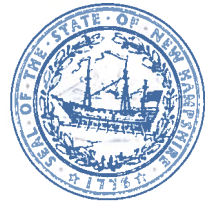




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

September 20, 2017

The Honorable Kevin Avard
NH Senator Dan Feltes
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord, NH 03301

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

Dear Chairman Avard and Senator Feltes:

I write regarding the NH Department of Environmental Services' (NHDES) receipt, in June 2017, of a nomination for the inclusion of the Warner River into the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP). As proposed by the Warner River Nominating Committee, designation would begin on the West Branch Warner River at its confluence with Andrew Brook in Bradford, extend 1.1 miles to the headwaters of the Warner River mainstem, and continue 19 miles further to the Warner River's confluence with the Contoocook River in Hopkinton.

My review of the nomination considered the important resources outlined in the nomination, public comments received by the Department, and the recommendations of the Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) and the Rivers Coordinator. Based on this review and considering the factors listed in RSA 483:6, IV, I have determined that designation of the Warner River would be consistent with the purposes of RSA 483, and I am strongly recommending its inclusion in the RMPP.

In each of the five resource categories evaluated - natural, managed, cultural, recreational, and other - the Warner River contains resources of local and regional significance. The river is also valued statewide for its natural, cultural, recreational, and other resources.

Public support for the nomination of the Warner River has been strong. The nomination document included 34 letters of support, and three members of the public spoke in support of the nomination during the formal public hearing on July 11, 2017. During the public comment period, the Department received five additional letters and emails of support, and only one email expressing opposition to the nomination.

The RMAC reviewed the nomination, conducted a site visit, and hosted the public hearing. The RMAC was impressed with the level of local support for the nomination as well as with the Warner River Nominating Committee's dedication to working with community members to ensure that the designation would be compatible with landowners' desire for future hydropower generation. The RMAC unanimously recommended that the Warner River be

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designated into the RMPP. The committee's letter of recommendation is enclosed. The Rivers Coordinator reviewed nomination materials, listened to testimony at the public hearing, received correspondence related to the nomination, and visited the river. Based on this information, the Rivers Coordinator recommends that the nomination of the Warner River into the RMPP be forwarded to the General Court for consideration in the 2018 session.

Enclosed please find a Report to the General Court on the nomination of the Warner River into the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The report specifies in greater detail the values and characteristics that qualify the Warner River for designation, and includes a map of the river proposed for designation. The full nomination document is available on the Department website at <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/rivers/nominations.htm>.

The Warner River meets the criteria for designation and is a worthy addition to the Rivers Management and Protection Program. I hereby forward the Nomination to the General Court for review and legislative approval according to RSA 483:7.

If you have further questions or need additional information about the nomination, please contact me at robert.scott@des.nh.gov or 271-2958, or the Rivers Coordinator, Tracie Sales, at tracie.sales@des.nh.gov or 271-2959.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Scott
Commissioner

Enclosures

cc: Senator Ruth Ward
Representative Suzanne Smith
Board of Selectmen, Bradford
Board of Selectmen, Hopkinton
Board of Selectmen, Sutton
Board of Selectmen, Warner
Board of Selectmen, Webster
Clark Freise, Assistant Commissioner, NHDES
Gene Forbes, Director, Water Division, NHDES
Ted Diers, Administrator, Watershed Management Bureau, NHDES
Tracie Sales, Rivers Coordinator
Warner River Nominating Committee
RMAC Members
LRMAC Chairs