



SOUHEGAN FLOWS ON

Take a good look...it's about to be removed...

2006 has been an important year for the Souhegan River. Finally local planning boards, conservation commissions, and developers have recognized the LAC as being an important voice for the river that can provide worthwhile input. Both the LAC and the Souhegan Watershed Association are being consulted for projects even though the projects are outside of the river corridor and several improvements have been made to improve the area.

We do have several permitted projects that still are not in the best interests of the river. A proposal for a golf course in Milford has already installed some riprapping and has plans for lots more. There are two outstanding corrections that have yet to be implemented by landowners one involving rip rapping and the other replanting of cleared brush.

The Souhegan is the first of the designated rivers to erect signs at all the bridge crossings that identify the river and note that it is a protected NH river. There are still a few more signs to go up, but shortly the entire river will have designated signs.

The Merrimack Village Dam is slated for removal this summer. This dam that has been in place since the Civil War has been studied for removal for the last several years and has been a priority for removal by the state for some time. The dam is only a short distance up from the mouth of the river at the Merrimack and so blocks the entire river from the anadromous salmon and shad that are expected to repopulate the 14 miles that will open up. Further discussion is well underway to remove another dam in Milford that will help restore the river. The removal of the dam and attendant publicity has also caused a Merrimack citizen to donate 14 acres of riverfront land that was the old mill site to the town for a public park. And there have been plans to improve the entire area.

For the last several years SoRLAC has attended monthly meetings that have been a bit of a drain on the volunteer members who are already busy people. We are trying having quarterly meetings instead of the monthly get-togethers. It seems to be working out fairly well thanks to email.

We have completed drafting the Souhegan River Masterplan though there is still a considerable amount of work to spread the word and finish up the project.

The most important project for the Souhegan River is its selection as one of two NH rivers to be studied to implement the Instream Flow Rules that are mandated by the Rivers Management & Protection Program. The technical committee has just about finished up its work of studying every conceivable aspect of river flow scenarios and is ready to hand it off to the management committee for implementation. The Souhegan is proud to be the pilot for all NH rivers.