

REPORT OF THE EXETER RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC) celebrated its 11th year of stewardship of the river and watershed in 2007. The year was marked by productive partnerships with several organizations, including the Rockingham Planning Commission, NH Department of Environmental Services, NH Coastal Program, and NH Estuaries Project. These partnerships provide ERLAC with an opportunity to work with local Conservation Commissions to advocate effectively for protection of natural resources throughout the watershed.

ERLAC partnered with the Fremont Conservation Commission to hold the seventh annual vernal pool workshop in May. Children and adults waded into woodland pools to identify salamanders, turtles and clusters of frog eggs. Development of forestland threatens vernal pools in every watershed community.

In June, ERLAC partnered with dozens of environmental and community organizations and several local artists to hold the Exeter River Alewife Festival and canoe and kayak race. Funding to support this event was provided by the NH Coastal Program and NH Department of Environmental Services. ERLAC looks forward to working with Conservation Commissions and other organizations in the watershed on a new series of activities in 2008.

Several ERLAC members spent the summer working with the NH Coastal Program to collect and identify macroinvertebrates in the Exeter River and its tributaries. These intrepid volunteers waded into the water at several locations to capture and identify bugs hiding under rocks in rapid sections of the river. Macroinvertebrates are used as an indication of water quality. ERLAC members are also actively monitoring water temperature and other indicators. Results from these sampling programs will be available in early 2008 on ERLAC's website, www.exeterriver.org.

In October, ERLAC partnered with the Sandown Conservation Commission and NH Department of Environmental Services to hold a family friendly workshop explaining how to identify macroinvertebrates and why they are an important indicator of the impacts of land use on water quality and quantity.

ERLAC has also been working with the NH Department of Environmental Services and the consulting firm Geosyntec on a Watershed Restoration Plan. The first phase of the plan, a Vulnerability Analysis, has just been completed and identifies sections of the Exeter River and the watershed most impacted by development. The next phase of the project will involve management and restoration plans for these areas.

ERLAC meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room at the Rockingham County Nursing Home in Brentwood. Representatives are needed from your community. Please call 778-0885 for more information, or visit www.exeterriver.org.