



# Warner River Local Advisory Committee

5 East Main Street, P.O. Box 265

Warner, New Hampshire 03278

## **TOWN REPORT 2024**

### **Bradford, Sutton, Warner, Webster, Hopkinton**

The Warner River Local Advisory Committee (WRLAC) is pleased to report on its work for the calendar year 2024. This Committee has statutory authority (RSA 483:8-a) to advise state and local governments on federal, state, and local permit applications and other environmental issues within the Designated Warner River Corridor, which extends for one-quarter mile outward from each river bank as the main stem of the river flows through our five riverfront towns: Bradford, Sutton, Warner, Webster, and Hopkinton. Committee members work with residents, landowners, and state and local officials to promote thoughtful stewardship of this treasured element of our natural and cultural landscape.

One of the main tasks of the Committee is to provide its perspective on town permits within the corridor as described above. This year, the Committee provided comments on permits issued in the towns of Bradford and Warner. This included comments on two alteration-of-terrain permits, two notices of intent-to-cut, three NH Department of Environmental Service Shoreland permits, and two NH Department of Environmental Service Wetlands permits. We have received thoughtful responses to our comments from residents, town officials, and state regulators. In addition, the Committee discusses and tries to find ways to encourage communities to address river-related problems such as flooding, run-off, and erosion.

The WRLAC also partners with members of state agencies whose work is related to ours. This summer and fall, members of this Committee participated with other local citizen-scientists in a macroinvertebrate survey sponsored by NH Fish & Game and Trout Unlimited and spearheaded by the Warner Conservation Commission. Volunteers took water samples, recorded stream conditions, and counted the presence of important and diverse species of macroinvertebrates in seven brooks that empty into the Warner River: Ballard, Frazier, French, Stevens, Bartlett, Willow and Silver. Based on the data, all the streams were in good condition for supporting macroinvertebrate life, which in turn provide food for our native brook trout populations. Members of this Committee have also participated in the Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP), sponsored by NH DES. This program provides an opportunity for citizen-scientists to assist in assessing the quality of the river's water. In its 8th year, the data continue to show that the quality of the water is, for the most part, excellent. The raw data sets are available at the NH DES's Volunteer Assessment Programs webpage, as well as the WRLAC website ([www.wrlac.com](http://www.wrlac.com)). These data provide good news, but we are also reminded that increased pressure from human development and changes in weather patterns can disrupt the river and its ecosystem. While resilient in many ways, the river depends on a delicate balance that must be maintained over time. The WRLAC thanks NH F&G, TU, and the Warner Conservation Commission for providing these opportunities to understand the river's importance to our community.

This Committee has also engaged with organizations across the five towns. We had an update about the Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail's plans for developing trail through the Exit 9 area in Warner. We heard from both advocates of the plan as well as from those who have concerns about the trail's impact on the river's ecosystem. The Committee will continue to review and comment on permits associated with this project. The Committee also heard from the commissioner of the Warner Village Water District about how that organization works to provide clean and plentiful water to the village of Warner, and this Committee looks forward to supporting the commission in any way that it can. Also in Warner, the Committee's chair met with the Tom's Pond Association to share their mission and goals with each other. In Bradford, our

Committee stays in contact with the Bradford Conservation Commission regarding permits and other environmental conversations that are related to the quarter-mile corridor. Finally, the Committee had the opportunity to introduce itself to representatives of 12 towns at a meeting of the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust.

The Committee continues to work on raising its visibility and communicating its mission and goals with community members. One important way we do this is by partnering with Trout Unlimited at a booth during the Warner Fall Foliage Festival. We greatly appreciate the generosity of TU and MainStreet Bookends of Warner for providing the space for us to do this.

For the coming year, we will continue to create stronger ties to, and better coordination with our communities' hardworking and dedicated local agencies, boards, and committees whose work is related to ours. This includes staying in touch with the five towns' conservation commissions, planning boards, water precincts, road committees, and selectboards. There is also work that can be done in analyzing data in order to continue to learn about the health of the river and its relationship to its human neighbors. In addition, we will begin updating the "Appendix B - Action Plan" of the [Warner River Corridor Management Plan](#), first published in 2021.

In 2025, this committee will meet every other month at 7:00 PM at the Pillsbury Library, Warner, on the following Wednesdays: January 29, March 26, May 28, July 23, Sept 24, and Nov 19. We invite interested members of the community to join us in our work. For more information about the WRLAC, please visit [www.wrlac.com](http://www.wrlac.com).

Finally, the Committee extends its sincere thanks to three former representatives for their dedication, leadership, and expertise on many topics related to our work: Ken Milender (Warner), Mike Howley (Bradford), and George Embley (Webster).

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Russell, WRLAC Secretary

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**Warner River Local Advisory Committee**

Bradford: Marlene Freyler, Rebecca Herman

Sutton: Peter Savickas, Treasurer

Warner: Laura Russell, Secretary; Christopher Spannweitz, Mickey Benson

Webster: Bob MacGowan

Hopkinton: Daniel Morrissey, Chair

*BRADFORD, HOPKINTON, SUTTON, WARNER, WEBSTER*