel.		--	--
Ecological Integrity	Project work would avoid unnatural structural elements.	Yes - ecological enhancement, wetland restoration and aquatic habitat restoration.	Supports the significance of the Boundary Waters Treaty - to address cross-boundary pollution, articulate principles of boundary water resource development, and prohibit the diversion of boundary waters.	The project would consider conservation of muskellunge genetics ~ maximize their evolutionary potential.	--
Public Well-Being	Project would provide habitat for birds and fish; heighten public wellness.			--	Lighted park would enhance public well-being.
Connectivity	Bell Slip enhancements along the Port-Outer Harbor Waterfront Trail.	Yes - presume access to come (trails, pathways); promotes continuity of habitats.	Canadian connection/ would create connections between constituents, organizations and municipalities w/in NRG.	--	Project would increase opportunities for access to Gill Creek Park.
Restoration	Enhanced habitat	Yes, project restores ecological resources.	--	Yes, identification of priority nursery areas for protection and rehabilitation would help restore muskellunge.	--
Authenticity		The project would return sustainable ecological and cultural practices and traditions to the Tuscarora Nation Land.	Celebrates historic event.	--	--
Celebration	--	The project would reclaim habitat area and become a place for environmental education.	Centennial celebration and Boundary Waters Week	--	--

Partnerships	NYSDEC, USACOE	Many are expected, e.g., HETF, the Tuscarora School, the Niagara County Spoil and Water Conservation District, NYSDEC, USACOE, Niagara Univ, SUNY ESF, Cornell Univ.	Cooperation and support is widespread, bi-national and inclusive.	NYSDEC, SUNY-ESF, and local community.	--
Community Based	The City of Buffalo Draft LWRP (Sub-Area 3) identifies need for stabilization of Bell Slip with public access as the primary focus throughout the Outer Harbor.	Tuscarora Nation	--	--	City of Niagara Falls Strategic Master Plan
Improve Access	--	Would become place of environmental education.	Inherent in celebration.	--	Yes, lighting would provide more opportunities to enjoy the park.
Make Connections	--	--	The event is supported by the IJC, governments of Canada and the U.S., and the Niagara 10.	--	Lighting would improve the physical connection between the park and surrounding neighborhood.
Protect and Restore Environmental Systems	Project would protect and restore ecological resources.	Planning project would (eventually) restore the area to a condition similar to pre-construction of the NYPA project/ Provide increased habitat diversity, creation of fish habitat, restoration of native flora and fauna.	Promotes the importance of natural resource management.	Project would identify areas in need of protection and habitat restoration.	--
Celebrate History and Heritage	--	--	Yes, week-long activities would heighten awareness of the Boundary Waters Treaty.	--	--
Spark Revitalization and Renewal	--	--	--	--	--
Promote Long-Term Sustainability	--	--	--	Project would provide information needed to preserve muskellunge.	City's commitment.
Extend Olmsted's Legacy	--	--	--	--	Improves a riverfront park.
Consistency with Principles	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent

Priority Status	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent
Focus Area	Consistent	--	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent
Environmental Soundness	Shoreline stabilization would have a positive environmental impact.	--	--	--	--	Minimal impacts expected to result/
Implementable	Scheduled to begin in Spring 2009.	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent
Economic Viability	--	--	One-time event.	--	--	--
Local Sponsor or Partner	NFTA	Tuscarora Nation	multiple	Research Foundation - SUNY	City of Niagara Falls	City of Niagara Falls Strategic Master Plan
Matching Funds/ Leveraging	\$500,000 from the NYSDEC (Environmental Restoration Program)	No leveraging apparent at this phase.	Fund raising is being undertaken by a broad coalition of stakeholders.	Matching funds have been pledged by multiple agencies, e.g., NYSDEC, Niagara Musky Association.	No leveraging apparent.	
Consideration of other Planning Efforts	LWRP, NFTA's Outer Harbor Development Plan	--	--	--	City of Niagara Falls Strategic Master Plan	
Clear Benefits	Project would help to preserve the muskellunge population, provide area for migrating birds.	Project would enhance/restore critical ecological functions to an altered/degrade wetland complex.	Yes, the celebration would help to build regional capacity and cooperation.	Yes, fills critical information gaps needed for proper management of muskellunge.	Important asset in parks network; Niagara River & NRG.	

Project Review Comments and Findings
Paul G. Leuchner, Commissioner
Niagara River Greenway Commission
January 7, 2009

Ecological Enhancement, Wetland Restoration and Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project, Tuscarora Nation Land (Project No. 111808-A)

After collecting and analyzing field data, sustainable alternatives will be developed that have the potential to restore the hydrology and ecology of the upper reaches of Gill Creek a tributary to the Niagara River. The intent of this project is to restore the environmental values of this water course to conditions that existed prior to the construction of the Niagara Power Project.

The proposed project is fully *consistent* with principles, goals and guidelines that define the Niagara River Greenway Plan. Methodologies formulated as a result of this project will restore stressed or modified aquatic habitat adding value to the ecology of the Niagara River corridor. Further, these methodologies could have additional value as best management practices for environmental restoration that could be applied throughout the Niagara River Greenway.

Gill Creek Park Lighting, City of Niagara Falls (Project No. 111808-B)

The proposed project will add value and utility to Gill Creek Park allowing people to more fully enjoy a recreational asset that is a part of the Niagara River Greenway system. Improvement of lighting will increase the park user base and with increased activity existing vandalism issues should be less of a problem. Accordingly, this proposal is deemed to be *consistent* with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Outer Harbor Bell Slip Stabilization Project, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority: Revised December 2008 (Project No. 111808-C)

This project will restore the environmental enhancement measures that were damaged as a result of intense storm activity during 2008. Although not actually within the Niagara River, the Bell Slip has significant value as a shallow water fish spawning and nursery area. It also serves as a resting and feeding area for migratory birds and other species that follow the Lake Erie shoreline eventually entering the upper Niagara River. The project is well leveraged utilizing a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. In view of the above, the project is found to be *consistent* with the Niagara River Greenway Plan. The project will insure the continued existence of quality aquatic habitat that positively enhances the ecological and recreational sport fishing values of the Niagara River.

Muskellunge Genetic Structure, Reproductive Ecology and Fish Community Interaction Study, Research Foundation of the State University of New York (Project No. 111808-D)

The proposed project will add to the knowledge base for a fish species of significant recreational importance that inhabits the Niagara River. Research results will provide helpful measures that will insure effective management of this important fishery resource. The muskellunge is a high value sport fish species that attracts anglers from all over the country to the Niagara River thus adding value to the Niagara River Greenway. Accordingly, this proposal is found to be *consistent* with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.