

Suncook River Nomination Process

Suncook River
Nomination to the
New Hampshire
Rivers
Management and
Protection
Program

Suncook River Corridor Communities:

Allenstown
Barnstead
Chichester
Epsom
Gilmanton
Pembroke
Pittsfield

Nomination Schedule:

- ♦ Fall 2011: Formation of Suncook River Nomination Committee
- ♦ Winter 2011: Initial Public Forum on the Nomination
- ♦ January - April 2012: Prepare Draft Nomination with resource inventory and assessment
- ♦ April - May 2012: Present Draft Nomination for comment at Public Meeting
- ♦ June 1, 2012: Final Nomination Package Submitted to DES



Nomination Overview, October 2011 - June 2012 to the NH Rivers Management & Protection Program

What is the Nomination?



*A view of the Suncook River from the Pembroke/
Allenstown Double Decker Bridge*

The State of New Hampshire established the **Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP)** in 1988 under RSA 483. The RMPP provides a two-tiered approach to river management and protection: *State* designation of significant rivers and protection of instream characteristics, and *local* development and adoption of river corridor management plans to protect shorelines and adjacent lands. The RMPP is administered by the Department of Environmental Services (DES).

Why is the Suncook River Being Nominated?

The **Suncook River Community Planning Team**, formed in 2010 with Town officials and emergency management personnel in the five lower Suncook communities, has been working together to promote **regional hazard mitigation and resource planning along the Suncook River**. This group identified a need for continued regional communication and cooperation on a variety of matters relating to the River.

The Suncook River is an **extremely dynamic system** possessing many resources vital to local communities. Historically and currently, the river has **shaped patterns of settlement in the area**. Several **hydroelectric dams** operate along the Suncook, and the Towns of Epsom, Pembroke, and Allenstown all depend upon **aquifers** adjacent to the river for public water supplies. The river is used **recreationally** by pad-

A river may be nominated for state designation by community members or organizations. Sponsors must submit a **nomination document** that includes an inventory and assessment of the river's values, characteristics, and significant resources. The nomination document must also recommend the classification level(s) desired with designation. RSA 483 recognizes four different river classifications: Natural, Rural, Rural-Community, and Community. The nomination must also demonstrate public involvement and support. Nominations are submitted to DES for evaluation by the Commissioner and the state Rivers Management Advisory Committee. If approved, the nomination is forwarded to the state legislature. The legislature then considers a bill to designate the river formally under RSA 483.

Nominations are due to DES on June 1 in order to be considered in the next legislative session. A **Suncook River Nomination Committee** has been formed to sponsor the River's nomination and oversee the process. Coordination will be provided by the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission and the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

dlers, anglers, hikers, and wildlife watchers. It also provides a **habitat corridor for wildlife**. In sum, the Suncook River represents an important regional resource whose water quality, quantity, and flow directly affect residents and users throughout the region. Designation would provide **statewide recognition and opportunities for regional river management**.

Will Designation of the Suncook River Mean More Regulations for Towns and Landowners?

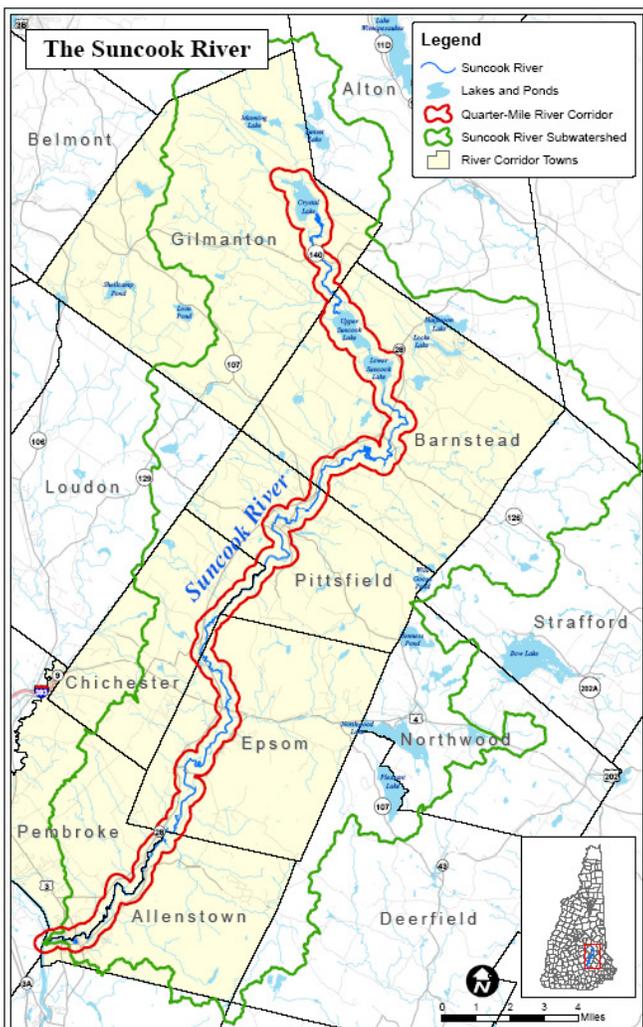
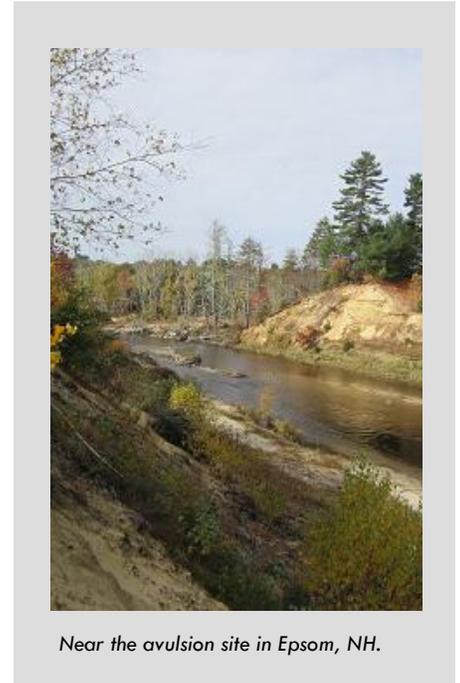
Local land use control authority is NOT affected by state designation of a river. RSA 483 specifically states that “nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted to preempt any land and zoning authority granted to municipal bodies”

There are **specific river protections** in the RSAs relating to the establishment of new dams, hydroelectric facilities, landfills, hazardous waste facilities, and the agricultural application of sludge within the river corridor. Protected instream flow levels may be established by the state to ensure adequate water flow for all users, but would be set on a case-

by-case basis using scientific modeling and a significant public involvement process. There are no other development restrictions within the RMPP. **Local land use decisions remain entirely local.**

What Designation Will Mean:

The main result of river designation is the formation of a **Local Advisory Committee (LAC)** composed of volunteer community representatives. The LAC is formally charged with developing and implementing a **river corridor management plan**, including recommendations for land use and conservation within the river corridor. These plans are advisory only and may be adopted by individual municipalities as part of their master plans if so desired. The LAC may also comment on federal, state, and local permit applications within the river corridor. The LAC can provide **regional planning and coordination** of river-wide events and initiatives.



How Can I Participate in the Nomination Process?

A key part of the nomination process is demonstration of local support for river designation. You can attend **public forums** and meetings to learn more and voice your support; write a support letter; assist the Suncook River Nomination Committee with the resource inventory and assessment; provide **photos** of the river corridor; participate in **field visits**; and assist in other public outreach efforts.

More information will be available on the Suncook River website at www.suncookriver.org. Please contact your Regional Planning Commission or NHDES with questions or comments:

Barnstead and Gilmanton:

David Jeffers, Regional Planner, Lakes Region Planning Commission at djeffers@lakesrpc.org or 279-8171.

Allenstown, Chichester, Epsom, Pembroke, and Pittsfield:

Vanessa Gould, Regional Planner, Central NH Regional Planning Commission at vgould@cnhrpc.org or 226-6020.

All Interested Parties:

Jacque Colburn, Rivers Coordinator, NH Rivers Management & Protection Program, Department of Environmental Services at jacque.colburn@des.nh.gov or 271-2959.

Stay up to date on the nomination process:
www.suncookriver.org