

Results in from Major River Water Quality Study

THE New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services delivered the findings of the most comprehensive river water quality assessment undertaken in New Hampshire to the Connecticut River Joint Commissions in Lebanon on January 31st. Ted Walsh, Coordinator of DES' Volunteer River Assessment Program, presented last summer's results from forty-five sampling locations.

Under the microscope were the safety of the Connecticut River for recreation, including swimming, and the conditions for aquatic life. Results indicate a river that is largely in fine condition, especially for dissolved oxygen, although harmful bacteria still threaten some of the most popular canoeing waters in the North Country.

DES undertook this ambitious study at the request of the Commissions, who are engaged with their five local river subcommittees in updating the Connecticut River Management Plan. CRJC learned that the state had little or no information about the safety of river recreation or the quality of aquatic habitat for over 100 of the 275 miles of river in New Hampshire, and asked for help in filling this gap.

DES responded with a well-organized and intensive effort during the summer of 2004, sampling five times at each of 45 different sites for the presence of *E. coli* bacteria, and testing 12 times at each site for dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH, and specific

conductance. Walsh noted that the study collected 50,000 data points, all of which had to be double-checked for accuracy. Because bacteria samples had to reach the DES lab in Concord within six hours, the handling of water collected from Fourth Connecticut Lake at the end of a trail on the Canadian border, for example, required careful planning.

"This effort has been quite a demonstration of choreography, including arranging for quality control, sampling timing, and transport to the lab," observed Sharon Francis, CRJC Executive Director. "We are very grateful for this work."



A fisherman examines his catch. River sampling found a good oxygen supply to meet the demand of fish such as this brown trout.

Swimming safe in most of the river

In most places, and at most times, the river today is clean enough for swimming, but there are still areas and weather conditions where swimming is not advised. Bacteria can

continued on page 2

Partnership Grants Available for 2005

CRJC is pleased to announce that grants of \$500-5000 are available to communities and organizations in the Connecticut River watershed. Eligible projects are locally-inspired and act upon the recommendations of the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan or enhance the

Connecticut River Byway.

Applications are due March 30. Download the application from our web site or call our office (603-826-4800). Visit www.crjc.org/partnership.htm for more information, including a list of projects funded in previous years.

Inside

CT River dams: changes ahead	3
New flood hazard maps	4
Progress on the Plan	5
Legislation to watch	5
Erosion demystified	6
\$\$ for valley farms	7
Bald eagles break records	7
Calendar	8
River ripples	8

Dates with invasives
Source to sea cleanups
New subcommittee members
Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust

Insert: Summary of 2004 WQ results

See insert for summary of results.

Water Quality, continued

reach rivers through faulty septic systems or drainage from places where animals are concentrated, whether they are moose or cows, especially where they have direct access to the water. Bacteria also enter rivers through runoff, such as stormwater washing over a city street where dog walkers do not pick up after their pets, and especially through combined sewer overflows, where runoff from heavy storms can overwhelm a wastewater treatment plant and send untreated sewage into the river. Bacteria counts are likely to be higher in the river after a heavy storm.

On a single day, researchers found high bacteria levels in undeveloped parts of the headwaters after a heavy rain. Walsh guesses that these results reflect the flushing of wetlands and other wildlife habitat after a long dry spell. However, consistent bacteria problems appeared a few miles downstream, from Bishop Brook to Canaan Dam in Stewartstown and near Colebrook. The Commissions are especially concerned at dangerous bacteria levels found in the 19 miles from Bloomfield to Groveton, a particularly beautiful stretch popular with paddlers and swimmers that includes the state-designated natural segment. CRJC will be conferring with both states and investigating possible causes for this unexpected contamination.

Elsewhere, the river is safe for swimming, except at times in the 14 miles from the White River to Cornish and Windsor. This stretch passed the bacteria tests this year but still may receive untreated sewage during and right after big storms, due to remaining combined sewer overflows in Lebanon and White River Junction.

“For thirty years, wastewater treatment plants have been key to the return of the river’s health,” notes River Commissioner Henry Swan of Lyme. “We must be certain that, as they age, these plants continue to operate effectively and that the funds are there for maintenance and improvements.”

Water quality variable for aquatic life

The river demonstrated its ability to hold enough oxygen for fish and other aquatic life throughout its length. Dissolved oxygen never dropped below the state standard anywhere during the study, even at the very bottom of 100-foot deep Comerford Reservoir.

Acidity was a different story, with a number of readings in the river’s first hundred miles showing pH more acid than the state standard. Walsh points out that where the river is smaller, it has less ability to bounce back from the damaging effects of acid rain



DES interns Beth Ross and Guihong Zhang crossed paths with EPA’s Dan Burke near a West Lebanon river sampling site.

that now regularly falls in its watershed.

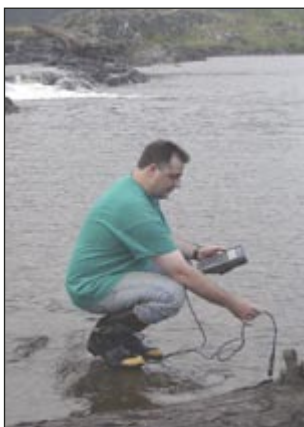
DES also measured specific conductance, a test that indicates general pollution, such as road salt runoff. Researchers found a clear increase in specific conductance as they traveled downstream. At one station at the confluence of the Black River in Springfield, aquatic habitat is impaired due to the presence of milfoil.

The study’s results are generally encouraging news for aquatic life, but they shed light on just four aspects of the underwater world, notes Adair Mulligan, CRJC Communications Director. “Mercury and other metals, automotive oils, and pesticides can lurk in the sediments or the bodies of fish and their food, and never appear in a bucket of river water.” An extensive study of Connecticut River sediments by EPA in 2000 found contaminants from road runoff at many locations as far north as Pittsburg village, and traces of copper from the mines in the Waits and Ompompanoosuc watersheds of Vermont. At some sites, the contaminants were in levels high enough to threaten aquatic life.

Funds for the water quality study came primarily from DES and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. CRJC helped pay for the cost of processing bacteria samples. DES hired four interns to conduct the study, who went through a detailed training program before their work began. Vermont Commissioner of Environmental Conservation Jeffrey Wennberg said he would like to have Vermont’s water quality program coordinate with New Hampshire’s to help answer questions on the river they share.

CRJC has updated information on the safety of various parts of the river for recreation at www.crjc.org/swimming.htm. Complete results will be posted on the DES web site. 🌿

EPA Connecticut River Navigator Dan Burke tests for oxygen at Sumner Falls in Hartland. Burke got out of the office for a few days to help with the sampling effort.



Changes Ahead for Connecticut River Dams

CHANGES are in store for most of the river's mainstem dams in the near future, although river users probably will not notice much difference.

Topping the list is the imminent sale of five of USGen New England's six hydro dams on the upper river for \$433 million to TransCanada Corporation. The sale price includes facilities on the Deerfield River, a tributary that enters the Connecticut in Massachusetts.

Based in Calgary, Alberta, TransCanada was the highest bidder in the first round of bidding last summer. The purchase represents a new direction for the company, which owns only one other hydro plant, in New York State, in addition to 25,600 miles of gas pipeline in western Canada and the U.S.

No other company stepped forward with a higher bid in the second round. The State of Vermont had explored purchasing the dams with the help of two Canadian power company partners but decided not to bid again. The transfer of Moore, Comerford, McIndoe Falls, Wilder, and Vernon Stations and their associated property will probably take place before July. USGen has approval from the bankruptcy court to sell to TransCanada, and the companies are filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to transfer the existing licenses for the plants. Both companies are also applying for state approvals.

Bellows Falls sold separately

The Town of Rockingham, Vermont, with the backing of Brascan Power and Emera, Inc., has plucked out one of USGen's string of dams, purchasing the Bellows Falls Station for \$72 million. To guide the various new owners in handling water flowing to and from Bellows Falls, FERC may require a detailed water management agreement.

Along with the power station and the dam, Rockingham also acquires many acres of riverfront land in both states, much of it valuable farmland and wildlife habitat. Herrick's Cove, a well-used recreation area and boat launch, is also a designated Vermont Important Bird Area and a stop on the Connecticut River Birding Trail for both migrating birds and their binocular-toting human observers. Across the river in Charlestown, the company owns many acres of prime agricultural lands, currently leased to local farmers. Several years ago, USGen and local volunteers planted a substantial riparian buffer here to protect water quality and stabilize the shoreline.

The use of these lands is governed by the existing FERC license for the Bellows Falls Dam, and must continue to provide a substantial benefit to the public. Any change would have to be approved by the federal agency. Rockingham's plans for the lands are not yet known, but it is expected that conservation will be part of their future.

What is assured is that the terms of the dams' FERC operating licenses will continue to be met, including water levels, minimum flows, and maintenance of recreation sites identified in the licenses, such as boat ramps and picnic areas.

Relicensing begins for Canaan Dam

Far upstream, Public Service Company of New Hampshire has begun the relicensing process for its hydro dam at Canaan, Vermont. The 18-foot concrete dam creates a 20-acre pool and is operated in a run-of-river mode. Built in 1927, it was acquired by PSNH the following year.

The current license will expire in 2007. Working with FERC, the company has invited stakeholders to participate in planning for the new license and future operation of the dam. CRJC has joined this group along with state and federal agencies, Trout Unlimited, and the Connecticut River Watershed Council, and is advising the company on a series of investigations this summer into the dam's setting and effects upon the river:

- wildlife, wetlands, and plants
- recreation, land use, and aesthetics
- shoreline erosion
- effects of dam shutdowns on aquatic life
- historical and archeological resources
- water quality questions
- aquatic habitat in the bypass
- feasibility of providing passage around the dam for resident fish.

CRJC's Headwaters Subcommittee is advising on local conditions and needs, and will meet with a PSNH representative in March. 🌿



Canaan Dam and its historic wood stave penstock between Canaan and Stewartstown, a few miles from the Canadian border. The dam is up for relicensing.

New Flood Hazard Maps for 16 River Towns

THE Federal Emergency Management Agency has recently concluded a project to update flood hazard mapping for a series of Connecticut riverfront towns. This work comes in response to the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan, in which all five of CRJC's local subcommittees called for more accurate maps.

Unfortunately, the FEMA project covered only 16 of the 53 towns that sit on the river's banks, and less than 70 of the 275 miles of the river in the two states. The project extended from Vernon Dam upstream through Windsor and Cornish. The \$500,000 cost came from policy holders in the National Flood Insurance Program, rather than taxpayers.

At the start of the study in 2001, FEMA officials explained that the intent was to cover the entire Connecticut River in three phases, depending upon the funds available. The first phase would start at Vernon Dam, an hydraulic control point, to the Upper Valley, studying the river's hydrology all the way to its source. Later phases would build upon this one. New Hampshire Emergency Management Officer George Musler indicated at the time that the towns could raise funds to extend the work upstream.

FEMA is now updating maps for the entire state of Connecticut and the southernmost county in Massachusetts. However, FEMA's consultant believes there are no longer any plans to finish this work in New Hampshire and Vermont, suggesting that what he called "the low population and growth rate" north of

Cornish and Windsor mean that this study would be a low priority for funding. However, a number of communities upstream are experiencing a growth and building boom, including Lebanon, Hartford, Hanover, Lancaster, and Colebrook.

"Absolutely, Hanover and Lebanon are high growth, and the Hanover maps are old," says Hanover Town Planner Vicki Smith. She observes that many studies begin in the southern reaches of the river and run out of funds before covering the northern reaches, leaving communities upstream without useful information to support good planning and help avoid problems before they occur.

FEMA's consultant suggests that it would be less expensive to update the maps for communities close to Wilder Dam than for those farther north, because the bathymetry has

already been studied and ice jam analysis has been done. Connecticut River communities could also form a regional group as a cooperating technical partner with FEMA, creating an opportunity for FEMA to fund 75 percent of the cost of updating their flood hazard maps. A very rough estimate of the per-town cost of updating bathymetry alone is \$20,000.

Communities concerned about the accuracy of their floodplain maps and interested in a revision should contact Michael Goetz, Branch Chief for Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment in the Mitigation Division at FEMA, Region I, at 617-223-9571.

Aerial photogrammetry was used to help create a digital terrain model of the study area to produce the new maps. This was combined with the bathymetry of the river to develop hydraulic models, to determine the 100-year floodplain. Ice jam simulations were also run to see how ice affects flood profiles.

Preliminary new maps were delivered to the towns last summer and fall, with a request for comments. In most of the area, the difference was no more than about a foot of elevation, but there was a significant change (5-6 feet) in Westminster and Westmoreland, since towns in this area had previously been using significantly lower elevations. FEMA will hold regional public hearings on the draft maps, as yet unscheduled. Before they can become official, the maps must be adopted by the affected town. In the interim, the new maps can be used, since they represent the best available information.

Roads and large buildings show up on the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps, a great step forward, since the flood plain delineation appears in relationship to structures on the ground. The maps are available in a digital format compatible with ArcView, for states and communities to use. FEMA is switching to digital mapping, and is currently also providing new geo-referenced maps to other towns in the area to replace the old paper maps, although for those towns, the flood hazard area has not been updated. The benefit is that they will be easier to update and use with other mapping data layers. 🌊

Better flood hazard mapping is on its way to 16 NH and VT towns, but not to Newbury, where this photo was taken on March 27 in 1913.



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Every Drop Counts

Progress on the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan

THE five local river subcommittees have now completed new and greatly expanded recreation chapters for the Connecticut River Management Plan, which they will present to the Commissioners and the states on February 28. Each subcommittee has selected its top ten priorities for action. Watch for a complete run-down on recreation from the Connecticut Lakes to the Vernon pool in our summer issue.

Thanks to a grant from USGen New England, CRJC will soon provide new water quality planning maps to the subcommittees, prepared by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

Progress in realizing the goals of the plan continues in towns along the river.

• The **Upper Valley Land Trust** has conserved 538 acres of farmland through five different projects in **Haverhill** and **Bath**, NH.

• The **Wells River Conservation Commission** is working on a fluvial geomorphological study, and developed an intriguing web site: www.crossvermont.org/BLUE/farm/index.htm.

• The towns of **Newbury**, **Thetford**, and **Norwich** are updating their town plans and looking at shoreland protection.

• **Lebanon** has published a new trails map and guide to city properties, and is hard at

work on plans to revitalize the historic Westboro Rail Yard. NH DOT has applied for an EPA brownfields grant to remove contamination from the site.

• **Springfield's** long-awaited wastewater treatment plant improvements were dedicated at a ceremony in November. Anyone who has launched a boat amid the heavy algal growth that plagued the confluence of the Black and Connecticut Rivers should toast the town and the State of Vermont for aggressively pursuing phosphorus reduction at this plant. The effluent is now getting UV treatment, releasing 90 percent less phosphorus to feed the algae. The Mt. Ascutney Subcommittee made this recommendation at its very first meeting in 1993.

• Observers report that boaters using **Hoyt's Landing** are regularly checking their boats and trailers for invasive plants.

• Citizens in the **West**, **Williams**, and **Saxton's River basins** have set up committees to look at swimming holes, public access, and water quality monitoring as they devise plans for these tributaries.

• Public opinion has encouraged the **Cheshire County** Commissioners to recommend against building a new jail on the county farm's prime farmlands in the river's floodplain. 🌿

With the support of the riverfront towns, CRJC has won a grant from NHDES to update and expand the Plan's Water Resources chapter.

Legislation to Watch

THE legislatures are back in action, and CRJC will be following a number of bills this session. Our web site provides direct links to both state houses: www.crjc.org/legislatures.htm.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- HB539, HB544, HB670 propose a new source of funding for LCHIP, the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, from a surcharge on recording documents with the register of deeds; other changes to the program.
- HB371 bans disposal of mercury-added products in solid waste landfills or transfer stations.
- HB57, HB121, HB293, HB517: bills related to burning and recycling of construction and demolition debris.
- HB272 funds barn preservation grants.
- HB433 provides funds to plan for public access and recreational use in the Connecticut

Lakes headwaters working forest.

- SB41, SB121, HB342, HB355, HB491: a variety of bills on ATVs, snowmobiles, and other OHRVs, including training program requirements; trail distance from public wells; study commissions on barriers to establishment of ATV trails and environmental impact of ATV use; legal protection for landowners.
- SB83 establishes a study commission relative to the shoreland protection act.

VERMONT

- H.114 establishes minimum waterfront protection standards.
- H.75, S.37 reduce the amount of phosphorus allowed in dishwasher detergents.
- H.89 addresses stormwater discharges in unimpaired watersheds.
- H.0132 establishes a milfoil control sticker for display on paddlecraft. 🌿

Correction

The Summer 2004 issue incorrectly reported a Partnership grant to The Nature Conservancy for the protection of Fall Mountain.

Study Reveals Reasons for River Erosion

THE Connecticut River has more than a few secrets, and Dr. John Field, a fluvial geomorphologist working with the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, shared some at a public forum in Lancaster on November 4. Field presented the results of his study of the river's behavior in the 85 miles from Murphy Dam to Gilman, in which he compared historical and current maps of the river's course before making hundreds of measurements of the river and its bed. (See *RVN*, Summer 2004).

River straightened for log drives

The first surprising discovery was that a third of the northern river was straightened before 1925. The New Hampshire General Court incorporated the Upper Connecticut River and Lake Improvement Company in 1863 and allowed it to "remove the boulders and rocks and all other obstructions from, and enlarge the channel ... erect ... dams, piers, and side or branch booms as may facilitate rafting, driving, floating and securing lumber upon said river." Soon after, lumber baron George Van

Dyke ran the first log drive through this area.

Dr. Field commented that river managers traded log drives for erosion problems. Long straight stretches of river are not natural, and the river is now shaping the sharp corners back into smoother, more natural curves. Straightening the channel has also caused it to cut down three to four feet within its bed. The river is now trying to widen and slow as it recovers from these dramatic changes.

Feeder streams can bring problems

Tributaries are also changing the main stem. Sediment dropped in the mainstem by Bolter Brook in Canaan, for example, has shifted the river current to erode the New Hampshire side. The sediment may be coming from heavy land clearing and road sanding in the brook's watershed. Sediment from the Mohawk River in Colebrook is causing erosion downstream at the Industrial Park. Steep, high banks such as at Brunswick Springs are also a troublesome source of sediment that creates bars and erosion.

Some have asked about dredging such gravel bars, but Dr. Field said that they would soon be back, and it would be better to keep

sediment from entering the tributaries in the first place. Former NRCS Soil Conservationist Lawrence Underhill reported that the Mohawk's gravel bars reappeared not long after they were dredged in the 1970s.

Of riprap and riparian buffers

Dr. Field discovered that stone riprap, long trusted by many for erosion control, is not always foolproof. In some cases, the river eventually eroded behind the stone, and such armoring can shift the river's energy somewhere else and prevent the river from naturally widening and slowing down as it recovers from earlier changes. Dr. Field advised keeping buildings away from the river, to avoid conflicts as the river moves back into a more natural path.

The study also helped confirm the value of riparian buffers. On the upper river, Dr. Field observed a 67 percent greater chance of finding erosion where there is no riparian buffer, and that a forested buffer at least 25-feet wide is associated with greater bank stability. He found that only one-third of the 166 miles of riverbanks he studied are stable.

Project at Colebrook Industrial Park

With the support of the town and the Colebrook Development Corporation, CRJC has won grants to restore an erosion site that threatens the Colebrook Industrial Park. The river here is popular with fishermen, and the riverbank restoration will be designed by Dr. Field to help improve the fishing. The project will combine bioengineering with root wads to provide fish cover, planting a riparian buffer, and creating a conservation agreement for the buffer area, while looking further into the Mohawk River's role in causing the erosion. The Colebrook site was selected to help protect an economically important area for a community that is already wisely planning for its future, having protected its drinking water supplies and conserved riverfront land.

CRJC will also further examine the complex erosion problems at the Groveton Cemetery with the support of the Town, including the Upper Ammonoosuc River and eroding farmland in Maidstone and Guildhall.

Funds for the 2004 study came from NOAA, and the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund. Funds for the Colebrook restoration and Groveton study will come from the NH Department of Environmental Services matched by a grant from the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund. ♻️

Artificially sharp bend just below Route 114 bridge, Canaan-Stewartstown. Lines indicate probable location of natural shoreline.



Image courtesy John Field

USDA \$\$\$ for Conservation on Valley Farms

USDA's Conservation Security Program has come to the Connecticut River Valley, along with the clear message that conservation counts on the farm. The federal agency has announced that 790 farms in the Connecticut River watershed could qualify for funds for practicing good conservation.

The Conservation Security Program, part of the 2002 Farm Bill, was introduced last summer in 18 watersheds around the country, with the goal of promoting conservation of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life on private working lands. Each watershed will be eligible once every eight years.

A portion of the Connecticut River valley is the only area in New Hampshire eligible for funds this year. Farms from Piermont in Grafton County to Vernon Dam in Hinsdale in Cheshire County may apply. NRCS estimates that there are 465 farms in this area with a total of 71,919 acres. In Vermont, 325 farms on 48,954 acres in the West River watershed are eligible in 2005, as are farms in Lake Champlain's Otter Creek basin.

No information was available on why only part of New Hampshire's valley was selected.

Farms in the rest of the watershed will presumably become eligible some time within the next eight years.

"This really is a reward system for having worked hard and put conservation practices down," observes Janice Heighes, Sullivan County Conservation District Manager. "You don't have to be a huge landowner to participate, and you can enter your whole farm or just one field."

Farmers can sign up for a reward based on conservation efforts they have already made, such as nutrient management plans, riparian buffers, or rotational grazing, or they can apply for more to do further improvements.

Jan advises that good records will come in handy. Those farmers who have kept track of improvements they've made will rank higher. She recommends calling the county conservation district first with questions.

Signup dates and deadlines for the program have not yet been announced, nor are dollar amounts yet known, but one thing is certain. Farms have a key role to play in protecting water, soil, air, and the life they support, and are being rewarded for their stewardship. ♻️

Bald Eagles Boost Numbers

BALD eagle numbers jumped again in 2004 as for the first time the birds nested near the Connecticut River in Plainfield, New Hampshire, fledging two chicks in July. Observers documented at least nine individual eagles during the nesting season in this reach, including these four birds. Down river in Hinsdale, the pair nesting near Vernon Dam fledged one chick in 2004 from a new nest on an island upriver of their original nest tree. At least five eagles used the area, including two immature birds and a pair of adults "commuting" from the dam to Spofford Lake.

Vermont is now the only state in the contiguous United States that lacks nesting bald eagles. Last spring, the National Wildlife Federation helped launch the Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative, and the first eight eaglets were released in western Vermont.

This year's Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey, coordinated by the Audubon Society of NH in early January with Vermont observers, yielded a new record-high for New Hampshire of 55 eagles (37 adults, 18 immatures), 10 percent above the previous record of 50 birds. A total of 19 of the handsome birds were seen on the Connecticut River, 15 observed using the 82 miles of river below Wilder Dam, and four more

in the 193 miles north of that point.

Good places to observe wintering eagles, often where they find open water below dams for feeding, include Moore Dam, McIndoe Falls impoundment, Wilder Dam, the Walpole portage trail below the Bellows Falls Dam, and Vernon Dam.

Eagle etiquette is a must for observers of this once federally endangered species now returning to its former range along the Connecticut River. Use good optic equipment and don't try to get close to a bird for a photo, or try a trick to make a bird fly, such as by throwing objects, slamming a car door, or honking a horn. Respect the birds' human hosts, too—don't trespass on private property to get a better look. ♻️

Chris Martin of the Audubon Society of NH, Mark LaBarr of Audubon Vermont, and NH Fish & Game staff contributed to this report.



Eagles spend many winter days perched in the pines at right, surveying open water below Wilder Dam.

Calendar

For the most current information,
visit www.crjc.org/calendar1.htm

FEBRUARY

- 28 CRJC meeting, 1 pm, Lebanon City Hall

MARCH

- 10 Headwaters Subcommittee, Columbia Town Hall, 7-9 pm
- 21 Upper Valley Subcommittee, Bicentennial Bldg, Thetford Hill, 7-9 pm
- 24 Riverbend Subcommittee, Littleton Opera House, 7-9 pm
- 28 CRJC meeting, 1 pm, Lebanon City Hall

APRIL

- 12 Mt. Ascutney Subcommittee, Windsor House, 7-9 pm
- 25 CRJC Annual Meeting, 1 pm, VA Admin Bldg, WRJ
- 27 Wantastiquet Subcommittee, Westmoreland Town Hall, 7-9 pm

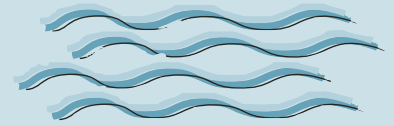
MAY

- 12 Headwaters Subcommittee, Columbia Town Hall, 7-9 pm
- 16 Upper Valley Subcommittee, Bicentennial Bldg, Thetford Hill, 7-9 pm
- 26 Riverbend Subcommittee, Littleton Opera House, 7-9 pm
- 31 CRJC meeting, 1 pm, Lebanon City Hall

JUNE

- 14 Mt. Ascutney Subcommittee, Windsor House, 7-9 pm
- 27 CRJC meeting, 1 pm, VA Admin Bldg, WRJ
- 29 Wantastiquet Subcommittee, Westmoreland Town Hall, 7-9 pm

River Ripples



Invasive Plant "Least Wanted" Calendar

This 2005 calendar is available in color at www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/calendar/apwg2005-300dpi.pdf. While at the site, learn more about invasive plants and how to recognize this growing menace.

Source to the Sea Cleanups

CRJC thanks the Connecticut River Watershed Council for inspiring dozens of river cleanups last fall. Seven groups of volunteers, including 64 in VT and 21 in NH, hauled roughly 1,600 pounds of trash from the Black, White, and Connecticut Rivers and Mill Brook in Weathersfield. Among the items salvaged were 50 tires, 16 shopping carts, 11 car parts and automotive supplies, hundreds of bottles, cans, and food containers, 6 barrels, and even a wood stove. The Hanover High School Environmental Club went to work at Lebanon's Two Rivers Park behind J. C. Penney. Prompted by CRWC board member Ed Gray of Lyme, a local family retrieved, among other things, a bottle with a message inside encouraging the reader to "find one's own message." They also observed dozens of automobile tires from a failed attempt to shore up the riverbank.

Other groups, including "Clean Up Walpole," the Weathersfield, VT 7th Grade, residents of Bethel, VT, Bellows Falls Rotary, and the Black River Watershed Action Team also pitched in. Kurt Staudter, Springfield, VT's representative to CRJC's Mt. Ascutney Region River Subcommittee, reported that "The Black River Action Team did a big cleanup recently, in the pouring rain. This being election season, we even had some would-be politicians with us, getting poison ivy." All in the name of a healthy river system.

New Faces on the Local River Subcommittees

The Riverbend Subcommittee welcomes riverfront landowners Michael and Nancy Crosby, recently appointed by the Town of Dalton as its representatives. Dr. Daniel Marx will represent the Town of Dummerston on the Wantastiquet Subcommittee.

Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust

The Connecticut River Joint Commissions welcome a growing new land trust in our watershed. The North Country's first locally based, grassroots land trust was founded by a group of neighbors concerned about the rapid loss of open lands in the western White Mountains. The Trust recently stepped up its engagement throughout the Ammonoosuc River Valley region through the efforts of president Rebecca Brown. Visit www.aconservationtrust.org, where the Trust has just posted its new watershed conservation plan, or get in touch at 80 Old Post Road, Sugar Hill, NH 03586, 603-826-7777.

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