



The Nature Conservancy in New  
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Tracie Sales, Rivers Coordinator  
Rivers Management & Protection Program  
NH Department of Environmental Services  
29 Hazen Drive  
Concord, NH 03301

May 15<sup>th</sup> 2017

Dear Ms. Sales,

On behalf of the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of the Warner River to the Rivers Management and Protection Program. Our scientific analyses, coupled with the detailed information collected by our partner organizations including Trout Unlimited and the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game clearly demonstrates the ecological importance of the river and the need to elevate the level of protection afforded to the riparian habitat to maintain this ecological integrity into the future.

The Nature Conservancy has identified the Warner River as a Priority River, i.e. an outstanding freshwater ecosystem based on its existing ecological integrity. Furthermore, our aquatic resilience data identifies the river as "Highest Relative Resilience". This scoring is indicative of a river that, if maintained in its current natural state, is likely to be able to withstand environmental perturbations such as climate change. The ecological quality of the Warner River is further evidenced by the presence of wild brook trout throughout much of the watershed; the fact that over 25% of the land area within the river corridors has been identified as the highest ranked wildlife habitat in the state by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Wildlife Action Plan; and the occurrence of 260 acres of exemplary temperate minor river floodplain system (S3) and rare wood turtles (S3) in the river as documented by the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau.

One of the keys to successfully maintaining healthy watersheds such as the Warner River is finding approaches for communities to work together. We applaud the grass-roots efforts of the Warner River Watershed Conservation Project to build a strong coalition of support among local communities, state agency partners, and non-governmental organization. Furthermore, this group has contributed countless hours of volunteer time in the field, collecting vital data that will allow resource managers to make well-reasoned decisions and prioritize management actions that will have the most benefit to the health of the river. The Nature Conservancy sees these efforts as a model for a community-based approach to conservation and hopes to see similar projects develop in other areas of the state.

Sincerely

David Patrick Ph.D. Director of Conservation Programs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. Patrick", written over a light blue horizontal line.