

Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee (ARLAC)
Annual Report 2009
Chairman, Charlie Ryan

The highlight of 2009 was the designation of the Upper Reach of the Ammonoosuc River into the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP), protecting the entire river from its source at Lakes of the Clouds on Mt. Washington to the confluence with the Connecticut River. The first half of the year in 2009 was devoted to seeing this goal through to completion. Five Local Advisory Committee (LAC) members were present at the Legislative Hearing for HB452 on March 3 as well as at the NH Senate Energy, Environment, and Economic Development Committee HB452 Hearing on April 16; they provided written and spoken testimony to both hearings. Leslie Bergum also attended the HB452 Hearing on May 28th. The Senate voted HB452 as Ought to Pass on June 3rd and the NH House received concurrence on June 10. Governor Lynch signed the Upper Reach Designation in Dover on July 15. LAC Member, Leslie Bergum attended the ceremony. The story received state and local press coverage throughout the process. The designation of the Upper Reach went into effect on September 13th.

In June members commenced working on the Ammonoosuc River Corridor Management Plan. Tara Bamford, Planning Director for the North Country Council, facilitated the process of drawing up a list of issues and goals for the plan. A Management Plan Subcommittee of 5 members was formed and started meeting monthly to do preliminary work; the Subcommittee met at intervals with all the LAC members to get everyone's input. North Country Council (NCC) and Connecticut River Joint Commission (CRJC) assisted LAC in obtaining funding to do the plan. The Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) offered LAC members information on the subject of educating the public about watershed resources, including landowner outreach and education. Funding for the Management Plan was received from the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation & Enhancement Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation and the NHDES for Watershed Assistance for High Quality Waters.

Dr. John Field, Consultant Field Geology Services and his Associate, Nicolas Miller carried out a Fluvial Geomorphological Study of the Ammonoosuc River. The data provided by the study and the final report will provide valuable information for the Management Plan, such as erosion and flood hazard mapping. The fieldwork along the river was hampered by rainfall over the summer months; the study continued into the late fall. Dr. Field gave a presentation to the seven river corridor towns at a Public Hearing held in Littleton on June 22, informing attendees about his study in progress. The Ammonoosuc River Assessment Advisory Committee (ARAAC) held its first meeting on September 2nd. Rick Walling was appointed LAC's Representative on the ARAAC Committee. Dr. Field presented his results to date at a Public Hearing in Littleton on September 22. In October and November Dr. Field held public outreach meetings with each town's Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and with other interested parties. Dr. Field and Sharon Francis, Executive Director of the Connecticut River Joint Commission, met with LAC members November 4th to discuss 8 potential Ammonoosuc River sites for conservation and restoration projects. This

discussion set the course to give consideration to future projects, identifying important conservation and archaeological areas along the river. The Management plan, which is a work in progress, continues on into 2010.

Applications

In 2009 LAC members reviewed State of NHDES Wetland Bureau Permit Applications for 3 of the 7 corridor towns, made field inspections at each of the permit sites, and commented on 2 applications.

Public Hearings

- Members attended the January 29th Riverbend/DES Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act Hearing.
- They sent written testimony to the NH Senate Finance Committee HB2 Hearing on April 15 and May 22.
- Members attended the DES Dalton Drag Strip Regional Public Hearing on July 16th, providing both spoken and written testimony.
- They attended the DES Stream Crossing Hearings in Lancaster and Plymouth on November 9 and 10, sending a letter of comment November 18th.

Workshops

- Members attended Israel River Water Quality Presentation by DES Biologists, Ted Walsh and David Neils on May 19th.
- DES Water Primer May 27th.
- CRJC Presentation on Connecticut River, Clean Water Healthy River June 11.
- Israel River Watershed Stream Connectivity Mapping: Culvert Training Program in a Field Implementation Study, discussed perched culverts September 11.
- The NRCS Conservation Easement Workshop November 12.
- DES Watershed Conference November 20th.

VRAP

Jen Drociak, Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP) Coordinator, provided a water quality training program. Five LAC members volunteered to do monthly water quality testing from May into October, excluding September. New sites were added to the roster for a total of 16 sampling stations, located at elevation of 2000' down to 500'. No adverse water quality issues were found. Phosphorus testing was done for the first time as a baseline at 5 stations; the findings were below the level of concern. The DES did Macro-invertebrate bio-monitoring in the river on August 11th. DES VRAP Intern, Sabrina Kliman, did Field audit on October 16.

Issues

- Concern that the extent of gold dredging activity is starting to outgrow a recreational level in hot spots. Need for greater outreach to educate the public about wetland permit and landowner permission requirements.
- Invasive Plants
 1. Japanese Knotweed
 - a.) Littleton- the lower end of Palmer Brook is bordered by dense growth of

- knotweed overhanging the brook to outflow into the Ammonoosuc River.
- b.) Littleton- hedge of knotweed alongside the river next to Shaws
 - c.) Lisbon and Bath- extensive growth seen in multiple locations along river
2. Purple Loosestrife- in meadow by box stores (Littleton)
 3. Bull Thistle found in Littleton and in area between Bath and Lisbon.
 4. Algae Didymo- none observed

Awards

EPA presented New England Region Environmental Merit Award to NHDES Volunteer River Assessment Program, April 2009

2009 Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee

Charlie Ryan, Chairman (Littleton)
Richard Walling, Vice Chairman (Bath)
Connie McDade, Secretary (Littleton)
Michael King, Treasurer (Haverhill)
William Harris, *New Member* (Haverhill)
Errol Peters, *New Member* (Landaff)
Steve Jesseman, Member (Lisbon)
Marilyn Johnson, Member (Bethlehem)
Joan Karpf, Member (Carroll)
Leslie Bergum, Member (Carroll)

Served as Member for Part of 2009 (Resigned)

Robert Fagnant, Member (Haverhill)
Michael Dannehy, Member (Woodsville)
Dennis Solinsky, Member (Bath)
Douglas Erb, Member (Landaff)
Jonathan Reid, Member (Lisbon)
Aaron Townshend, Member (Littleton)
Victoria McMillan, Member (Bethlehem)

Nominated Candidate Members

Jessica Willis, (Littleton)
Duncan McKee, (Lisbon)
Linda Dowling, (Carroll)

Compiled by Connie McDade, Secretary

Submitted by Charlie Ryan, Chairman