

Appendix B. Progress since 1997

Since initial publication of the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan in 1997, much progress has been made. The State of New Hampshire has applied the protections of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act to the New Hampshire side of the Connecticut River. In some towns, local governments have enacted even stronger water quality protection for their shorelines, most notably Piermont and Hartford.

River communities are working to eliminate combined sewer overflows and upgrade their wastewater treatment plants, holding the promise of improving water quality in the Hanover / White River Junction /Lebanon region. Voters are also investing more funds in land conservation to discourage polluting uses, and many landowners are improving pollution control on their property by enhancing riparian buffers and reducing use of fertilizers and pesticides near waterways. The Upper Valley Land Trust has protected many more acres of agricultural floodplain, keeping this essential “green infrastructure” open and functioning for flood control while protecting valued valley views. The Mascoma Watershed Conservation Council has protected significant wetlands and wildlife habitat at Bear Pond in the headwaters of this major tributary, as well as downstream along the Mascoma River.

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 Environmental Protection Agency, 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. EPA also responded to strong concern about the effect of acid mine drainage at the Elizabeth Mine, declaring it a Superfund site and working with local communities to address the extreme water quality problems posed by the mine.

Both states have greatly improved public access to water quality information in the last several years, through their web sites. Vermont’s regional planning commissions have made significant contributions by conducting bridge and culvert surveys for their communities. Communications have improved between the US Army Corps of Engineers and the hydro power company managing mainstem dams regarding flows in the major tributaries, allowing better management of Connecticut River flows.

Perhaps even more encouraging is the energetic volunteerism of watershed groups on a number of the tributaries, including the White River Partnership. Basin planning on the Vermont tributaries of the Ompompanoosuc and Waits Rivers has focused new volunteer energy on these waterways, which in turn benefits the Connecticut River.