

Cocheco River Local Advisory Committee NH Rivers Management and Protection Program

Biennial Report 2011

Two years ago Governor Lynch signed the bill designating the Cocheco River as a Protected River. The ceremony was attended by many decision-makers and river corridor citizens who had worked tirelessly to achieve that goal. The process involved participation of long-standing partners, drawing on their expertise and good will to prepare the nomination package and follow it through the legislative actions. The Cocheco River Watershed Coalition initiated the process and Strafford Regional Planning Commission staff prepared the submission. Many people from resource agencies, local historians, volunteer monitors, riparian landowners, and municipal officials worked together to complete the tasks. The NH Coastal Program and the NH Charitable Trust gave partial funding. The document continues to serve us well.

We began to meet as a committee on January 28, 2010. During the first few meetings we established our administrative procedures and began to review and comment on applications. The City of Rochester is providing a place on the municipal website for communications from the LAC. Agendas, minutes, and application materials are available for LAC access and public information. Our meetings are also posted on the Rochester web calendar.

While work was being completed on the North Main Street Bridge in Rochester, the City Dam was opened to lower the water level. LAC members organized a cleanup of a mile of the river bed that resulted in several truckloads of large trash and debris removal, including a car stolen in the early 1980s.

A Fluvial Erosion Hazard Study is being performed on the Cocheco River and two of its tributaries, the Mad River and Axe Handle Brook, by the staff of the NH Geological Survey and NH DES. The LAC plans to use the studies as a basis for a corridor management plan and is actively seeking funding to support the effort. In anticipation of the planning process, the LAC is organizing a series of public education activities to inform the public and ourselves about the river resources, emerging issues and community benefits of a healthy river.

Significantly, during this two-year period, the City of Rochester has developed new sources of drinking water in the corridor, and the Town of Farmington began major upgrades to the wastewater treatment facility that include redirecting treated effluent out of the river. Also remediation of Tolend Landfill, an EPA Superfund site that drains to the river in Dover, is underway.

Members of the CRLAC are Paul Parker and Glen Demers, Farmington; Mike Gelinas, New Durham; Lou Vita and Carol Vita, Middleton; John Scruton and Steve Hervey, Rochester; Tom Fargo, Dover; Lorie Chase, Cocheco River Watershed Coalition. The LAC meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

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