



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

November 24, 2009

Kenneth Sweet, Chair
Sandown Planning Board
PO Box 1756
Sandown, NH 03873

Dear Mr. Sweet and Planning Board Members:

The most effective ways to protect rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds from the impacts of nearby land use and development are to prevent stormwater runoff in the first place and then to leave a buffer of undisturbed native vegetation adjacent to the water body. Buffers perform critical functions that help maintain clean water quality and healthy wildlife. When left undisturbed and intact, these natural systems filter pollutants, attenuate floodwaters, maintain shoreland stability, provide cover for wildlife, and reduce sediment loads. A number of scientific studies, such as those conducted by the Center for Watershed Protection, support the environmental and economic benefits for protecting and restoring riparian buffers.

The draft Wetlands and Surface Waters Conservation District Ordinance under consideration by Sandown is consistent with the innovative planning approaches for shoreland protection as described in the Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques handbook published by the New Hampshire regional planning commissions and NHDES in 2008. The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA) affords protection for many waterbodies in Sandown; however, municipalities may elect to adopt land use control ordinances that are more stringent than the minimum standards of the CSPA (see RSA 483-B:8; Municipal Authority). Additionally, the CSPA encourages communities to adopt shoreland regulations that extend to waterbodies not subject to the CSPA.

Buffer ordinances, such as Sandown's, that offer enhanced protection for the town's waterbodies will go a long way toward addressing some of the critical environmental issues currently facing our region's waters, such as nutrient loading, flood impacts, and sedimentation. Sandown's efforts to protect its water resources are commendable.

Sincerely,

Sally Soule
Coastal Watershed Supervisor

cc: Mark Traeger, Sandown Conservation Commission