

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

### PEMIGEWASSET RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**KEY EVENTS – 2016. Ongoing:** PRLAC completed its 15<sup>th</sup> year of water quality testing on the Pemi. PRLAC members logged over 286 volunteer hours in ongoing activities: Water testing, permit application site visits, outreach, and meetings. Member miles traveled in support of these efforts is estimated to be 1,053. An average of 7-8 members attended PRLAC's 11 meeting 2016 schedule. Our primary focus is on eight corridor towns from Thornton to Hill. All these towns supported PRLAC in 2016. PRLAC receives administrative and occasional technical support from the Lakes Region Planning Commission. Despite drought conditions, key indicators of river health (dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, turbidity, pH, temperature) were normal with the exception of water temperature which shows a slight increase. Observations in the field confirm that climate change, with its associated extreme weather events, increases destabilization of sensitive feeder systems to the river. Stormwater runoff continues to be the issue of most concern.

**MAJOR PROJECT – NORTHERN PASS::** From day one of 2016 – the Northern Pass Transmission line (NPT) consumed practically all of PRLAC's volunteer resources. After extensive review of all the Northern Pass Transmission (NPT) development permit applications (27) involving Shoreland, Wetlands, and Alteration of Terrain – PRLAC concluded that the NPT Project, as presented, will have unacceptable adverse consequences in the Pemi Watershed – particularly wetlands and its feeder streams. PRLAC voted (unanimously) to petition the Northern Pass Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) for "Intervener Status" at its November, 2015, meeting. The SEC responded with the following: "The Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee's duties include the requirement to consider and comment on any federal, state, or local governmental plans to approve, license, fund or construct facilities that would alter the resource values and character for which the river is designated. The Pemi River was "designated" in 1991. PRLAC's focus is on the implications of proposed development activity on water quality, water quantity, and aesthetic impact on the river. PRLAC asserts that the river and supporting wetlands will be negatively affected by the project." "PRLAC has a substantial interest in ensuring that rivers and wetlands will not be negatively impacted by the Project." "PRLAC may intervene as a full party in these proceedings".

There were more than 150 motions to intervene on this project. This expression of concern to the SEC was unprecedented. Approximately 90% of the petitions were against what NPT proposes. Fulfilling the responsibilities of intervener status was indeed a huge commitment for a relatively small volunteer organization. It involved attendance at a series of Site Evaluation Committee Technical Sessions in Concord, several public meetings, and a major time devoted to developing pre-trial testimony on multiple occasions for several members.

PRLAC's annual report to NH DES will show the following level of commitment to NPT in 2016: member time attributable to intervention in this project is more than 800 hours; travel directly associated with NPT totals ~700 miles.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** The PRLAC's heavy involvement in NPT will continue thru September 2017, at which time the SEC will make a final decision. Our critical issues revolve around anticipated increases in stormwater runoff related to ROW construction damage, visual aesthetics related to 90' towers, secondary damage to wetlands. PRLAC meets on the last Tuesday of most months January-November at 7:00PM in Plymouth's Pease Public Library. All are encouraged to attend. For more information go to: <http://www.lakesrpc.org/prlac/prlacindex.asp>.

Max Stamp, PRLAC Chair