

Mascoma River Corridor Management Plan

Phase 1: Identifying Priority Issues in the Mascoma River Watershed

Adopted December 19, 2012

Prepared by:

Mascoma River Local
Advisory Committee



With assistance from:
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

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This plan is also available online at: <http://mascomariver.wordpress.com>

The Mascoma River Watershed: A Community Resource



The Mascoma River is an outstanding community resource for the City of Lebanon and Towns of Enfield and Canaan. The river connects the hearts of the three communities, flowing through villages and downtown areas before entering the Connecticut River in West Lebanon. The river acts as an important component of the region's economy, providing clean, safe drinking water for the City of Lebanon, and also sufficient water to power hydroelectric stations and support industrial uses. The Mascoma River, Mascoma Lake and the watershed are valued for their scenic beauty and wildlife habitat as well as the year-round recreation they provide.

To learn more about the resources of the Mascoma River, please refer to Appendix A: Nomination of the Mascoma River from Canaan Center to West Lebanon.

The Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee

In recognition of the Mascoma River as a vital community asset and the local support for its nomination, the New Hampshire Legislature designated the Mascoma River from Canaan Center to West Lebanon as a Protected River under the State Rivers Management and Protection Program (RSA 483) in 2010.

The Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee (Mascoma LAC), composed of residents of Lebanon, Enfield, and Canaan, is authorized by State law to advise on the management and protection of the Mascoma River. The Mascoma LAC receives no dedicated funding from the State, instead seeking funding from grants and local sources such as Mascoma River Watershed Council, Rotary Clubs, Lions Club, and other local philanthropic organizations.

The Mascoma River Corridor Management Plan

Under RSA 483, the Mascoma LAC is charged with developing and implementing a River Corridor Management Plan so that the outstanding qualities of the river may be better managed and protected now and in the future. ***The Mascoma River Corridor Management Plan's purpose is: to guide the Mascoma LAC and its community partners as they take action to protect the unique and valuable resources of the Mascoma River.***

The Mascoma LAC worked with Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission to survey municipal officials, waterfront landowners, and watershed residents about the most important resources and most pressing threats to the river and its watershed.

The Mascoma LAC used the survey responses (Appendix B) to develop goals for management and protection of the river and its watershed. For each goal, they studied the work already underway, and then brainstormed what action steps the Mascoma LAC can take to address these goals and how they can support the ongoing work of community partners.

Goal 1: Protect the quality and adequate supply of drinking water for the City of Lebanon.

Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Lebanon is proposing zoning amendments to improve riverbank and wetland protection. • The City Water Department is engaged in ongoing monitoring of the water supply. • The City Water Department recently completed a Source Water Protection planning project. • Lebanon and Enfield sponsor regional household hazardous waste and unwanted medicine collections; Lebanon, Enfield and Canaan participate in drug take-back days through Drug Enforcement Agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a coordinating body for water-related organizations in watershed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a website to access water data for the watershed. • Partner with the City and NH DES to educate watershed residents about drinking water protection. • Provide outreach to homeowners and homeowners’ associations about the special status and protections for the Mascoma River through RSA 483 and other relevant state and federal laws.

Goal 2: Identify causes of water quality problems in Mascoma Lake and take action to improve water quality.

Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with DES, the watershed’s lake associations and a river-monitoring group are engaged in a robust volunteer water quality monitoring program for the Mascoma watershed. • Cyanobacteria blooms in Mascoma Lake and Goose Pond are tracked by DES and UNH and have been publicized through local media outlets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and participate in continued volunteer water quality monitoring. • Support studies to identify causes of cyanobacteria blooms and other water quality problems. • Support sharing of current water quality data within the watershed with DES, lake associations, and municipalities.

Goal 3: Ensure adequate water flows and water levels for the Mascoma’s many users.

Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NH DES regulates withdrawals from the Mascoma River for drinking water, industry, and hydropower. • Mascoma Lake’s level is managed for recreation and to ensure sufficient water supply for the City of Lebanon. Mascoma Lake and other lakes in the watershed are drawn down in the fall to mitigate risk of ice damage and spring flooding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a study of water quantity to identify potential conflicts that could arise due to changing precipitation patterns or changes in water withdrawals.

Goal 4: Improve public access to the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake for recreation.

Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Lebanon is working to extend the Mascoma River Greenway along the rail corridor from downtown Lebanon to West Lebanon. This would connect to the Northern Rail Trail, which is a popular community, state and regional recreation resource. • The Lebanon Rotary Club has been developing community parks along the Mascoma River, called the String of Pearls project. This includes Baker’s Crossing and Riverside Park. • The Town of Enfield has been in discussion with NH DOT about a waterfront parcel that may be suitable for park development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to promote the Mascoma River as a recreational corridor and identify potential access points or viewpoints that connect the Greenway, Rail Trail or parks to the river. • Participate in the planning of waterfront parks and access points to promote environmentally-sensitive construction and design.

Goal 5: Prevent the spread of aquatic, wetland and terrestrial invasive species.

Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mascoma Lake Association has an active volunteer scuba diving group that removes and manages Eurasian water milfoil in Mascoma Lake. • Mascoma Lake Association, Goose Pond Lake Association, Canaan Street Lake Association, Crystal Lake Association and Friends of Grafton Pond are involved in the DES Weed Watchers program for early detection and NH Lakes Association’s Lake Host program for prevention. • Volunteers affiliated with the Volunteer River Assessment Program monitor the Mascoma River for invasive species on an informal basis. • Grass-roots volunteer efforts are underway in Lebanon to control garlic mustard, knotweed and other terrestrial invasive species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as a clearinghouse for information on invasive species populations in the watershed. • Promote the expansion of the NH Lakes Association’s Lake Host program to all lakes in the watershed. • Partner with the NH Rivers Council’s River Runners program to expand invasive species monitoring in the Mascoma River. • Promote the construction of information/bulletin boards at river access points. • Survey existing water access sites to determine if invasive species information is posted. If not, then add this information at access sites.

Goal 6: Protect the scenic quality of the Mascoma River watershed.	
Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing conservation of public and private lands protects scenic views and vistas in the watershed. • The Town of Enfield is developing zoning amendments that would improve aesthetics for commercial development along Route 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support land conservation efforts within the watershed. • Support protection of riparian buffers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support local efforts in watershed towns to adopt riparian buffer provisions into local regulations. ○ Host a homeowner’s workshop for the DES Shoreland Program. • Encourage Planning Boards to include questions about the scenic quality of the watershed in Master Plan surveys.

Goal 7: Ensure that septic systems are properly maintained.	
Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mascoma LAC hosted an educational workshop for homeowners on septic system maintenance in 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify methods to educate homeowners, real estate agents, lake associations, homeowners’ associations and planning boards on septic system maintenance. • Host an annual educational workshop on septic system maintenance.

Goal 8: Prevent stormwater runoff from carrying pollutants into the river system.	
Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing state and local regulations provide some provisions for on-site treatment of stormwater. • The Town of Enfield is developing zoning amendments that would improve stormwater infiltration for development along Route 4. • NH Lakes Association’s Lake Conservation Corps partners with lake associations to construct stormwater management features; a statewide training program called Soak Up the Rain is being developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify methods to educate homeowners about buffer zones, Best Management Practices and existing Shoreland regulations. • Host a homeowners’ workshop with the DES Shoreland Program. • In cooperation with NH Lakes Association’s Lake Conservation Corps, work with lake associations and volunteer property owners to facilitate demonstration projects on lakefront properties.

Goal 9: Reduce road salt runoff into the river system.	
Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town roads near Goose Pond have been designated as low-salt areas. • UNH Technology Transfer Center provides training on winter road maintenance and road salting methods, including a Green SnowPro certification course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep towns informed of best practices and options for road salt application and salt storage. • Investigate how salt application on state highways might be reduced. • Partner with the DES to identify and recommend Best Management Practices (BMPs) that could be implemented throughout the watershed.

Goal 10: Avoid over-development and protect open space.	
Current Work toward Achieving Goal	Action Items for Mascoma LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing conservation of public and private lands protects open space in the watershed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the Mascoma River as a community asset. • Encourage Planning Boards to include questions about the Mascoma River and watershed in Master Plan surveys. • Promote education for landowners about conservation easements. • Refer to local zoning regulations when reviewing state permit applications. • Comment on local site plans and subdivisions when river/watershed may be impacted. • Keep riverfront municipalities informed about amendments to local zoning/regulations that improve protection for the river/watershed.

Plan Implementation and Update

The Mascoma River LAC will use this plan to guide their work and will review goals and action items on an annual basis. While many different organizations have been working in the Mascoma River watershed for decades, this plan is the first to include both the newly-designated river and the entire watershed. To monitor the Mascoma LAC's progress and offer your comments and ideas, please visit the Mascoma LAC's website at <http://mascomariver.wordpress.com>.

- Adopted December 19, 2012 by the members of the Mascoma River LAC -
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