



The River Connects Us.

Connecticut River Watershed Council

FIGHTING RIVER POLLUTERS

FIVE YEARS OF ILLEGAL POLLUTION NEEDS TO STOP!

CRWC has taken action to stop the illegal discharge of pollution into the Connecticut River by the Whately, MA-based Chang Farms. In June, CRWC and Earthrise Law Center of the Lewis & Clark School filed a Notice of Intent to file suit for violations of the Clean Water Act. CRWC is now evaluating a response from Chang Farms and will work to negotiate an agreement to ensure they comply with their permits.

Chang Farms grows organic beans, vegetables, and berries. They process bean sprouts for the wholesale and retail markets. The process water for growing sprouts is treated and discharged to the Connecticut River. Over the last five years, Chang Farms has violated the terms of their federal pollution discharge permit in 55 of the last 60 months, 92% of the time, by discharging more pollutants than allowed by law. They have violated permit limits for four separate pollutants more than 330 times. They have also failed the toxicity test of their discharge 30% of the time.

Federal and state agencies have not stepped in to correct the violations, so CRWC is using a provision of the Clean

Water Act that allows citizen groups to act. "We appreciate that this is a local farming operation.

But you can't ignore reasonable limits designed to protect the public's water. This section of the Connecticut River is used by thousands of people for swimming, boating/paddling, fishing, and diving every year," notes Andrea Donlon, CRWC's MA River Steward.

The full Notice of Intent to file suit for violations of the Federal Clean Water Act is available on our website: www.ctriver.org/news-events/news/



AL BRADEN

This is the iconic stretch of river where Chang Farms is discharging their polluted water.

HYDROELECTRIC RELICENSING – ABOUT HALF WAY THERE

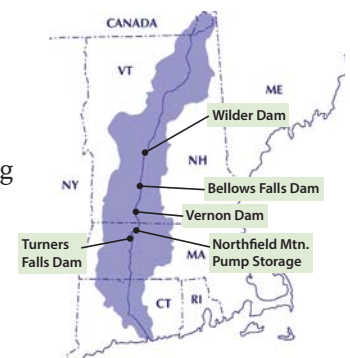
The 5½-year process of federal relicensing of five major hydroelectric facilities on the mainstem of the CT River is about half over. The facilities include four large dams at Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon, VT and at Turners Falls, MA and the pump storage facility at Northfield Mountain in MA. CRWC continues its watchdog work on this process. Since the new licenses will last for the next 30-50 years, it is important that we get it right, right now.

The summer of 2015 is the second season of studies geared towards better understanding the impacts of the dams on resources in the affected areas. The closure of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant delayed all of the fisheries studies and, because of this, TransCanada requested a 1-year extension of the relicensing process on their dams in VT and NH. This

extension was approved in late July.

River Stewards David Deen and Andrea Donlon have represented CRWC, commenting on the study designs and study reports for the 71 studies that look at issues including flows, fish passage and habitat, water quality, erosion, and recreation.

Get in touch to learn more or to provide input.
ddeen@ctriver.org or
adonlon@ctriver.org



CRWC remains involved in the federal relicensing of these five hydroelectric facilities.



Out & About

Mission

CRWC works to protect the Connecticut River basin's diversity of habitats, communities and resources. We celebrate our four-state treasure and collaborate, educate, organize, restore, and intervene to preserve the health of the whole for generations to come.

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WATERSHED - WIDE



DAVE HOITT

Thank you for celebrating with us!

It was great to see so many of you in June at the Path of Life Garden (Windsor, VT) for the 2015 River Celebration! Many thanks to Willem Lange for joining us and sharing his river tales.

VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

Making Progress on River Restoration

Work will begin this year on several projects in the upper river. Groton #9 is a deadbeat dam on the Wells River in Groton, VT just 1.5 miles downstream from the Franconia Paper Mill dam that CRWC and partners removed in 2014. This project will remove the concrete dam remnants which are causing a four foot drop that blocks fish passage. Removal will open 34 miles of stream, roughly half of which is cold water habitat upstream from the dam.

On Abbott Brook in Strafford, VT an undersized, perched culvert will be removed and a larger box culvert will be installed.

The new culvert will allow for fish passage, including Brook trout, into the 924-acre Podunk Wildlife Management Area, an area currently blocked by the existing culvert. Funding for both projects comes from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, NH Charitable Foundation, and the VT Department of Fish & Wildlife.

CRWC is also working in Lisbon, NH to plant a buffer of trees and shrubs along the Ammonoosuc River. The USDA asked CRWC to help the landowner through the state permitting process. Our involvement is supported by the \$10 million Long Island Sound Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant to provide technical assistance to landowners.



CRWC STAFF

Work on this dam removal project in Groton, VT will begin August 31.

MASSACHUSETTS

Chickley River Gets New Trees

In May, CRWC staff and many volunteers planted over 400 native trees and shrubs along the Chickley River in Hawley, MA. CRWC was hired by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, through a public bidding process, to complete the plantings.

The Chickley River, a tributary of the Deerfield, is a cold-water river that experienced major flooding during Hurricane Irene in 2011. After the flooding, the Town hired a construction company that



CRWC STAFF

In May, 400 native trees & shrubs were planted along the Chickley River to restore river banks.

straightened, dredged and bermed the river for 5 miles, some of it through endangered species habitat. CRWC raised an alarm and then intervened in an enforcement appeal. The enforcement action had the river channel restored in 2013 and provided funding for the tree planting project, as well as aquatic monitoring.

CRWC appreciates the help from our members, Trout Unlimited members, the Student Conservation Association, Polatin Ecological Services, Charlemont Academy, and J.S. Rae construction. Several landowners helped with the planting, donated equipment and space for storage. The rocky soil made for challenging digging on some hot May days, but everyone enjoyed being out along a beautiful river improving river habitat. In fall, we'll be back to re-plant any trees and shrubs that didn't survive the summer.

CONNECTICUT

A Plan for CT's Water

Connecticut does not yet have a comprehensive, integrated plan for its water resources but is making progress. Spurred by a controversy over water supply for the University of Connecticut in 2011, the legislature passed Public Act 14-163 in 2013, which directs CT's Water Planning Council (WPC) to provide the legislature with a plan by July 2017. The WPC, in existence since 2001, has representatives from four state agencies. The Public Act outlines the work expected to be done for the development of the plan as well as its scope. To facilitate this process, the WPC has assembled a steering committee of 18 individuals from diverse backgrounds that met for the first time in June.

A good plan should consider all aspects of water use, provide a fair and consistent decision making process for

how the resources are used, and take all stakeholders into consideration. Recently, there has been much talk about marketing CT's water resources to attract business. If CT wants to ensure that it remains "water rich" for generations to come, it should not employ such a marketing plan until a comprehensive plan for its water resources is in place.

For more information, get in touch with Alicea Charamut at acharamut@ctriver.org.

Dry Ledges

What is uncanny is the strength that accompanies the autumn.

The oiled chirping of a cricket penetrates the diminished ratchet of cicadas; a passing wedge of geese writes the symbol

for flock across the smoky sky in brant, reminding me *fires still burn in my heart.*

The sound of the rain, igniting in the maple's crown, pulls me toward the gravity of a falling

leaf; and these dry ledges of the mountain stream, brightened

by a flurry of blowing beech leaves, is the strength that carries me,

as it flows with the first silver trickles of October rain.

Contributed by Wally Swist, from his book "Winding Paths Worn through Grass".



Nature Notes: Osprey

Ospreys, also known as fish hawks, are often found for part of the year at the mouth of the Connecticut River and in northern reaches of the watershed in VT/NH. Their scientific name, *Pandion haliaetus*, means sea hawk in Greek but the osprey is not a hawk at all.

The osprey is superbly evolved to catch fish that comprise 98-99% of its diet. Their feet have reversible outer talons, small needle-sharp spicules on the underside of the talons and backwards-facing scales on the talons that hold its catch. Ospreys are the only raptor that plunges into the water when hunting fish. They dive with their feet thrust forward on each side of their head, allowing them to keep the fish in sight through the dive. Their feet hit the water first, cutting through the water surface, and they have closable nostrils to keep water out. Ospreys also waterproof their feathers with oil during preening.

The osprey is unusual in that it is a single species that occurs worldwide on all continents except Antarctica. Ospreys breed throughout Canada and the entire United States, establishing breeding territories near lakes, rivers, and coastal estuaries. The osprey population is recovering from DDT. Unfortunately, because ospreys are long-distance migrants, they are exposed to this chemical in areas where the use of DDT is not forbidden.

Originally published & adapted from Upper Valley River Steward David Deen's "River Currents" column. Is there a topic you want to know more about? Let us know and we may cover it here. editor@ctriver.org



Upcoming Events

Visit our online calendar for more information, www.ctriver.org/news-events, or call 413-772-2020.

SWALLOW PADDLE

Thursday, September 10, 2015; 5-8pm
Old Lyme, CT

Join CRWC & the CT River Museum for a sunset paddle on the CT River to see the swirling flocks of Tree Swallows, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, performing their nightly aerial ballet. Contact the Museum to register at 860-767-8269 x110 or crm@ctrivermuseum.org.



CRWC STAFF



19TH ANNUAL SOURCE TO SEA CLEANUP

Friday & Saturday, September 25 & 26, 2015
VT, NH, MA & CT

Registration is open now! Sign up a group or find one near you to join. www.ctriver.org/cleanup

CONTE FISH LAB TOUR

Thursday, October 22, 2015; 6-7:30pm
One Migratory Way, Turners Falls, MA

Scientists at the Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory do all sorts of research directed towards restoration and protection of migratory fishes here in the U.S. and around the world, and they are right here in our watershed! Join us for a tour of the Conte Lab hosted by eel expert Alex Haro to see some of what they do, including wet labs, dry lab, outdoor sprint swimming flume, hydraulic lab, and a large flume complex. We may even get to see shortnose sturgeon, juvenile lamprey, juvenile and adults eels, Atlantic salmon, and brook trout. Space is limited to 25 people. Contact CRWC to register: amrozinski@ctriver.org or 413-772-2020 x204.

DO YOU GET OUR EMAILS?
SIGN UP ONLINE AT WWW.CTRIVER.ORG

FIND CRWC ONLINE:



Join thousands of volunteers to clean up our rivers this fall

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN for the 2015 Source to Sea Cleanup! You can register your group of any size to clean an area near you. Register by September 7 if you'd like us to send you gloves and trash bags.

Not interested in organizing a group? You can find and join a group near you. Know of a trashy site that could use some cleaning? Report it to us. All this and more at www.ctriver.org/cleanup

Thanks to the many sponsors that help make the Source to Sea Cleanup possible, including our lead sponsors NRG, Pratt & Whitney, and TransCanada.



Where in the Watershed?

Kudos to all who correctly guessed that this is the Memorial Bridge in Springfield, MA! The winner is Crystal Adams of Lebanon, NH. Look for another round of photos in our Spring newsletter next year.



STEVE SHELASKY

2015 Fish Migration— How many came back?

While many fish migrated at low or average numbers this year, including a particularly bad year for alewives, the American shad had one of their strongest runs in many years. In fact, Vernon Dam broke an all-time record for shad! Coincidence that this is the first spring Vermont Yankee hasn't been dumping hot water into the CT River there?



USFWS

But shad numbers at Vernon Dam should be even higher. Turners Falls Dam, just south of Vernon, is still acting as an obstacle. Only 14% of shad from Holyoke Dam got past Turners Falls Dam. The goal is 40-60% passage. We'll continue working with this dam during their Federal relicensing process to improve fish passage.

Many thanks to Steve Gephard of the CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) for compiling these migration numbers every year.