A scenic view of a river with rapids, a blue kayak on a rock, and a forested background. The river flows through a lush green forest, with white water rapids visible. A blue kayak is resting on a large, flat rock in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

Making a River Segment Family and People Friendly: A Case Study of the Pemi River in the Plymouth Region

Kenneth Evans, Plymouth Rotary Club
Patrick Hummel, Division of Parks & Recreation;
Larry Spencer, Chair, Holderness Conservation Commission

The Presenters

- Kenneth Evans, Member of the Plymouth Rotary Club and Chair, Friends of the Pemi, Livermore Chapter
- Patrick Hummel, Volunteers Coordinator, NH State Parks, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development
- Larry Spencer, Chair, Holderness Conservation Commission, Holderness, NH and Professor Emeritus of Biology, Plymouth State University

A short history of the Livermore Falls area

- The Holderness side of the river was an active community in the late 19th century
 - A variety of mills (lumber, grist)
 - The location of the first fish hatchery in the state of New Hampshire (1887)



Brief History-Continued



18 March 2014 PSU Watershed
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- Plymouth-Campton side was the location of a number of mills beginning in the 1880s. Most recent stopped functioning in 1950.

Brief History-continued



- Connecting the two sides of the river over time were a series of bridges. The first bridge crossing was constructed in 1869 and the most recent bridge, known by its design as the “Pumpkin Seed Bridge”, was built in 1886 and closed in 1959. The remains of the “Pumpkin Seed Bridge” are in place on site today.



How did ownership change?

- There were many owners of property on both sides of the river starting in about 1771 (first Charter was in 1751).
- The bulk of the property surrounding the Falls on both sides of the river, nearly 42 acres, became State property in 1992, utilizing a Land Conservation Improvement Program (LCIP) Grant.
- No improvements were made on the Plymouth-Campton (west) side at this time, but on the Holderness (east) side, the NH Fish and Game Department managed the property as a launching site for boaters.

The nature of the situation before this program of action

- Abandoned mill site represented a dangerous situation for visitors
- Fast flowing river above the falls often caught swimmers and tubers unaware and individuals were swept into the falls.
- Pumpkin seed bridge represented a diving/jumping challenge to individuals
- Rope swings on Holderness side represent diving/jumping challenge to individuals
- Unattended beach on Holderness side became mecca for drinking, fire pits and litter. Beach was unsafe because of broken glass.



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Friends of the Pemi - Timeline

- Interested organizations and individuals meet 2012
- Friends organized with Plymouth Rotary Fall 2013
- Community visioning sessions held Winter 2014
- DRED assumes responsibility for Livermore Falls Spring 2014
- Friends receive grant funding for improvements Summer 2014
- Holderness continues supervision of area Summer 2014
- Friends organize greeters and events Summer 2015
- DRED begins supervision in Holderness Summer 2015

Friends of the Pemi - Timeline

- State and Friends agree on needed improvements Fall 2014
- Parking lot plans finalized for Holderness Winter 2016
- Focus turns to Campton side of river Winter 2016
- Planning for summer events in 2016 Now



18 March 2016, PSU Watershed
Conference



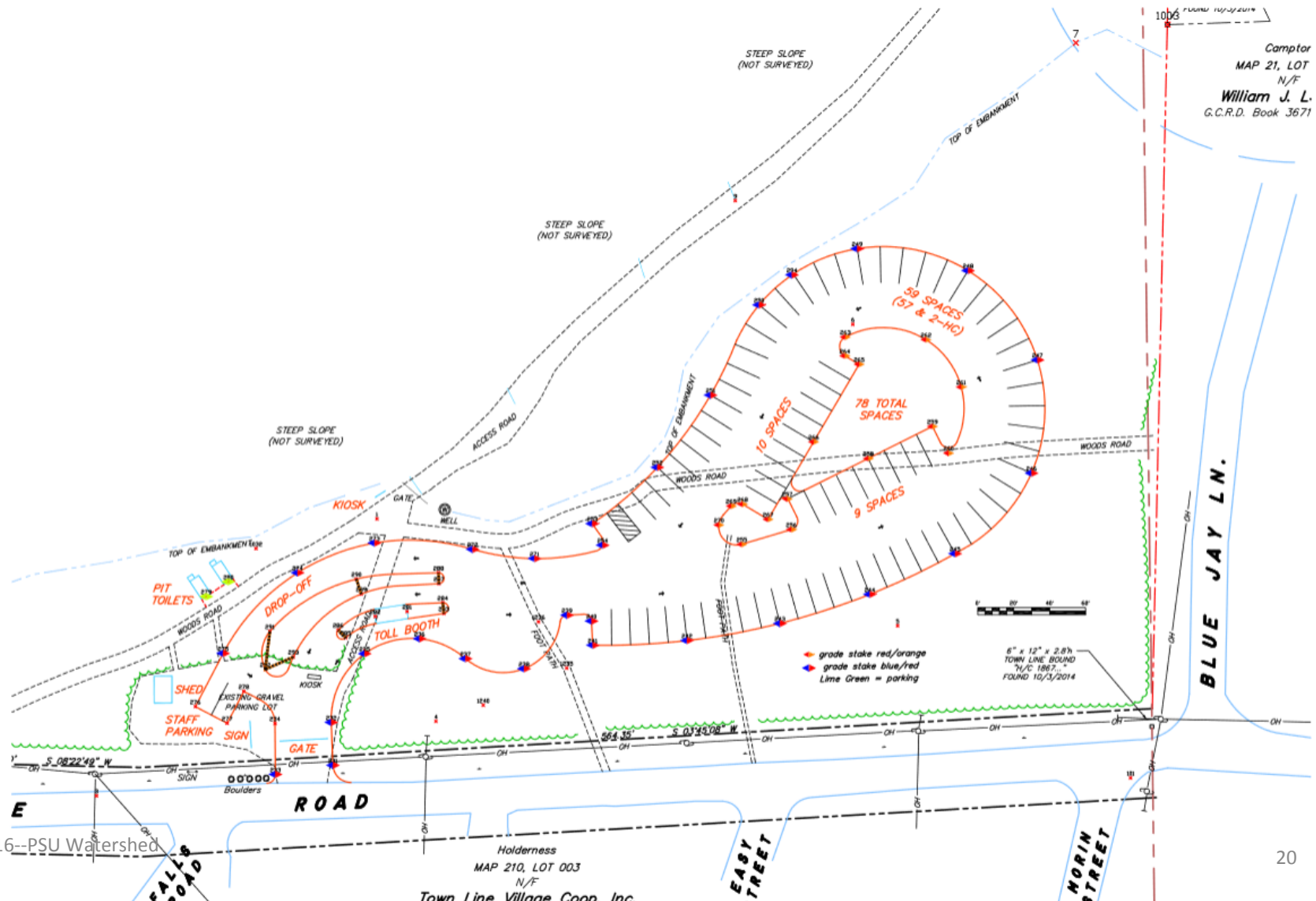
18 March 2016--PSU Watershed Conference



18 March 2016--PSU Watershed Conference



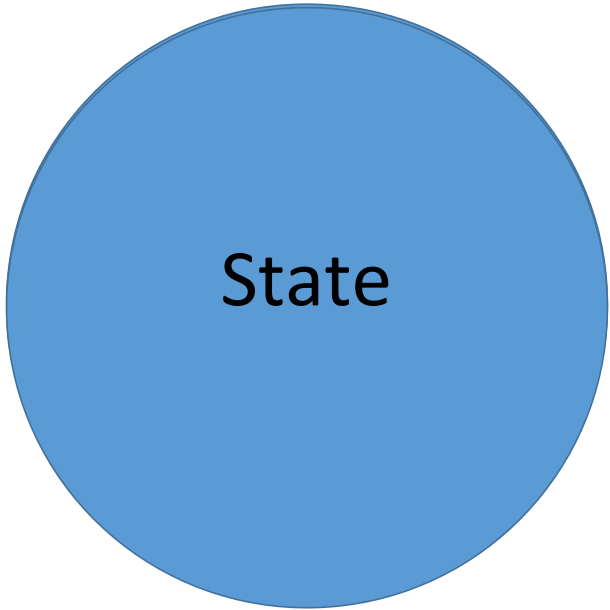
18 March 2016 - PSU Watershed Conference



18 March 2016--PSU Watershed Conference

Friends organized a series of informative events, summer of 2015

- Spring Cleanup and greeter training
- Water rescue and safety demo
- Historical presentation
- Water Quality
- Float trip and celebration

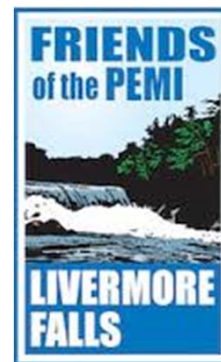


In 1992, the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) purchased 41.8 acres of land spanning both sides of the Pemigewasset River around Livermore Falls, joining the larger Livermore Falls State Forest reservation.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department entered into an agreement with DRED in 2006 to manage the east side of Livermore Falls as a public boat launch.

By 2012, with ongoing concerns from the local community about lack of direct staff supervision and management resulting in misuse and vandalism at the property, the NH Fish and Game Department began to transition oversight of the area around Livermore Falls back to DRED and the Division of Parks & Recreation as the agreement between the agencies was also set to expire.

With cooperation and help from the newly formed "Friends of the Pemi" and the Towns of Plymouth, Holderness, and Campton, the Division of Parks began to provide onsite improvements, supervision, and public outreach.



Through the Division's partnership with the Friends of the Pemi, the following has been accomplished since 2013:

- Seasonal volunteer clean-up days
- Volunteer presence for outreach, visitor research (east side, Friends of the Pemi)
- Developing plans for parking area, access improvement, and interpretive signage (west side)
- Decreased litter, drinking, vandalism
- Decreased police and rescue calls/responses (at one point, Holderness PD reported that 40% of their calls were in response to illegal activities or complaints at Livermore Falls).
- More friendly environment for visitation and use



In 2014,

- The Friends of the Pemi coordinated and conducted Visioning Sessions with the citizens of the local communities in March of 2014, collecting people's thoughts, concerns, and ideas for improvement and enhancements.
- New Picnic Tables and fire grilles (east side)
- Holderness Police presence for outreach and enforcement on site (east side)



18 March 2014
Conference
Watershed



In 2015,

- Regular Park Staff presence for outreach and enforcement on site (east side 2015)

- Completion of the first phase of a Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment.

- Finalization of plans for a new parking lot and staffed area (east side, construction set to begin in 2016)

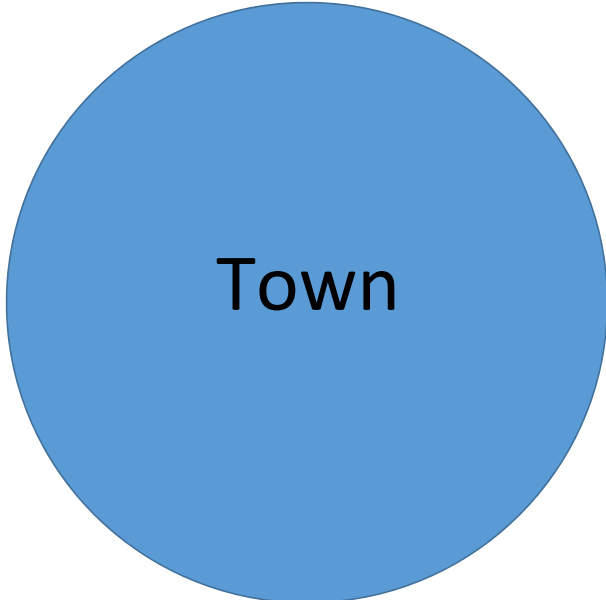
- New information kiosk (east side)

- Livermore Falls "Recreation Area" webpage at www.nhstateparks.org

- Info Table staffed by Volunteers of Friends of Pemi







Areas of interest in Holderness



Town Participants

The Select Board

The Town Administrator

The Holderness Police Department

The Holderness DPW

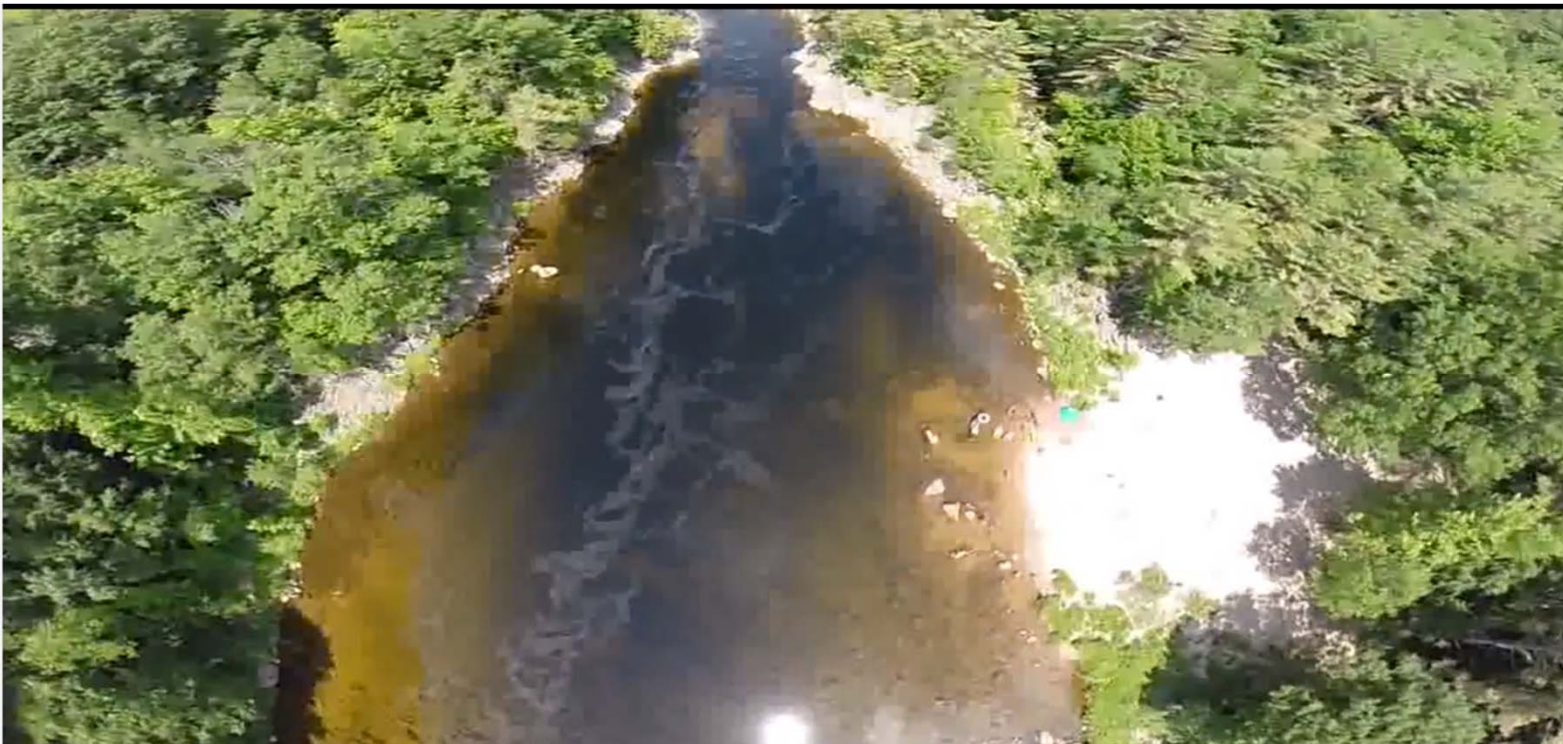
The Holderness Conservation Commission

Livermore gorge and beach

1992---N.H. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development purchases from Gary Farina 41.8a around Livermore Falls Gorge with Land Conservation Investment Program funds comprising two miles of river frontage and **35.4a in Holderness**, 6.4a in Campton & 2.5a between Rte. 3 and the former Boston & Maine (now state-owned) railroad tracks. as per the Aug. 12 Governor & Council approval, all for \$393,500

The commission has been cleaning the beach area since the purchase time, usually annually, sometimes more often. The Holderness DPW usually picked up the collected.





Gorge and Beach--cont

Although property was owned by DRED, through an agreement, the NH Fish and Game used the site as a put-in location for aquatic users (kayaks, canoes, tubes, rafts, etc.) Small parking lot and welcome board was built at the head of the road that leads down to the beach. Five years ago, the Holderness Selectboard recognized a problem with alcohol consumption and unsafe activities and paid for a summer beach attendant out of the Holderness Police Budget for two summers. Selectboard realized problem was not simply a Holderness problem and worked with the late Ray Burton to start a community effort to better manage the gorge and beach sites.

Moving Down the River--Pemi Riverside Park

This 2.5 acre parcel was also purchased with LCIP monies. Commission put in two parking places, a trail to the river and took many truck loads of trash out of the park (the area had once been a dumping site for the west side of town). This side also provides access to South Beach and the Flood Plain area.









Flood Plain

- Access to this area is by a road that passes between the Citgo and the Irving Station.
- Area is used for birding, dog walking, mountain biking and to access South Beach.
- Because of the delicate nature of the floodplains, the commission has worked closely with Holderness School (the owner or the right-of-way and much of the floodplain property) to prohibit motorized access during non-snow covered times.







South Beach

This is the name that we've given to this beach.

Access is via the road between the Irving and Citgo stations or by the Pemi Riverside Park property.

Commission and mountain bikers usually clean this area at least annually, if not more often.

The property is actually in Plymouth.

Once drinking was outlawed at the Livermore Gorge beach, usage of the area for "recreational" drinking and partying has increased.

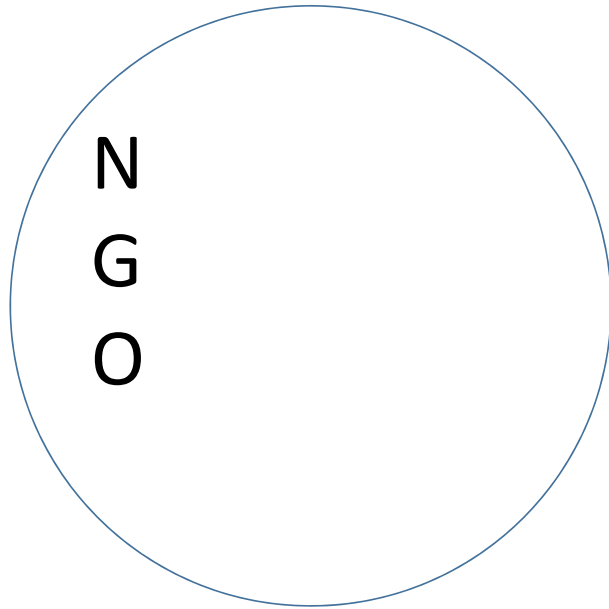


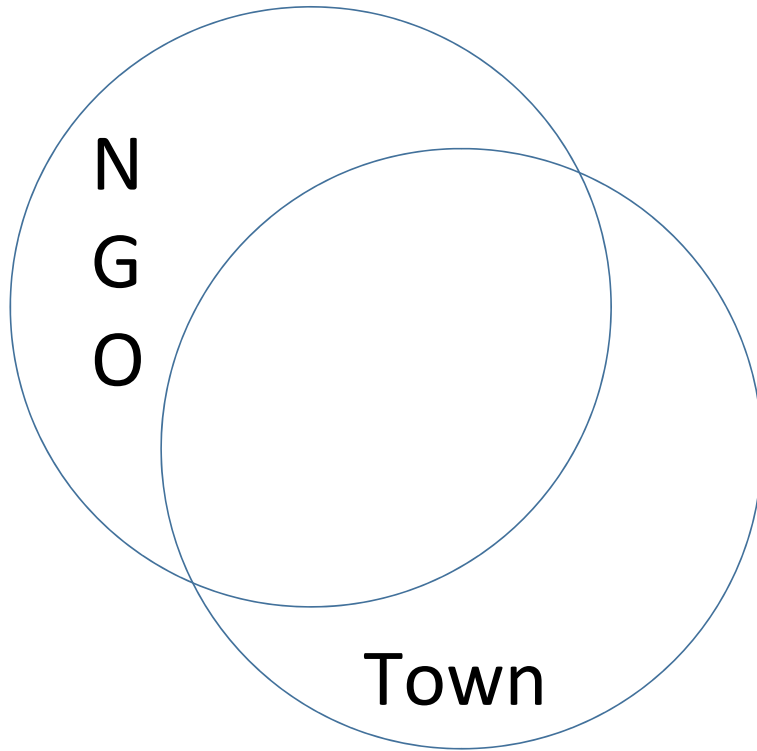


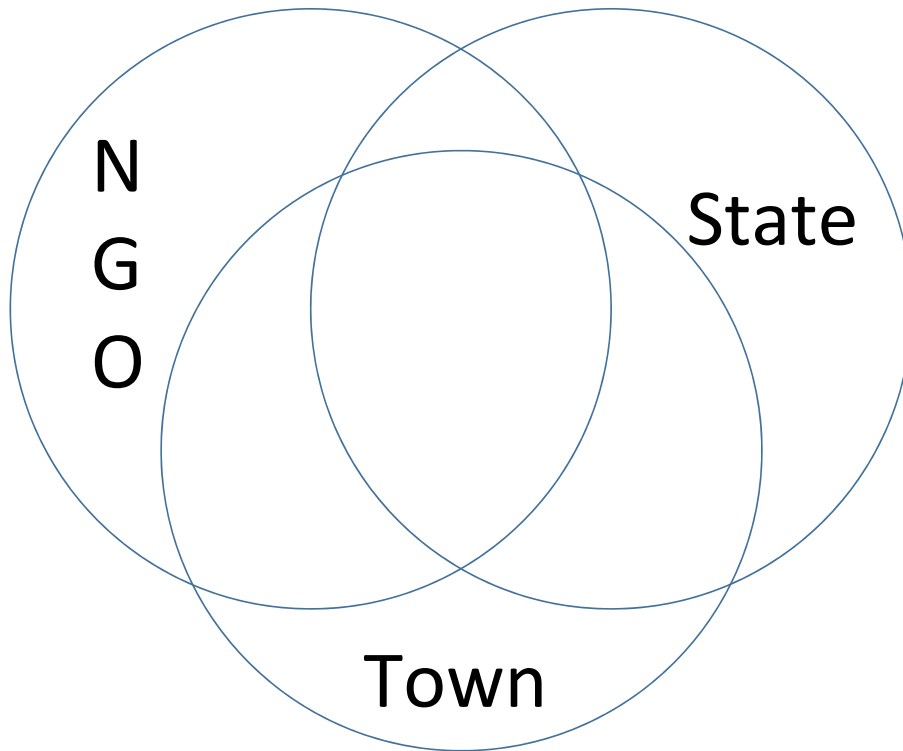
Long and short term plans

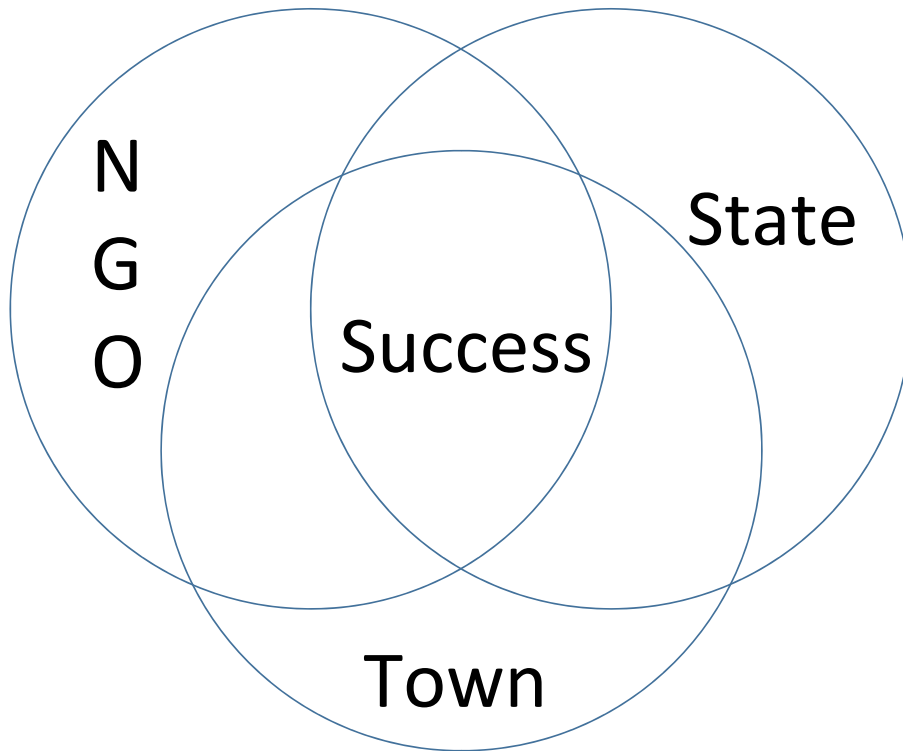
Commission has worked closely with Holderness School to restrict use to those that don't damage the floodplain environment.

Since the area is also a possible area for future water supply for the towns of Holderness and Plymouth, the Commission would like to see the properties in a conservation easement. The area has also been recognized by the recent NH Wildlife Action Plan as an important ecological area which further substantiates the idea of an easement to protect the environment.



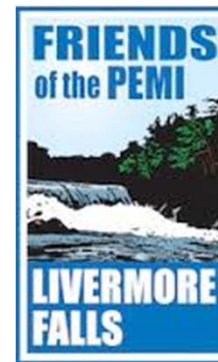






Where can I go for more information??

- LivermoreFalls.org
- Friends of the Pemi on Facebook
- Livermore Falls “Recreation Area” webpage at www.nhstateparks.org
- <http://holdernessconservationcommission.org/>



Thank you and Questions

