

Report of the Exeter-Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee

The Exeter-Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee (ESRLAC) is made up of volunteers representing the twelve communities in the Exeter-Squamscott River watershed: Chester, Raymond, Fremont, Sandown, Danville, Kingston, East Kingston, Brentwood, Kensington, Exeter, Stratham and Newfields. The Exeter-Squamscott River is one river with two names, reflecting the fresh and salt water portions of this major tributary to Great Bay.

ESRLAC celebrated its 16th year of stewardship of the river and its watershed in 2012. The year was marked by productive partnerships with landowners and towns in the watershed as well as several organizations, including the Rockingham Planning Commission, NH Department of Environmental Services, and NH Fish and Game. These partnerships provide ESRLAC with an opportunity to advocate effectively for the protection of water quality, water quantity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and historic resources.

ESRLAC partnered with the Newfields Conservation Commission to hold the 11th 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 and ESRLAC continues to advocate for the protection of critical wildlife habitat like vernal pools.

In June, ESRLAC partnered with the Exeter Conservation Commission and NH Fish and Game for the annual tour of the fish ladder located next to the Great Dam in downtown Exeter. As always, this event attracted a large crowd interested in learning how NH Fish and Game manages the fish ladder to enable annual fish migration from the salt water of the Squamscott River to the fresh water of the Exeter River.

ESRLAC continues to work on an update to the Exeter-Squamscott River Watershed Management Plan. The Plan provides the committee with a blueprint for their work in the coming decade and details how ESRLAC will work with landowners and towns to improve water quality.

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

*"May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view.
May your mountains rise into and above the clouds."*

~ Edward Abbey