

**Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Management Plan Update  
Public Meeting and Visioning Session  
Monday, January 25, 2010, 7:00 p.m.  
Pierce School, Bennington, NH**

**Meeting Notes**

**1. Values: Activities and Resources**

Activities:

- a. Boating
- b. Fishing, ice fishing
- c. Bird/wildlife watching
- d. Canoeing/kayaking
- e. Walking
- f. Hunting
- g. Skiing
- h. Nature photography
- i. Motor vehicle racing
- j. Ice sailing
- k. Snowmobiling along railroad bed and on lakes

Resources:

- l. Aesthetics
- m. Water quality
- n. Wildlife habitat/corridor
- o. Connection to natural world
- p. Quality of life
- q. Water source for drip irrigation and for fire departments
- r. Peaceful, undeveloped
- s. Agriculture in floodplains
- t. Historic resources such as mill sites
- u. Hydropower resources
- v. River is a municipal water/wastewater treatment resource
- w. Tourism, recreational resources attract visitors to the area
- x. Rail trail – Peterborough, Hancock and Deering
- y. Property values

**2. Concerns**

- a. Invasive aquatics (milfoil, yellow iris, purple loosestrife – animals spread, difficult to remove, difficult to swim, interferes with fishing)
- b. Litter
- c. Erosion – lack of timber management
- d. Land development
- e. Lack of education and support
- f. Geese infestation – feces, habitat destruction, bacterial problems
- g. Road salt causing contamination
- h. CSPA confusing, need increased education
- i. Increased and increasing regulation – need a balance

- j. Downed trees blocking watercraft (from Deering bridge south)
- k. Sediment/runoff from gravel pits – Chase Brook and Amey Brook in Henniker
- l. Negative effects on tributaries (sediment, invasive species) impacting mainstem
- m. Lack of safe, convenient access points
- n. Need for more trash facilities

### **3. Vision: What strategies will help to improve the Contoocook and North Branch Rivers?**

- a. Education and outreach
  - i. Invasive species, habitat, water quality concerns and impacts on water quality
  - ii. Incorporate into elementary and secondary curriculum and activities
    - 1. Work with Harris Center
    - 2. Have students ID and map invasive species
  - iii. Tie education into public participation/activity like a river clean-up
  - iv. Fishers and motorboaters – have educational materials at boat ramps and launches
    - 1. Bottom waders may be a concern, spread invasive species
    - 2. Information could be included with purchase of fishing licenses and motor boat registrations
  - v. Education on state protected rivers including water quality data
- b. Local coordination and continued town efforts to restore and rehabilitate river system
  - i. Such as efforts to move landfills farther away from river
  - ii. A combination of regulation and voluntary efforts
- c. Implement measures to prevent invasive species (natural methods)
- d. Establish goals as a community to improve/protect river
  - i. Education
  - ii. River clean-ups
  - iii. Coordinate with Conservation Commission and other organizations
- e. Post signs pointing out milfoil and tell boaters how not to spread it (also pickerel weed)
- f. State highway education on road salt use
- g. Use of property to launch watercraft
- h. No dams
- i. Key is landowner involvement
- j. Greater appreciation for history, diversity of uses (including industrial uses)
- k. Refurbish mill/industrial buildings

### **4. Specific project ideas:**

- a. Convert historic sites into parks/museums (e.g., Henniker Paper Mill, Hillsborough Woolen Mills)
- b. Bennington village district about to be placed in the National Register for Historic Places – other areas could also be eligible
- c. Upgrade rail trail in Henniker