



Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee
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To: Emma Berger
Inland Wetland Permitting Section Supervisor
Emma.Berger@des.nh.gov
NH Dept. of Environmental Services
PO Box 95, 29 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302

Date: June 7, 2024

RE: Wetlands Standard Dredge and Fill, NHDES File Number: 2023-03259
Project Name: GRANITE STATE LANDFILL
Subject Property: Tax Map# 406, Lot# 2.1 & 3

Dear Ms. Berger:

The New Hampshire General court passed the Rivers Management and Protection Act (RSA 483) in 1988. The 44.8-mile segment of Ammonoosuc River, from the White Mountain National Forest boundary near Lower Falls in Carroll, to the confluence with the Connecticut River in Haverhill was enrolled in the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program in 2007. The upper reach of the river to its source at the Lake of the Clouds was designated in 2009.

Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee (LAC) has provided eight letters of comment to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and other agencies relevant to the proposed Granite State Landfill, including the current iteration of the proposed project and the abandoned attempt at securing DES approval for the proposed project. In comments provide LAC members have noted their concerns about environmental impact to the site selected for the landfill, being uphill of the Ammonoosuc River and that the headwater on the hillside are highly interconnected with groundwater, feeding into the Hatch Brook-Alder Brook tributary, a perennial stream complex that flows into the Ammonoosuc River just a short distance upstream of Town of Littleton.

In reviewing this application and others submitted to NHDES regarding the Granite State Landfill Project, the Committee has noted serious concerns about environmental and community impacts to the site selected for this landfill, as well as to hydrologically connected neighboring sites and downstream communities. These concerns are shared widely by residents and representatives of communities downstream of this proposed project.

The current wetlands application describes several alternative impacts to the proposed project area but the “preferred alternative 5.3” is relied upon for quantifying all the proposed impacts. The proposed project will impact approximately 11.5 acres of wetlands. This includes permanent impacts to 10.2 acres for landfill and infrastructure improvements (largely consisting of forested wetland, including an additional approximately 0.9 acres of after-the-fact impacts), approximately 956 linear feet of intermittent stream, and approximately 910 linear feet of perennial stream. Five vernal pools of medium and high function were documented within the landfill footprint. The permit application is strictly for alternative 5.3.

The groundwater within the proposed footprint generally flows to the southwest, towards Alder Brook and its associated wetlands, in the same general direction as surface water flow. The potential for a disastrous leachate spill would certainly impact the Ammonoosuc River cannot be ignored. Two recent accidental discharges of toxic landfill leachate from two of the applicant's landfill sites (Bethlehem, NH and Coventry, VT). Local emergency services, who would be the first responders, do not have the equipment to deal with such a disaster. Any spill of leach or overflow of stormwater runoff will almost certainly impact the perennial streams and higher functioning wetlands downslope of the proposed project area. The poisons, including PFAS and other toxins, would flow down gradient into the Ammonoosuc River and then downstream to Littleton and other communities along the river.

Stormwater treatment plans presented in this application rely on historical data and use a 50-year event as the maximum considered in calculations. It seems obvious that, while apparently conforming to application requirements, reliance on historic data and limiting calculations to a maximum of a 50-year event are not considering the current trends in storm activity and amounts of precipitation produced. In addition, snow is excluded from calculation, but recent events show that there is rapid snow melt accompanied by liquid rain due to influxes of warm temperatures.

Selection of the landfill location should be based on factors of topography, natural resources, socioeconomics, and safety. It is recommended that the Dalton site does not appear to be a suitable location for multiple reasons. In addition, the Ammonoosuc River having been selected for two upstream landfill sites (existing landfill in Bethlehem and proposed site in Dalton) makes it seem like the responsibility has unduly been put on one river to carry the landfill burden of several states, which is unfair to the River, downstream communities, and the region.

Specific concerns and negative impacts that will result from the granting of this SD&F permit include:

- Disturbance to the well-functioning wetland complex
- Disturbance to Alder Brook fishery managed to protect wild brook trout (catch & release)
- Disturbance to rainbow trout and brown trout fishing in the Ammonoosuc River
- Alder Brook has Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat in NH in 2020 Wildlife Action Plan
- 5 Vernal Pools on the property are a priority resource that need to be protected
- Ammonoosuc River is source of drinking water downstream in Woodville and in Lisbon with river's proximity to the Lisbon town wells
- Fluvial Geomorphology indicates a very high fluvial erosion zone in this reach of the river (Ammonoosuc River Geomorphic Assessment, Floodplain Conservation, and River Corridor Planning by Dr. John Field, October 2011)
- Slope of land in topography directs drainage flow from the site down to the river
- Runoff drainage from impervious gravel area on the site would also flow downhill
- Screening landfill from the public view of tourists, a challenge for the proposed hillside
- Truck traffic blowing dust from gravel driveway down to highway Route 116 below
- Highway sharp turn access to site poses an impediment to traffic flow along highway
- There are numerous differences and discrepancies in the information supplied in the AoT permit application and this SD&F.

Three years ago, the withdrawn NHDES File #2021-52265 Application/Standard Solid Waste Landfill in Dalton Volume 1, Section V – Site Report, Attachment 2(V) – Compliance with Solid Waste Rules, page 7, addressing ENV-SW 804.03 Surface Water Protection Standards, the applicant stated: “Phase I of the landfill has been designed such that the limit of the landfill is greater than 200 feet upgradient and 100 feet downgradient from wetlands...A Standard Dredge and Fill Wetlands Application has been filed for this project for filling of 17 acres of wetlands. The new wetland limits after filling will provide the

required separation...” While not stated as blatantly in the current application, the strategy has not changed.

While the redesign of the proposed project reduces the wetland impacts from those proposed in the earlier iteration of the wetland permit application the fact remains that in order to meet the requirement of the State of New Hampshire Solid Waste rules wetlands will need to be destroyed.

As detailed in **Env-Sw 804.03 Surface Water Protection Standards**.

(e) The footprint of a landfill shall not be located within 200 feet upgradient and 100 feet downgradient of a wetland within the jurisdiction of RSA 482-A, excluding any drainage appurtenances related to the site, that is not allowed to be filled under the authority of RSA 482-A.

The Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee (LAC) is particularly concerned about the attempt to absolve the distance requirement of a proposed new solid waste landfill from portions of an important functioning wetland complex by attempting to use other permits to allow impacts to 11.5 acres of wetlands (including five vernal pools), approximately 956 linear feet of intermittent stream, and approximately 910 linear feet of perennial stream.

The current wetlands application describes several alternative impacts to the proposed project area but the “preferred alternative 5.3” is relied upon for quantifying all the proposed impacts as well as justification for the Compensatory Mitigation Plan.

As stated in the permit, state-wide site search results identified 169 potential landfill sites in New Hampshire was based on a criterion of least 300 acres of level or moderately sloped land. The size of the proposed project has been considerably reduced. Were a new solid waste landfill needed in New Hampshire, studies indicate that this is not the case, a new search for a possible site should be conducted.

It is the opinion of the committee that Wetlands Standard Dredge and Fill, NHDES File Number: 2023-03259 should not be issued.

Respectfully,



Courtney Bowler, Chair
Ammonoosuc River LAC