

## **APPENDIX B. Progress since 1997 - Headwaters Region**

Since publication of the first *Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan* in 1997, much progress has been made. The Town of Colebrook has worked with the state to cap its landfill and is in the process of eliminating a plume of groundwater pollution that was headed for Lime Pond in Columbia. Many landowners are improving pollution control on their property by planting riparian buffers and reducing use of fertilizers and pesticides near waterways. The State of New Hampshire has applied the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act to its side of the Connecticut River, and towns such as Northumberland have enacted even stronger protection for their shorelines.

The State of Vermont has dedicated funding to assist landowners with water quality improvements through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and offered this funding to those in the Connecticut River Valley. A Canaan riverfront landowner has used this program to plant the largest riparian buffer project undertaken along the entire Connecticut River. A growing number of landowners have decided to conserve their land, especially along the river, and have found conservation organizations willing and able to help them. The largest such conservation project in New Hampshire history occurred here, with the conservation of 171,500 acres of industrial timberland surrounding the headwaters of the Connecticut River.

The Connecticut River Joint Commissions have conducted a detailed geomorphic assessment of the entire Connecticut River in this region to learn more about the causes of erosion. These studies were extended also to the Mohawk and Upper Ammonoosuc Rivers when it became clear that they were affecting erosion on the mainstem. Results were shared with the select boards of each riverfront town in the region.

In 1997, this Plan reported that the State of New Hampshire described the Connecticut River in the Headwaters region as offering excellent swimming, perhaps the best anywhere along the Connecticut River, and in addition to very good water quality, adequate dissolved oxygen, and an aquatic food chain community in excellent condition. The Plan cautioned that safe swimming and other water contact uses depend upon absence of harmful bacteria. It appears now that safe swimming without bacteria present is not a guarantee, especially in the section between Clarksville and Stratford.

Town investments in wastewater treatment and discharges will surely help improve this situation. Colebrook and Canaan have recently upgraded their wastewater treatment plants, and many direct septic discharges to Bog Brook have been eliminated in the village of Stratford Hollow. North Stratford has improved its wastewater treatment plant management and discharge, delivering it to the mainstem rather than to smaller tributaries. Vermont's transportation agency has also reduced a threat to the river by building a new salt storage shed at its Bloomfield yard. Both states have improved public access to water quality information in the last several years through their web sites.

The Connecticut River has been the focus of energetic assessment of its waters, sediments, and fish in recent years, in response to the 1997 *Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan*. In preparation for the update of this plan, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), conducted an assessment of the entire 275 miles of the river during the summer of 2004. The extensive study provided greatly improved information over what had previously existed. Two studies of sediment quality by EPA brought new information that will be useful in many ways.