



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

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Glenn Normandeau
Executive Director

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Tracie Sales
Rivers Coordinator
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

RE: The Nomination of the Warner River into the Rivers Management and Protection Program

Without hesitation the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFGD) expresses support for the Warner River to be accepted into the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The NHFGD has been an active partner within this watershed since 2012 when the Warner River Watershed Conservation Project was created. Over the past five years, the NHFGD, in collaboration with project partners, has collected a great deal of information that indicates the river is worth protecting.

The NHFGD recognizes both the value and utility in this designation for two primary reasons. First, a local river advisory will be formed. This non-regulatory body will be given an opportunity to communicate a local perspective on how the river is managed. By providing guidance and recommendations it is anticipated that this group will complement the ongoing efforts of NHFGD to ensure the sustainability of cold water habitats in the watershed. This is an opportunity to have a more holistic approach to river management. Without this viewpoint it can be difficult to effectively address watershed scale issues that transcend town boundaries. Secondly, instream flow provisions associated with a river designation will help to maintain the needs of aquatic species in the Warner River. These provisions will also evaluate and protect the current uses of the river while proactively considering future uses and demands on the resources provided by the river.

While supporting a variety of different recreational interests, the riparian corridor along the Warner River mainstem supports a rich and diverse ecosystem. It provides habitat for several tracked species as well as a wide variety of common species. The New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan indicates that over 25 percent of the land area within the river corridor is noted as the highest ranked habitat in the state and biological region. At the same time, a 2009 US Forest Service report (*Private Forests, Public Benefit Report*) predicts the Contoocook River Watershed (of which this river is part) is one of the most threatened watersheds in the nation due to private forest loss and building demands.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jason Smith, Chief
Inland Fisheries Division

Glenn Normandeau
Executive Director