

OCTOBER 2022

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the Maine Forest Products Council



Message from the Executive Director

PAT STRAUCH

For the Council, fall has been filled with events, meetings and opportunities to visit with members. First was our 62nd Annual Meeting at the Grand Summit Hotel in Newry. This two-day event, attended by nearly 100 people, was a big success. The Council would again like to thank our sponsors for making this event possible. We would also like to thank our speakers, including Governor Janet Mills and Hon. Paul LePage, and our membership.

Materials from the annual meeting, including press releases for award winners and videos from our federal delegation, visit maineforest.org/62nd-annual-meeting. Once recordings from the presentations become available, those too will be uploaded to this page.

The Council also launched a new website this fall, located at our old IP address (maineforest.org). We hope that members and the public find this new website to be straightforward and easy to use. We plan to use the "Legislative Action" tab to keep membership up to date on bills of interest as they progress through the legislative process. Under this tab, you will also find a [regulatory calendar](#) where we will keep a running list of opportunities for comment so our membership remains informed and engaged on the pressing matters of the day. I would encourage all members to regularly visit the new website, and to reach out to myself or Krysta with any questions or concerns.

The Council also hosted four candidate breakfasts at locations around the state, facilitated a meeting between snowmobile clubs, landowners and other interested parties, submitted comments to FERC in support of the Shawmut dam and closely monitored a commission that has met several times this fall to examine water issues. Summaries for all of these important activities are included below.

We are now entering the home stretch to election day, so we will soon know more about the landscape of the 132nd Legislature. Now is the time to brainstorm potential legislation. If there is a policy change you'd like to see, please let us know.

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MFPC Comments to FERC in support of Shawmut Dam

United States of America
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Comments in support of Brookfield White Pine Hydro, LLC, Project Nos. 2322-069, 2322-071, 2325-100, 2611-091

To whom it may concern,

The Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC) submits comments today in support of the relicensing of Brookfield White Pine Hydro, LLC's Shawmut dam on the Kennebec River. Since 1961, the Maine Forest Products Council has been the voice of Maine's forest economy. MFPC represents the diverse needs of Maine's forest products community. Our members are landowners, loggers, truckers, paper mills, tree farmers, foresters and lumber manufacturers and more. While the Council generally does not get involved with individual company permits, the precedent of this permit has far-reaching policy implications. The precedent of the Shawmut Dam permit has a very significant relationship to the entire wood supply chain in Maine as it relates to the Sappi Somerset mill.

In Maine, forest products are an \$8.1 billion industry that sustains more than 31,000 jobs (one out of every 25 jobs in Maine), providing \$1.7 billion in labor income annually and \$276 million in state and local taxes. In Somerset and Kennebec counties, where the four dams in question are located, the forest products industry provides nearly 4,000 direct jobs. These are good paying jobs with an economic impact that ripples throughout the region's economy.

Forest products businesses, from the stump to the mill, require regulatory stability to thrive. Without stability, investments are stifled, placing future viability and employment at significant risk. The pulp and paper industry, which directly supports nearly 5,000 jobs in Maine, relies heavily on the use of dams to operate.

If the Sappi mill goes down, it will have an enormous impact on the entire forest industry because there is already a shortage of loggers due to the recent shutdown of other papermills in the state. When the loggers are in the woods cutting pulpwood, they are also cutting saw logs. Loggers need both pulpwood and sawlog markets to survive. If the loggers lose their pulpwood market, then sawmills lose the loggers needed to supply logs. Therefore, if Sappi closes, Maine will lose jobs not only in papermill and the woods, but also in the sawmills and all the ancillary jobs that go with them.

Snowmobile Club Meeting

On October 18, the Council facilitated a productive meeting between landowners, snowmobile clubs, the Maine Snowmobile Association and the State to discuss the importance of the snowmobile industry to the economy. This industry is made possible by private forest landowners who allow public access, so these conversations are crucial. Thanks to Weyerhaeuser for hosting this meeting at their Bingham office, and to Senator Russell Black and Senator Paul Davis for attending.





FERC Comments Continued

Beyond simple economics, strong pulpwood markets support sustainable forestry by creating markets for timber stand improvements, which in turn create healthier and more resilient forests. Sappi's Somerset Mill is critical in this regard.

The ongoing delays in the renewal of Brookfield's Shawmut dam set a dangerous precedent for permit renewals for Maine dams in the future and is of grave concern throughout the industry. When considering these renewals, it is pertinent for regulators to carefully balance environmental and economic needs to find common sense solutions that protect Maine's resources while allowing for a stable business climate.

The supplemental fish passage measures proposed by Brookfield provide further support for FERC to conclude that the project will be best adapted for the adequate protection, mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife, as required by Section 10(a)(1) of the Federal Power Act.

Brookfield's additional proposed measures strike the right balance by improving fish passage at Shawmut without hurting the Sappi Somerset Mill's operations by reducing water levels in the impoundment behind the dam. Because they are discrete and straightforward supplements to Brookfield's existing proposal for fish passage, FERC should promptly review them and incorporate them into its environmental review of the project. Prompt review and approval will remove the threat to Sappi Somerset mill's critical infrastructure and provide the mill, its workforce and the industry with certainty moving forward.

Maine DEP Offers Brookfield Opportunity to Submit Updated Application

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is offering Brookfield Renewable Energy the opportunity to submit an updated application for a Water Quality Certification (WQC) for the Shawmut Hydroelectric Project that incorporates new information, analyses, and comments.

DEP is offering Brookfield the opportunity after the global, multibillion dollar energy company very recently amended its application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a new operating license for the Shawmut Dam. The amended application provides significant new information about proposed measures Brookfield would take to protect Atlantic salmon.

FERC is now in the process of gathering public comment on Brookfield's new information and will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on Brookfield's application. The public comment period closes October 25th.

MFPC Candidate Breakfast Recap

The Maine Forest Products Council recently concluded a four-event series of breakfast events where members joined MFPC staff to educate local and statewide candidates about our industry. Overall these events, which provide a great opportunity for members and staff to forge relationships with new and returning lawmakers, were engaging and well attended. Attendance for each of the events was approximately as follows:

Portland: 22 candidates; 9 members/staff

Jay: 18 candidates; 10 members/staff

Bangor: 23 candidates; 18 members/staff

Presque Isle: 5 candidates; 8 members/staff

As always, the Council thanks the generosity of our members who sponsored these important networking events.



Maine DEP Continued

Additionally, in July 2022, FERC granted the National Marine Fisheries Services request to further delay its federal Endangered Species Act findings related to Atlantic salmon in the Kennebec River. According to the extension request, new information emerged as a result of discussions between the National Marine Fisheries Service and Brookfield related to impacts on Atlantic salmon. That analysis is still pending.

DEP will then consider these analyses, along with any response or other additional information Brookfield may wish to submit as part of its updated application. This process ensures that DEP will have the benefit of the most current and best available information when it acts on the merits of the WQC application.

[View full DEP press release here.](#)

Commission to Study the Role of Water as a Resource in the State of Maine

Last session, the Legislature established the Commission to Study the Role of Water as a Resource in the State of Maine. This commission, which is made of a blend of lawmakers and members of the public, was tasked with examining the status of water as a resource, and water rights in the state of Maine in response to the perennial issue of taxing water extraction and exportation. The commission was allotted four four meetings in statute with a report deadline of December 2nd.

Following the first three meetings, it became clear that the commission would not be able to complete its work according to schedule, so the Chairs have requested from the Legislative Council an extension and permission for an additional meeting.

The website for the Commission can be found [here](#), and individual commission member recommendations (which have not yet been voted on and may have been updated) are available [here](#).

While it is evident that the focus of this commission is on groundwater extraction for the purpose of bottling, the Council has closely monitored each meeting for surface water implications and will update membership upon the conclusion of the Commission's work.

Patrick Strauch receives UMaine School of Forest Resources Distinguished Alumni Award

ORONO – The University of Maine’s School of Forest Resources recognized Patrick Strauch of Exeter with the 2022 Distinguished Alumni Award at a ceremony in Orono on Friday, October 14. This award, which is given annually, recognizes the distinguished service and significant contributions a program graduate has made to the forest resources profession and society.

[View our full press release here.](#)



MFPC Regulatory Calendar

| Issue/project | Agency/Department | Website | Comment period deadline |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Canada lynx Species Status Assessment | US FWS | https://maineforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/LynxDIPMaineConservationPartners_20221012.pdf | Tuesday, November 8, 2022 |
| Review of Chapter 100 Forester Classifications and Code of Ethics | Professional Forester Licensing Board | | Thursday, January 26, 2023 |
| Extended Producer Responsibility Program for Packaging | Maine DEP | https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDEP/bulletins/32efa46 | Ongoing |
| PFAS in Products | Maine DEP | https://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/PFAS-products/index.html#:~:text= Frequently%20Asked%20Questions | Ongoing |
| | | | |
| Moosehead Regional Planning Process | Maine LUPC | https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/projects/moosehead_region_planning_project/moosehead_regional_planning.html | Past deadline |
| Endangered and Threatened Species Listing | Maine IFW | https://maineforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Endangered-Threatened-species-listing-NARP.pdf | Past deadline |
| Brookfield White Pine Hydro, LLC | FERC | https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/10/13/2022-22171/brookfield-white-pine-hydro-llc-merimil-limited-partnership-hydro-kennebec-llc-notice-of | Past deadline |

FOR/Maine Survey

One of the goals of FOR/Maine is to raise public awareness of all that Maine's forest products industry does for - and means to - the state's economy. They'd like to know how they're doing and are asking for your help with a quick survey. [Take the survey here.](#)

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