

## Oyster River Local Advisory Committee 2015 Annual Report

In 2011, the Oyster River was added as a designated river to the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program and a Local Advisory Committee was established. The Oyster River Local Advisory Committee (ORLAC) is made up of representatives from the four towns through which the designated river flows. Currently, there is representation from the following communities: Barrington (1), Durham (1), Lee (1), Madbury (2) and UNH (vacant). The ORLAC would like to increase the representation to at least two per town. If anyone has an interest, the governing body of the town nominates representatives who are then appointed by the Commissioner for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). The duties of the committee include: advising on plans or actions that would alter the resource values or characteristics of the river, developing a local river corridor management plan, and reporting biennially to the State and annually to the towns.

In 2015, the Committee, with help from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission through a grant from NHDES, completed the corridor management plan for the river. The plan, which is not regulatory in nature, should go toward identifying actions towns might consider to continue protection of the river. It is available at [oysterriverlac.org](http://oysterriverlac.org). The committee has also begun work on a virtual document library which will be a publically accessible depository for materials about the river. In the long term, NHDES has the responsibility to prepare and adopt a long-range comprehensive plan for each designated river which will address the management and protection of instream values.

The committee commented positively on three projects in the river corridor. We looked favorably on a proposal to replace an undersized culvert at Topaz Dr. in Barrington. The replacement structure would better handle high water levels and provide fish passage and refuge habitat. There was also a habitat improvement project, involving the removal of invasive species, along the river at the Spruce Woods easement in Durham. Finally, the IBEW training site on Rt. 4 in Barrington proposed a redesign which should improve the site's stormwater runoff into the river. Currently, the committee is awaiting information about Eversource's crossing of the river in connection with their Seacoast Reliability Project.

The committee currently holds meetings on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5:30pm at the Madbury Town Hall. The committee can be contacted through a general email address at: [info@oysterriverlac.org](mailto:info@oysterriverlac.org).