

**Approved Minutes Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
October 25, 2022 Meeting
Pease Public Library Plymouth, NH**

Members Present:

Ashland: Kathleen DeWolfe

Bridgewater: Judy Faran

Bristol: Max Stamp

Campton: Suellen Skinner, Sherrill Howard

Holderness: Carl Lerner

Lincoln: OJ Robinson

New Hampton: Barry Draper, Russ Brummer

Plymouth: William Bolton, Lisa Doner

Thornton:

Woodstock: James Chesebrough

At Large:

LRPC:

Guests Present: Wayne Ives (DES) and Joseph Schmidl, Instream Flow Specialist, Instream Flow Program, Watershed Management Bureau, Water Division, DES

1. Quorum established and meeting called to order by Judy Faran at 6:38 PM
2. Approval of minutes from our September 30, 2022 meeting: Corrections were made to the minutes; Lisa motioned, Suellen seconded. Unanimous approval.
3. Joe Schmidl, PG, CWS, DSDS Instream Flow Specialist - Instream Flow Program, Watershed Management Bureau. Judy provided a brief introduction of our guests and how the Instream Flow (ISF) Program works, how it functions and how it affects the Pemi. As a case in point, Judy pointed out that Owls' Nest is seeking a revision to their 2021 project, and they are proposing a combined withdrawal from three wells at a rate of 648,000 gallons per day. This is in addition to the other water withdrawal permits they have received over the past couple years. Approving projects such as these would be better defending if there was an instream flow program in place. Joe Schmidl started a PowerPoint on the NHDES Instream Flow Program; describing their program, what they have done with the Pemi this year, and then a description of the inflow study process and consideration of water management plans, along with taking questions. Joe started out by stating that DES's ISF program is dependent on acquiring baseline data to get a river into the position where it can be considered a part of the program. Their data collection consists of deploying dataloggers at 5 stations along the Pemi from Lincoln down to Franklin. Once the Pemi is added to the ISF program, their datalogger sites will be greatly increased. The second part of the program is the protected instream flow study, which identifies such parameters as aquatic habitats, hydrology, and recreational and other uses of the river. Those studies result in a set of protected instream flow (PISF) criteria. The study process itself may take up to 3 years to complete and will include flow levels and allowable duration for those flows. The draft study report is published, an informational meeting is set and a public hearing is made. After a review by the DES Commissioner, the proposed PISF is released. Water Management plans follow that, which are designed to address the two parts of streamflow management – big water users and dams. This plan includes water management through conservation methods of affected water users. The other plan is dam-related, and DES will work

with the affected dam owners to describe best management practices. Development of the Water Management Plan is a process that is described in DES agency rules, and may take up to 5 years to implement. Once the Water Management Plan is in place, long-term monitoring will be initiated and will be repeated every 8 years to confirm that the targeted fish community and riparian vegetation is moving in the right direction by providing the protective flows for those communities.

Lisa Doner asked if water users are grandfathered to prior flow-standards. Wayne indicated that they will have only a specified amount that they must abide by. Also asked was whether salinity will be considered a criteria, and Wayne replied that water chemistry would be a consideration; as would temperature rise of released water. The focus of determining quality is fish population and health. Wayne also looks at insects and amphibians, but the quickest way to see the effect of changes in drawdown level are fish. Wayne indicated that instead of Instream Flow Program, it should be Instream Habitat Program because of its focus on native species of fish and riparian foliage. OJ asked about an entity that was given a permitted drawdown where the permit holder doesn't utilize the volume they were permitted for. The goal is to reduce and delay drawdowns and to find ways to lessen impact on the river by adherence to the Water Management Plan. The positives of the ISF Program is to get people thinking of how they will seek alternatives to river drawdowns during drought periods.

This past year, the ISF program updated the list of Pemi River water users and dam owners. This was done as an incremental step towards adding the Pemi to ISF's Priority List. DES targeted a tentative date of July 2025 to hire a consultant for Pemi's ISF process, but Wayne stated that DES is finding additional funding to shorten the implementation, so we are now on a tentative start date of July 2024!

Parting words had to do with different offices within DES dealing with different water sources and river withdrawals. One goal is to reconcile these offices so that they are all speaking with one voice when dealing with water sources.

4. Professor Emeritus Max Stamp: Russ Brummer arranged a teaching event with 'Professor' Max Stamp that included two classes of New Hampton School students at Moody Clark landing. Unfortunately, it was rained out, but it has been rescheduled for Thursday, October 27th.
5. Bristol Pemi Shores clear cutting update: Pictures were disseminated regarding the clear-cutting that went on at Bristol's Pemi Shores development. We have until November 11th to make comments to DES regarding the after-the-fact application that DES received. Even though the illegal cutting of trees and vegetation down to the Pemi River was done by the contractor, it is unlikely that DES would do anything more than issuing a letter of deficiency for such a lower-tiered violation that may lead to an administrative order. The property could be brought into compliance by reintroducing riparian foliage as a buffer. A letter will be drafted by Max on behalf of PRLAC to former state Representative Brian Gallagher, the owner of the property, explaining that he needs to reconstruct the natural vegetative riparian buffer that was illegally clear-cut

before any further development should proceed. The letter will be drafted and sent to Judy for forwarding to DES.

6. Adjourn: Suellen motioned to adjourn and Kathleen seconded. All in favor.

For meeting minutes, agenda, and information visit the PRLAC website at

<http://www.lakesrpc.org/prlac/prlacindex.asp>