

**Warner River Local Advisory Committee (WRLAC)**  
**ASPPROVED MEETING MINUTES**  
7pm, Tuesday, October 23, 2018  
Pillsbury Free Library (lower level), 18 E Main St, Warner, NH 03278

**Present WRLAC Members:** Chris Connors, Bruce Edwards, Scott MacLean, Carol Meise.

**Regrets:** Susan Roman.

**Guests:** Tracie Sales, NHDES Rivers and Lakes Programs Manager; Kat Crowley, Plymouth State University Master's Student Intern, Warner River Watershed Conservation Project.

**Other WRLAC Applicants:** Ken Milender, Laura Russell, Christopher Spannweitz, Martin Bean,

**Regrets:** Sara McNeil, Doug Giles.

Chris Connors, WRLAC Acting Chair, opened the meeting at 7:15 pm. She welcomed appointed WRLAC members and applicants to the meeting and provided everyone a more detailed agenda handout that includes several helpful web links beneath each of the agenda topics so that WRLAC members and applicants could research the various Rivers Management and Protection Program components and local river advisory committee responsibilities. She explained that there are several components of the RMPP program for the new WRLAC to become familiar with over time and that the detailed agenda and web links will be helpful over the next several months. For ease of use, she emailed this detailed agenda to WRLAC members and applicants prior to the meeting.

At Ms. Connors request, everyone introduced themselves and explained their reasons and/or specific interests for sitting on the new WRLAC. Since By Laws have not yet been established, she requested to conduct the meeting in an informal, informational manner. She then requested that all items on the agenda be deferred so that Tracie Sales, NHDES Rivers and Lakes Program Manager, could provide an introduction to the group and present a video on the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP) Instream Flow Program.

Tracie Sales welcomed and congratulated everyone on the success of designating the Warner River as the nineteenth river to the RMPP. She also thanked everyone for their willingness to serve on the new WRLAC and offered her support moving forward. After briefly describing the duties of local advisory committees and the various components of the RMPP (RSA 483), she provided an introduction to the Instream Flow Program for designated rivers.

**RMPP Instream Flow Program Introduction & Video**

Ms. Sales explained that several public meetings have taken place over the last few years, to complement NHDES's process to develop a new NH Instream Flow (ISF) Program from trial studies done for the Lamprey and Souhegan Rivers several years ago. *'Instream Flow Program calculates the stream flows that protect fish, recreation and stream bank species. The program then develops management plans to protect instream flows and ensure the water availability for off-stream uses. The management plans describe conservation, water use and dam management actions to apply during extended low-flow and drought conditions.'* The program enables local communities along designated rivers statewide and NHDES have a more thorough, scientifically-based understanding of the flow levels each designated river needs to maintain in order to effectively support the unique ecologic and human needs of each designated river. (For example, given periods of extreme drought conditions, what specific steps can communities and stakeholders with vested interests along the river do to help ensure the river does not

run dry - or town drinking water supplies run too low?) She presented an introductory video (link provide below).

After the video, Ms. Sales answered questions and explained where NHDES is at in the development of the revised ISF Program. She explained that the Warner River has been included in preliminary Instream Flow studies given that earlier in the year designation seemed likely.

#### **Instream Flow Study: Targeted Fish Species Report**

NHDES commissioned a Warner River Target Fish Community Study completed by Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, Henniker. This study examines the fish species present with the Warner River, studies the river's characteristics for how it supports certain fish species and specifies the specific fish species targeted to be able to establish a targeted river flow that would maintain ecologic needs. Ms. Connors showed excerpts from the study. A link to this report is provided below.

#### **Instream Flow Study: Prioritization of NH Designated Rivers for implementation of the new Instream Flow Program**

NHDES recently developed a prioritization method to determine the order for which each designated river (statewide) should undergo implementation of the ISF program. For several reasons, the Warner River is currently the second priority designated river to undergo the ISF Study. Ms. Connors showed excerpts of a slide show presentation describing NHDES's process for prioritization. A link to this slideshow is provided below.

Here are the web links for items discussed, referenced and/or shown in the meeting:

[The NHDES RMPP Instream Flow Program Home](#)

[The NH Instream Flow Program Fact Sheet](#)

**VIDEO:** [The Instream Flow Program: Water for People and Wildlife](#)  (shown)

#### **1. PRIORITIZATION OF INSTREAM FLOW PROGRAM TO NH DESIGNATED RIVERS**

[About the] [Prioritization of the Designated River Segments Instream Flow Program \(slideshow\)](#)  
[Stream Prioritization for Protected Instream Flow development – DISCUSSION DRAFT](#) (NHDES Public hearing late Nov-early Dec)

#### **2. TARGETED FISH COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS:**

[https://www4.des.state.nh.us/blogs/rmac/?page\\_id=3429](https://www4.des.state.nh.us/blogs/rmac/?page_id=3429)

[Targeted Fish Communities Assessment: Warner River – Final Report](#)

NHDES hosted an information meeting Monday, August 27, 2018 describing the conclusions of the Target Fish Communities assessments of designated rivers in New Hampshire. The presentation is available at [NHDES TFC Presentation – August 27, 2018 Meeting](#)

NHDES hosted an information meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 describing the development of Target Fish Communities on designated rivers in New Hampshire. A copy of the presentation can be found here: [ISF Target Fish Community Presentation 2.21.2018](#)

Ms. Sales announced there will be an upcoming NHDES public hearing (likely in mid-late November) for public comments on the NHDES prioritization list, and an additional upcoming public hearing (November

15<sup>th</sup>, 2018) for public comment on the new NHDES rules of the Instream Flow Program. She encouraged the new WRLAC to provide testimony and/or written comments for both hearings.

After the presentation, Ms. Connors thanked Ms. Sales for her presentation and directed everyone to the other agenda items. She briefly introduced and gained input on the following:

**Relative to establishing a regular monthly WRLAC meeting date, time and place.**

The fourth Wednesday of each month seems to have the least amount of conflicts for all five town calendars and Warner Town Hall and/or Warner Pillsbury Library meeting locations. Ms. Connors recommended a November date, time and place be selected for the next meeting and a regular monthly meeting date be decided at the November meeting. *Action Decided:* The next meeting date set for 7pm, Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Warner's Pillsbury Public Library. The regular monthly meeting date will be decided at the November meeting.

**Relative to all five towns posting WRLAC meeting notices**

Ms. Connors presented a list of contacts that she assembled with assistance from each of the five towns for posting public notices for WRLAC meetings. The WRLAC must adhere to the Right-to-Know Law and thus is required to provide public notice in each town twenty four hours advance of each meeting. *Action Decided:* Chris will continue to notify these individuals for all five towns to provide ample public meeting notice until a WRLAC Secretary is elected.

**Relative to establishing WRLAC By Laws**

Ms. Connors requested Committee members and applicants review the sample *LAC By Law Template (both the original and proposed WRLAC draft are attached)* and the *Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee (UMRLAC) proposed By Laws (with proposed changes)* ([link provided below](#)) for the purpose of establishing and voting upon WRLAC By Laws next meeting. Ms. Connors explained that proposed By Laws are typically provided at the meeting, or at least thirty days in advance of the meeting for the vote, thus she would like to give members and applicants the same amount of time to review the By Law options. *Action Decided:* Utilize the *NHDES LAC By Law Template* as the proposed By Laws (Ms. Connors relayed she made a version with basic customization for the WRLAC), and review the UMRLAC proposed By Laws ([link below](#)) for including any additional items. Committee members present were invited to submit suggestions/amendments to her prior before the next meeting, so she can incorporate input for discussion and vote at the November meeting.

**Link to Above Reference Documents mentioned:**

Proposed UMRLAC bylaws – [UMRLAC bylaws 10.15.18 draft for 11.12.18 adoption.doc](#) (DOC, 196.61 kb)

**Relative to voting upon WRLAC Officers**

Ms. Connors recommended that elections be deferred until the next meeting. *Action Decided:* All concurred with above.

**Relative to establishing written permit review guidelines**

Ms. Connors briefly introduced the typical local advisory committee process for NHDES permit review. She explained that since August 7<sup>th</sup>, the date the Warner River was officially designated, she has been receiving weekly email updates from NHDES of permits filed within the quarter mile protected buffer of all NH designated rivers. Since a permit for the Warner River could be filed at any time, and since NHDES requests Local Advisory Committee (LAC) response (whether an LAC has specific comments or not), Ms.

Connors requested WRLAC members and applicants review UMLAC permit review guidelines and recommended the WRLAC establish and vote upon permit review guidelines at the next meeting. Such guidelines not only help the WRLAC provide consistent permit review, but also help permit applicants guidance and understanding of what the WRLAC considers during such reviews. *Action Decided:* Agreed to review the [UMLAC permit application review guidance.pdf](#) and consider adoption of similar guidelines at the November meeting.

**Other helpful Resources provided:**

Permit review flow chart: [NHDES-LRMP-Permit-Application-Flow Chart.pdf](#)

[Interactive Designated Rivers Web Map](#) (Firefox Web Browser seems to work the best)

[Interactive Designated Rivers Web Map Instructions](#)

[Permit Types and LAC Review Time](#)

[Excerpts from the Permit Application Review Guidance for LACs](#) (caution, older doc, but still has good advice)

[UMLAC permit application review guidance.pdf](#) (PDF, 1.25 MB) (an outstanding prototype! Also outstanding for providing permit applicants guidance for best Management Practices (BMPs) that we like to see)

[UMLAC permit pre-review form.pdf](#) (PDF, 23.36 kb)(Could make a form to check off; leave spaces for adding notes)

Visit <http://www.merrimackriver.org/documents/> to see how permit docs and other info are posted for facilitating UMLAC review. This link to relevant permit docs is provided on their [Meeting Agenda](#).

**Relative to writing a Warner River Corridor Management Plan**

Ms. Connors relayed that unfortunately Mike Tardiff or Stephanie Alexander could not attend. She updated all that former nomination committee members, Bruce Edwards and Mike Tardiff, Central NH Regional Planning Commission, got together mid-summer, and decided to proceed with writing an Letter of Intent to pursue \$32,000 in NHDES 604(b) grant funds to assist the new WRLAC with writing the Warner River Corridor Plan, a primary responsibility of the WRLAC. This funding historically has only been offered every other year, so everyone agreed that CNHRPC (the formal grantee) should proceed with a Letter of Intent (LOI). Ben Nugent, Chris Connors, Kat Crowley and Mike Tardiff met with NHDES Jeff Marcoux of the Watershed Assistance Division to discuss the LOI. With input from Ben Nugent and Chris Connors, Mike Tardiff submitted the LOI on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Unfortunately we received notice on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, that our LOI was not selected. Mr. Sales then announced that NHDES will gift \$7,500 to the WRLAC for the purpose of providing assistance for writing the Warner River Corridor Management Plan. Additionally she said that NHDES has changed the availability for applying for 604(b) grant funds to an annual process, thus she foresees CNHRPC and the WRLAC will be able to apply for this same funding next fall. *Action Decided:* CNHRPC will be invited to the next meeting to discuss the Warner River Corridor Management Plan.

**Suggested reading:**

[A Guide to River Corridor Management Plans, NHRMPP, October, 1997](#)

\*[Warner River Nomination](#) and [Appendices](#)

\*[Warner River Designated Corridor Map](#)

\*[The Contoocook North River Corridor Management Plan](#) – recommended by CNHRPC to use as guiding template. We may incorporate additional criteria, use a slightly different organization and follow EPA watershed management plan guidelines, incorporate and adaptive management plan.

**Relative to Existing Programs related to protecting the Designated Corridor**

- **Warner River Voluntary River Assessment Program (WRVRAP)** – Ms. Connors explained that such water quality testing programs are typically run by NH LACs as the protection and maintenance of high river water quality is paramount to LAC's goals. Currently the WRVAP program is led by Basil Woods TU Chapter Member, Bob Ball, with the assistance of team leaders and volunteers. Bob Ball is retiring from his lead position after this season and is requesting the WRLAC take over the Program. Ken Milender, Scott MacLean and Chris Connors have participated in this program for the last two years. The NH VRAP webpage is here: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vrap/index.htm> . Our Warner River VRAP data and reports are located here: <http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vrap/warner/index.htm>

**- Warner River Watershed Conservation Project**

Due to a shift in WRLAC priorities for the meeting, Chris and Ben Nugent decided to defer an introduction to the Warner River Watershed Conservation Project. Ms. Connors suggested that Mr. Nugent be invited to attend the November meeting to provide an introduction to the Project and how Project data can be incorporated within a future Warner River Corridor Management Plan. *Action Decided:* Concurred with the above.

**Suggested WRLAC Member Work Assignments**

<i>Member</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
ALL	Review BY LAWS docs for discussion and possible vote at November meeting.
ALL	Review PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS docs for discussion and vote next meeting.
ALL	Review the Warner River Nomination, the Contoocook North Branch Rivers Corridor Management Plan and possibly some River Corridor Management Plan Docs for next meeting.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Connors, Acting Chair  
Warner River Local Advisory Committee  
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