

UPPER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Annual Report • 2018

The Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee, (known locally and affectionately as UMLAC; pronounced Uhm'-re-lack) capped a busy year in 2018 with a full slate of meetings, events, monitoring activities, public programs, anniversary observations, organizational governance review, updating bylaws, and other activities for the upper Merrimack communities.

Established in 1990, the UMLAC represents its six communities of Boscawen, Bow, Canterbury, Concord, Franklin, and Northfield through its statutory duties including permit review and management plan coordination. The UMLAC provides a voice for the upper Merrimack River towns and cities through the river's designation in the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program. The UMLAC updates the *Merrimack River Management and Implementation Plan* (<http://www.merrimackriver.org/managementplan>) and coordinates the activities in it.

The UMLAC reviewed and provided local comment on several project plans and proposals in the upper Merrimack including underground storage tanks in Concord and Franklin, whitewater park proposal in Franklin, herbicide application in Concord, and state permit applications in Boscawen, Bow, Concord, Franklin, and Northfield. The Committee monitored and provided comment on several Federal Energy Regulatory Commission applications including Eastman Falls, Penacook Lower Falls, Campton, and Lowell, and Lakeport facilities.

The UMLAC continued its tradition of professional improvement and hosted experts to present on a variety of issues, including eDNA (finding DNA of species in water samples), Low Impact Hydropower Institute, and the state's proposed Instream Flow Program. The Committee reviewed and commented on proposed Aquatic Resources Mitigation grants in the upper Merrimack watershed, and on the state's proposed wetlands rules revision.

In December, the UMLAC observed the 30th anniversary of the state's Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP). Robert Scott, Commissioner, NH Department of Environmental Services, and Program staff were present to provide background on the RMPP and answer questions. The RMPP's and the UMLAC's logos were rendered together in luxury frosting on a commemorative cake. The UMLAC continues to support the New Hampshire Rivers Council and Friends of the Northern Rail Trail. The UMLAC provided a letter of support to the Warner River Nominating Committee. The Warner River joined other designated rivers in the upper Merrimack in the summer. Designated rivers in the upper Merrimack watershed include the Contoocook and North Branch, and Pemigewasset Rivers.

The UMLAC is represented by Mike Hansen on the Brownfields Advisory Committee administered by the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission. The UMLAC wrote a letter of support for the grant to continue the project.

Non-statutory or discretionary programs include a variety of studies, planning activities, and programs related to the upper Merrimack River and its watershed. The UMLAC is working with the Upper Merrimack Watershed Association (UMWA) to assume and manage its non-statutory activities including community outreach, informative and data-rich website, St. Paul's School of the Upper Merrimack Monitoring Program Winter Series and Birkhead Science Lectures partnership, and the Upper Merrimack Monitoring Program (UMMP).

The Upper Merrimack Monitoring Program, which has been working for its communities' rivers since 1994, depends on the high quality work of over a hundred volunteers each year who monitor river and stream health on the upper Merrimack River and its tributaries at a total of seventeen sites from Franklin to Bow. During the summer, volunteers collect river water samples and the Franklin Waste Water Treatment Plant analyzes them at no charge to detect the presence or absence of *E. coli* bacteria. The resulting data are used to determine if the upper Merrimack River is safe for swimming, fishing, boating, and other recreational activities. The information is shared with municipalities and other local officials for their health officers' and other local officials' use, as well as to the State of New Hampshire

and the US Congress. Thanks this year to sample courier Adrienne Hutchinson, Aurora Hutchinson, and Chantal McGuire. These Concord-to-Franklin pick-up and drop-off runs, carried out by these volunteer sample couriers, are time-consuming but are essential for timely sample chain-of-custody and processing. Nearly 80 volunteers contributed their time to the Upper Merrimack Monitoring Program this year.

St. Paul’s School continues to be the gracious host for “Bug Nights,” the UMMP’s educational and research program, which continues its popularity in the region with dozens of individuals volunteering their sample sorting and identification services each Wednesday evening. The commitment and quality of volunteers that participate in the UMMP cannot be overstated and is the primary reason this program has been recognized nationally for generating superior citizen science results.

At its annual meeting in November, the UMLAC elected officers Michele Tremblay, Chair; Steve Landry, Vice-Chair, Krista Crowell, Treasurer; and Gary Lynn, Secretary. This year, the UMLAC bid farewell to and thanked Bill Dawson for his many terms of Northfield representation on the committee. His commitment and vision will be missed. The UMLAC thanks Alan Larter, whose term ended in the summer, for his service to the City of Franklin and the committee. The committee welcomed Ashley Warner, representing Northfield.

The UMMP work would not be possible without the generosity of all six of its municipal supporters and eleven Adopt-a-River Site Sponsors. Their support assures that the program has the resources that it needs to continue its programs. Adopt-a-River Site Sponsors include Aries Engineering, Inc., Elektrisola, Essex/Briar Hydro, Franklin Savings Bank, Franklin Wastewater Treatment Facility, Granite Shore Power, GZA Environmental, Inc., Nelson Analytical Lab, and Watts Regulator/Webster Valve.

Please visit the UMLAC’s blog at www.MerrimackRiver.org/forum as well as its website, www.MerrimackRiver.org for further information on the river, committee membership, activities, summaries from prior meetings, upcoming meeting agendas, maps, water quality data, and photographs of brave and selfless volunteers demonstrating their passion for water quality monitoring in the upper Merrimack watershed. Information is also available on Facebook and Twitter.

The UMLAC meets on a rotating basis in its six represented communities on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM. Thank you to the Towns and Cities of Boscawen, Bow, Canterbury, Concord, Franklin, and Northfield for graciously hosting Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee meetings and for their financial support during the past year. All are welcome to attend the meetings. For further information, please contact Michele Tremblay, Chair via telephone at 603.796.2615, email at UMLAC@MerrimackRiver.org or through your representatives listed below.

Boscawen

Thomas Gilmore

Canterbury

Anne Dowling
Adrienne Hutchinson

Franklin

Wayne Ives
Donna Liolis

Bow

Krista Crowell
Michael Hansen
Gary Lynn

Concord

Rick Chormann
Gary Lemay

Northfield

Ashley Warner

At-large

Stephen C. Landry
Nita Tomaszewski
Michele L. Tremblay