

NEWS

Groups against Winni dredge

by Phyllis Morrissette

TILTON -- Most of the people who testified for organizations at an April 26 hearing on NH House bill 100 in Concord were against a proposal to dredge parts of the Winnepesaukee River, says Ken Norton of Tilton, who attended.

Lakes Region groups offer-

ing oral and written testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee, and opposed a \$1.2 million appropriation for dredging, included the Lakes Region Clean Water Association, Loon Conservation Commission, Lake Winnepesaukee Association, Friends of the Winnepesaukee River

and Tilton Conservation Commission.

Also opposing it, says Norton, were the NH Audubon Society, Merrimack River Watershed Council, NH Conservation Commission, NH Fish & Game Department and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The NH Water Resources Board, which made the proposal, was almost alone in supporting it, says Norton.

The funding is sought as part of a \$6.4 million project intended to control Winnepesaukee River basin flooding. The project followed flooding of that basin in Spring 1984, he says, and proposes 75 percent federal funds and NH-generated revenues for the rest and for any cost overruns.

After the 1984 flood, the

US Army Corps of Engineers surveyed the river and its watershed, Norton says, and submitted a multi-faceted flood-control proposal.

The corps recommended dredging sections of the river, building a hinge dam near the river's crossing of Rte. 140, improving some bridges and managing Lake Winnepesaukee's level and subsequent water releases on the river.

One of the spots, Norton says, is a bridge in downtown Tilton to the south of the traffic light at Main and Park Streets, which slows the water flow and catches debris.

The corps report says the eight inches of rain that fell for six days, starting May 28, 1984, in the basin was "considered greater than a fifty-year flood at the Tilton Gage

Station."

A written report by the Audubon Society, says Norton, claimed that 85 percent of the benefits proposed by dredging can be achieved with better management of Lake Winnepesaukee.

According to views of a number of those who testified, dredging would destroy fish spawning habitats, archeological sites above the Lochmere Dam and whitewater recreation areas.

Proposed dredging near a former Johns-Manville waste dump that might expose contaminated materials was also mentioned. Another objection was that building a dam near Rte. 140 would endanger the Tioga wetlands and prevent public access to the rivere and Silver Lake from the boat ramp off Shaker Road in Northfield.

Some representatives of groups suggested the money might be better spent on river protection legislation or land protection trust fund.

Although the proposal was only one of many budget items, Norton says, "It was clearly the most controversial thing."

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