

Beaver Lake partnership meets to outline priorities

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DERRY – Stream assessments, runoff management and preserving open space are among the top priorities for members of the Beaver Lake Watershed Partnership, which met last night to discuss priorities for the plan as the project moves forward.

The expansion of Interstate 93 and the proposed Exit 4A were also concerns when it came to population and infrastructure growth.

Margaret Ives, a Derry conservation commissioner, said the growth could mean increased traffic, wider roads and new roads throughout the watershed, increasing the amount of impervious surfaces.

Alan Cote, Derry highway superintendent and an Auburn planning board member, suggested that monitoring the quality of runoff from all developments be a part of the watershed plan. He also expressed concern about aging septic systems within the watershed.

Using a federal grant, the group, a coalition of state, municipal and independent agencies, will create a plan that offers the towns of Derry, Chester and Auburn enforceable guidelines for development and recreation in the watershed, as well as plans for maintaining water quality, water quantity and overall ecological health.

Steve Landry, a watershed supervisor with the state Department of Environmental Services said the management plan could "set the stage for watershed management planning in the state."

Implementation of the plan will begin while it is being developed, said Michele Tremblay from Naturesource Communications, who is managing the project. In the spring, Pinkerton Academy students will begin monitoring the lakes, streams and other surface water in the watershed. Their data will be used to enforce and track the impact of the plan once it is completed.

The next partnership meeting will be on March 27 at 4 p.m. in the Marion Gerrish Community Center.

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