



**International Joint Commission
United States and Canada
International St. Croix River Watershed Board**

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July 30, 2009

Mr. Richard Dill, Chairman
St. Croix Fisheries Steering Committee
c/o Region F, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
73 Cobb Road
Enfield, ME 04493

Dear Chairman Dill and Fisheries Steering Committee Members:

On behalf of the International St. Croix River Watershed Board (ISCRWB), and with the support of the International Joint Commission (IJC), we are formally writing to the Fisheries Steering Committee concerning the decades-long dispute regarding the passage of sea-run alewives in the St. Croix River.

As the Committee that represents all of the international St. Croix River's jurisdictional fisheries agencies, we are writing to enlist your support and expertise to assist in the development and implementation of an adaptive management plan for the re-introduction of the anadromous alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) for the St. Croix Watershed.

As you may be aware, the IJC recently sent a letter to the Honorable John Baldacci, Governor of Maine (attached) expressing the Commission's conclusion that the natural migration and spawning of alewives (river herring/gaspereaux) in the St. Croix River watershed should be restored. Recognizing that there are also concerns in the basin about the health of recreational fisheries, the ISCRWB and IJC recommend continued fisheries management studies and monitoring.

We know that the St. Croix Fisheries Steering Committee has been committed to finding a way to achieve more proactive and precautionary protection of the smallmouth bass resource in balance with a sustainable alewife resource by coordinating fisheries management research and working to seek mutual agreements on rebuilding and maintaining depleted fish stocks in the river.

With this background and experience, the ISCRWB would like to discuss how we can cooperate to develop a five-year adaptive management plan for the watershed to coincide with the anticipated re-opening of fishways. This plan will need to include measurable objectives for: 1) alewives (escapement and harvest goals), 2) smallmouth bass (lake specific size quality, catch rate, year-class strength goals), and 3) monitoring. Furthermore, the adaptive management plan should include anticipated fisheries management decisions based on the likely results of monitoring over the 5-year period.

Spednic Lake should be of particular significance in developing the plan, as the majority of public and tribal concerns related to alewife passage have concentrated in this area. Different scenarios on how to address these concerns have been discussed by ISCRWB members, including phased-in alewife restoration starting at Woodland and Grand Falls with alewife passage at Vanceboro Dam remaining blocked initially.

The ISCRWB and the IJC stand ready to assist by continuing to provide a binational forum for information exchange and public discussion, and offer to facilitate meetings among stakeholders. We also ask for your assistance in engaging technical representation from the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet or another Native, Aboriginal, or First Nation participant(s) who live in or near the St. Croix River Watershed in developing this plan. Once developed, the ISCRWB will assist the committee in sharing the plan with the public, stakeholders, and Aboriginal communities for input and feedback before being finalized.

We look forward to working with you on this matter. Thank you in advance for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Philip T. Feir
Colonel, U.S. Army
U.S. Co-Chair
International St. Croix River
Watershed Board

Bill Appleby
Canadian Co-Chair
International St. Croix River
Watershed Board

Attachment