

SoRLAC (Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee)

The Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SoRLAC) is a volunteer river management committee. The committee plays a vital role in protecting the Souhegan River. SoRLAC is part of the collaboration with the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program and the State. Local Advisory Committees (LACs) are the cooperative partnership between the state and local stakeholders for Designated Rivers. Rivers Management and Protection Act states, "It is the policy of the state to ensure the continued viability of New Hampshire rivers as valued economic and social assets for the benefit of present and future generations". Nominated in 1999 the Souhegan River is one the state's nineteen Designated Rivers.

SoRLAC members represent a broad range of interests such as concerned citizen action, water quality protection, engineering best practices and local government involvement. Projects or other work being done within a quarter mile of the Souhegan River are reviewed by SoRLAC at its regular monthly meetings. SoRLAC recommendations for state permits are made prior to permit issuance. Each of the six corridor towns has room for three members who are nominated by the Board of Selectmen. Currently there are openings for additional interested citizens for every watershed town. Meetings are open to the public. Minutes are posted on the Nashua Regional Planning Commission website: <http://www.nashuarpc.org/about/related-organizations/sorlac>.

SoRLAC reviewed five construction permits in 2019 and made recommendations and inquiries to benefit the river during construction. SoRLAC monitored developments and projects in multiple towns including a residential bridge in New Ipswich, dam activities in Greeneville and Milford, wastewater treatment plant permit and maintenance renewals, small business development projects in Merrimack and other activities that impact the river. The committee held an informal educational seminar on a rising contamination issue of PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and participated in the Wilton Sustainability Fair. Several members also attended the statewide LAC workshop in Concord. The committee works in cooperation with the Souhegan Watershed Association on cleanups along the river, canoe trips, water quality monitoring during the summer months. Water quality data are posted <http://www.souheganriver.org/results.html>.

This upcoming year in addition to project reviews, SoRLAC is planning monthly informal speakers and educational seminars on rivers and issues specific to the Souhegan River. SoRLAC has a long history of engagement with the towns, counties and state. Fundamentally, members of SoRLAC have a high regard for the Souhegan River's health, access and for monitoring development. We welcome all visitors and look forward to a good year for the Souhegan River.

Cory Ritz, SoRLAC Chair