



FROM: Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee (PRLAC)

SUBJECT: 2017 Annual Town Report

The Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee (PRLAC) is made up of members from the towns of Bristol, Thornton, Campton, Plymouth, Holderness, Ashland, Bridgewater, and New Hampton. PRLAC members review and comment on state and local permits for activities impacting the Pemigewasset River corridor (1,320' on either side of the river) and communicate with municipalities and citizens regarding corridor management. The Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) provides administrative and technical assistance to PRLAC.

The Pemi is a Class B river. Class B waters have high aesthetic value and are acceptable for swimming and other recreational activities, fish habitat, and for use as a public water supply after treatment. Our mission is to do those things necessary to maintain the Pemi's Class B water quality status. The exposure PRLAC has had to a wide variety of surface water problems places us in a unique position to identify potential water quality issues before they become a crisis.

In 2017, PRLAC completed its 16th year of bi-weekly water testing on the Pemi and three of its tributaries. Testing takes place at 9 stations and runs from April into September. Four stations are entirely within the town of Bristol, and are located at the Pleasant Street Bridge, Mooney Clark Landing, Old Bristol Road Bridge and Smith River. Tests are conducted for Dissolved Oxygen, Specific Conductance, Turbidity, pH, and temperature, all key elements in assessing overall river health. Periodic tests are also made for E coli and other parameters at popular recreation sites on the river. The results of our testing are analyzed and posted on the state Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). The indicators show that water quality continues to be good, with only a minimal elevation in river pH, a slight, noticeable decrease in Dissolved Oxygen and a spike in the level of E. coli bacteria at the end of August, but all were well within standards, and may be from a natural source. Turbidity "spikes" are seen after most significant precipitation events, an indication that sediment and organic matter are flushing into the river. All other indicators were fine and consistent with the Pemi's historical profile. In general, a good report card.

Permit applications for development within the Pemi River corridor that potentially risk affecting river water quality/quantity/visual aesthetics are reviewed, and comments on projects are submitted to NHDES. PRLAC members conducted on-site visits at eleven permit application sites in CY 2017. Site visits are conducted with the property owner or an agent. NHDES is not

staffed to visit most application sites. We often recommend some changes, but we have no authority to deny approval.

PRLAC was identified as an intervenor in Eversource's Northern Pass project. As such, PRLAC became part of the SEC hearing process that consumed much of the focus and efforts of several PRLAC members. Three members actively participated in the SEC hearings in Concord, and presented evidence in support of the protection of the Pemi watershed. All told, these three members expended a combined 750 hours in preparing testimony and attending hearings in Concord. Their vehicle mileage totaled over 2200 miles!

As the SEC completes their permitting process of Northern Pass, we will return to work on several goals described in the 2013 Pemigewasset River Corridor Management Plan. Two years ago, the focus was storm-water runoff and its implications. We have already started the process of prioritizing work for the 2018 calendar year.

PRLAC meets at 7 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the months of January through November; usually at Plymouth's Pease Public Library. All are encouraged to attend. For more information go to <http://www.lakesrpc.org/prlac/prlacindex.asp>.

William Bolton, Chair
PRLAC