### The River Connects Us.

# Connecticut River Watershed Council

## 1876 River Sketches

An Olympian's Story

**Chang Farms** Settlement

Upcoming **Events** 

## Hey Buddy, Wanna Buy A Dam? Relicensing Proceeds As Dams Go Up For Sale

he glut of cheap natural gas is having ripple effects across the energy sector, including hydropower. In February, 2016, Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP Investments) announced plans to buy FirstLight Power Resources, which includes Turners Falls Dam and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage, from GDF Suez. PSP Investments is one of Canada's largest pension investment managers, investing funds for the pension plans of various government agencies. According to PSP's press release, the facilities will be managed by PSP Investments' existing hydropower platform, H2O Power LP. From what we know, PSP Investments does not have a long track record in the hydropower business.

This is third sale of these facilities in the last decade. In 2006. Northeast Utilities sold their remaining generating facilities to Energy Capital Partners, LLC (ECP) for \$1.34 billion. ECP created the FirstLight subsidiary. Just two years later,

ECP sold FirstLight to **GDF** Suez for \$1.9 billion, a tidy profit for two years of ownership. The current sale price of FirstLight to PSP Investments is \$1.2 billion.

According to a

VT Wilder Dam **Bellows Falls Dam** Vernon Dam Northfield Mtn. Turners MA Pump Storage Falls Dam

These 5 hydroelectric dams are getting new operating licenses AND being sold at the same

representative from GDF Suez/ENGIE, the current sale does not include the recently-shuttered Mt. Tom coal plant located on the Connecticut River in continued on page 6

## River Celebration 2016 - Join Us!

oin us to kick off summer in style at this year's annual River Celebration at Brunelle's Marina in South Hadley, MA. So much more than a marina, Brunelle's is also home to the Dockside Restaurant, which will provide your tasty lunch, and the Lady Bea, a 53-foot cruise boat. Don't miss your chance to get out on the river with a ride on the Lady Bea, before or after the River Celebration (RSVP required, sponsored by Leinenkugel Brewing Co.).

Writer and naturalist Laurie Sanders will join us as the keynote speaker presenting "Where Past and

Present Converge." Laurie is well known as the former host of "Field Notes," a weekly natural history series that aired on New England Public Radio for a decade. She's also



Laurie Sanders, former host of "Field Notes" radio program, will be the keynote speaker.

produced nature shorts for local public television. In 1988, she discovered the only known site for a hybrid cross between jack-in-the-pulpit and green

Your **Newsletters** Are Going Green Story on page 6



#### 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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## 1876 Connecticut River Sketches



T.H. Pattison kept a journal & sketches of his 1876 paddle of the Connecticut River.

In 1876, Thomas Harwood Pattison paddled the length of the Connecticut River, taking notes and sketching along the way. His family saved them all these years and his great-granddaughter, Jane Bowles, gifted them to CRWC for safe keeping.

If you attended CRWC's open house in March, you got a sneak peak of this historic journal and sketchbook. We are in the process of having these documents properly preserved and mounted. Our goal is to have them on display in CRWC's Greenfield, MA headquarters. Once they are ready, we'll invite you back for a proper viewing. Stay tuned!

Thank you Jane and Glen Bowles for entrusting these documents to CRWC. We're honored to house them as part of our collections.

## Welcome CRWC's Newest Staff







CRWC is growing! We are pleased to welcome Mary Link, Elayne Ryba, and Stacey Lennard, pictured left to right, above.

Mary is CRWC's new Membership Builder. She has served as director, development director or consultant to help grow a variety of non-profit organizations both locally and internationally. Mary also serves as chair of the development committee for Woolman Hill Conference Center in Deerfield, MA. You can reach Mary at *mlink@ctriver.org*.

Elayne serves as CRWC's Outreach & Development Assistant. She spent over 30 years in the upstate New York printing industry in sales, marketing & public relations. But her passion is the outdoors, especially birds. Elayne also served on the Board of Directors for the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club & the Capital Area Audubon Society. You can reach Elayne at <code>eryba@ctriver.org</code>.

Stacey is CRWC's Events and Special Projects Coordinator. She began volunteering with CRWC in the winter of 2015 and is eager to bring her creativity and organizing skills to the important work of CRWC. Previously, she was the Executive Director of Youth Action Coalition—a community-based youth arts and social justice organization—for nearly 20 years, and has been an arts educator and facilitator in rural and urban schools and out-of-school settings. You can reach Stacey at slennard@ctriver.org.



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## This Olympian's Favorite Spot? 3 Inches Above The River



Andy Larkin rowed on the 1968 Olympic men's eight team & continues to row today on the Connecticut River.

There is something compelling about going fast and making that speed happen with your own muscles. And when you do it on a beautiful morning with the sun breaking over the horizon on a

placid stretch of Connecticut River, it is inspiring. When you do it facing backwards in a 26' long, 12" wide rowing scull with 3" of freeboard, it is compelling, inspiring, and challenging.

Andy Larkin, CRWC member and retired internist, has been rowing on the Connecticut River for over twenty-five years since moving to the Pioneer Valley to practice medicine. "The Connecticut River is special to me because it is my home," notes Andy. "Because I am on the river, I see nature, I see magic, I see the floods and the storms, I see the river in all its majesty."

Andy brought his love of water from his youth growing up in Connecticut, where he roamed and explored many places throughout the watershed. Andy notes that he "was fascinated with rowing ever since he was a child" after a trip to Cambridge when he saw a single scull on the Charles River. He carried that fascination through a college career rowing on the Harvard varsity team and then making the 1968 Olympic squad rowing in the men's eight.

Andy supports the Connecticut River Watershed Council because, since 1952, CRWC has taken on the challenge to make his river healthier and a better place for him to enjoy his favorite pastime.

Rowing has a long history on the Connecticut River. Springfield, MA hosted the second inter-collegiate rowing race between Harvard and Yale in 1855. Today, a continuing resurgence of interest – and cleaner water – has brought new community, high school, and collegiate rowing programs to the river in all four states.

Learn more about Andy's inspiring story in a short video at <a href="https://goo.gl/qr8Duf">https://goo.gl/qr8Duf</a>

## Nature Notes: Sea Lamprey

Some people don't like sea lampreys and think they might get attacked as they swim. Banish that thought and give the oft-unloved sea lamprey a second chance! Sea lampreys are native to our rivers and play an important role. Lampreys, *Petromyzon marinus*, have traveled our oceans and rivers for 360 million years – that alone deserves respect. You can find lamprey in the Atlantic Ocean and coastal rivers from Canada all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.

They can grow to 40 inches long, have well-developed eyes, a single nostril on top of the head and seven gill openings on each side of their body. Sea lampreys are not eels. Adults have an internal skeleton of cartilage. Lampreys have a round, sucker-like, jawless mouth filled with rows of teeth and a rasp-like "tongue."

Lampreys are anadromous fish: they spawn in freshwater and the young return to sea to grow into adults. It's important to note that all truly anadromous fish, including lampreys, stop feeding when they return to freshwater. They are driven only to spawn and survive on stored fat reserves (not your leg) as they travel upstream.

Lamprey eggs hatch into larvae called ammocoetes, which lack the sucker mouths of adults. Ammocoetes burrow into the mud feeding on algae, small organisms and

waste. The larvae remain in streams for up to 10 years, drifting further downstream each year, eventually migrating to the ocean.

Lampreys bring nutrients from the oceans back to the rivers and are an important food source. Fish and marine mammals like lamprey due to their high fat content and they are easier to catch than most fish. Immediately after spawning lamprey die and become the base of the food chain, supporting all forms of new life.





Originally published & adapted from Upper Valley River Steward David Deen's "River Currents" column.



#### WATERSHED-WIDE

### What's Our River Doing To Long Island Sound? Two Years Of Samplepalooza Results Tell A Story

Fish and other aquatic life are dying in Long Island Sound due to lack of oxygen. Our watershed contributes 70% of the freshwater entering the Sound and that water contains nutrients and other pollutants that contribute to the problem. While the states of Connecticut and New York have had to follow a roadmap for pollution reductions for the last 12 years, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire have not. So what's their share of the responsibility to clean up Long Island Sound?

These states were not looking to answer this question. So CRWC initiated a monitoring strategy in 2014 (after several years of coaxing the states and EPA) and set out to determine the upstream states' share of the pollution problem in the Sound.

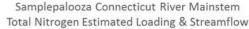
Samplepalooza 2014 and 2015 were each one-day cooperative sample events at a large number of locations in all four river states. Our mission was to compare results in different locations while minimizing differences in weather and river flow variation. The goal was to identify hot spots (high concentrations of nutrients) and help states target efforts to reduce nutrient impacts.

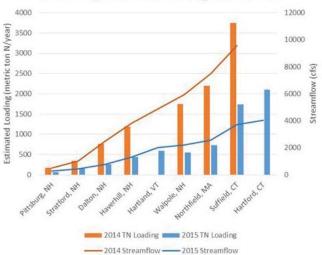
In both years, estimated Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) loading at the Connecticut River mainstem sites steadily increased from north to south, which makes sense as more and more of the drainage area contributes to loading at each site.

Total nitrogen (TN) results on the mainstem for both years were steady in NH and VT, but increased quite a bit in MA. The CT sites in the Farmington watershed, added in 2015, had some very high levels of TN in some spots.

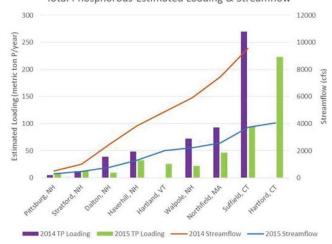
Total phosphorus (TP) results on the mainstem in 2014 were steady but increased at the Suffield, CT location. TP results on the mainstem in 2015 were fairly high in northern NH but then were lower until Suffield, CT. The Hartford, CT site had double the TP concentrations than the Suffield, CT site. The CT sites in the Farmington watershed, added in 2015, had extremely high levels of TP like nothing else we saw in the watershed.

This monitoring work will continue. Trends in data will help locate areas where pollution sources should be identified and help build regulations and standards for nutrient pollution, which are in pressing need of being updated, particularly in Massachusetts.





## Samplepalooza Connecticut River Mainstem Total Phosphorous Estimated Loading & Streamflow



These graphs show that estimated total nitrogen & phosphorus increase the farther down river you go. These nutrients are causing problems in Long Island Sound.

Thanks to Vermont DEC, New Hampshire DES, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, and Yale University for help in designing and implementing these two sampling events. Thanks to CRWC members, Lintilhac Foundation and Jane's Trust for funding support.

For more details, the 2014 and 2015 reports are available on available on CRWC's website: <u>www.ctriver.org</u>.

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#### VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

### **Planting Trees To Restore Rivers**

This spring CRWC and our partners will be planting 970 native trees and shrubs along the mainstem Connecticut River and the Ammonoosuc River in New Hampshire. The plantings, funded by grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, will help filter runoff, stabilize eroding banks and increase wildlife habitat. Partners include Beck Pond LLC. Northwoods Stewarship Center, Trinity and Tullando farms, the



Tree plantings & dam removals continue to help restore our rivers.

Orford Conservation Commission, and private landowners. In addition to tree plantings, the Bagatelle Dam in Putney, VT will be removed this summer and six other projects are in the works for coming years.

#### MASSACHUSETTS

### **Stepping Forward To Stop Pollution In Your River**

In August, 2015, CRWC and Earthrise Law Center of the Lewis & Clark Law School filed a complaint under the Clean Water Act against Chang Farms in Whately, MA. Chang Farms is a large grower and distributor of bean sprouts. Their wastewater is treated and discharged to the Connecticut River. Except they didn't really get a handle on the treatment part of things. Over five years, Chang Farms violated their federal pollution discharge permit in 55 of 60 months, 92% of the time, by discharging more pollutants than allowed by law. The EPA did not step in to correct the violations, so CRWC used a provision of the Clean Water Act that allows citizen groups to act when government doesn't.

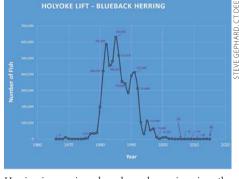
We are pleased to report that an agreement has been reached to resolve these long-running violations. Chang Farms will make necessary changes to ensure that their permit limits are met. The agreement ensures additional fines will kick in if Chang Farms doesn't meet its agreement. In lieu of a fine paid to the government, Chang Farms will fund two environmental projects. The penalty will support the Town of Sunderland to improve the town boat ramp on the Connecticut River as well as the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's (PVPC) weekly water quality monitoring program. PVPC's program was not funded last year, so we

are pleased that it can resume for another year. We appreciate Earthrise for helping us ensure that everyone plays by the rules to keep our rivers clean.

#### CONNECTICUT

### **Citizen Scientists Study River Herring**

Just about everything eats river herring.... except us. They are an extremely important part of the food chain. River herring is a collective term for blueback herring and alewife.



mid 1980's. largest migration

Herring in our rivers have been decreasing since the In 1985, the

of 650,000 blueback herring was recorded at the Holyoke Dam fish lift. Last year that number was 87. And as a CT state biologist noted, the alewife run was the worst on record. The primary culprit of this population decline is industrial mid-water trawlers operating in the Atlantic Ocean, where these fish spend a majority of their lives. These trawlers are targeting Atlantic herring but since river herring hang out with Atlantic herring in the ocean, they are a casualty of bycatch. Recent federal efforts to list river herring as endangered and tighten regulations and monitoring of industrial trawlers have failed. Fortunately, at the state level, Massachusetts and Connecticut have bans on the taking of river herring in state waters and many partners are working to make better freshwater habitat that is more accessible to the fish.

This year, thanks to CRWC member support, CRWC partnered with CT DEEP to launch a citizen science program for river herring to help understand their population structure and identify places to focus restoration and improvement projects. More than two dozen volunteers in Connecticut have been monitoring tributaries of the Connecticut River for the presence of river herring since the beginning of April and will continue their work until the end of June. Thank you to the volunteers! This project has gone in many wonderful directions. Teachers from two schools are getting their students involved and several volunteers have turned this into an activity to do with their young children and grandchildren!



### **Is Your Favorite River Spot Clean?**

There are times when water may not be clean enough for swimming or boating. Bacteria levels tend to be high for 24-48 hours after a heavy rainfall. From May through October, volunteers collect water samples that get tested for bacteria levels. You can see the latest lab results for more than 130 sites along the CT River and many tributaries at www.ConnecticutRiver.us, click on "Is It Clean?

Wanna Buy a Dam... continued from page 1

Holyoke, MA, which was part of the previous sale packages. Fast on the announcement from FirstLight, TransCanada put its facilities on the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers, including Vernon, Bellows Falls, and Wilder Dams on the market. In March, 2016, TransCanada announced plans to acquire Columbia Pipeline Group for \$13 billion. To generate funds for this purchase, TransCanada will sell its U.S. Northeast power portfolio, which also includes wind and solar facilities. As of late April, no purchaser had been publicly identified.

However, the State of Vermont is considering buying the dams on the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers. Governor Peter Shumlin established a 7-member working group to look at the possible purchase. Vermont bid on the dams in 2005 after former owner USGen New England went bankrupt, but was outbid by TransCanada, according to the Burlington Free Press. Shumlin has said Vermont "missed an opportunity" in 2005 and this is a chance to reconsider.

Time will tell whether or not the sales will impact the ongoing relicensing process. Because relicensing is well underway, the companies have publicly stated that all will continue as it has, with the same personnel and consulting teams. CRWC will remain involved to make sure the sales don't interfere with good solutions for the river.

In keeping with the relicensing schedule, FirstLight submitted a draft license application in December outlining its initial proposal for how they want to operate their facilities.

Your Newsletters Are Going Green

No, you're not imagining things. This newsletter has a different look and feel than what you're used to. So why the change?

First, CRWC has always promised to spend your donations wisely. This change helps keep costs down so that more of your donations can be used to support our rivers.

Second, this is now a more eco-friendly publication. The paper contains a portion of recycled material. It comes from a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified company that follows sustainable forestry and logging practices. The ink is water-based, meaning the print press is washed with warm water. Traditional soy or oil-based inks require harsh cleaning chemicals, which must be disposed of like motor oil. We are pleased to be working with Hampshire Gazette to produce this newsletter.

Economical plus eco-friendly equals a win-win in our opinion. We hope you agree that this is a positive change, but please tell us what you think. Good or bad, we love hearing from you!

Send your feedback to <u>editor@ctriver.org</u> or call 413-772-2020.

With most of the studies not yet completed, the draft license application was largely incomplete as expected. CRWC and stakeholders have significant concerns about many of the study designs and conclusions, particularly regarding erosion. CRWC is working closely with a wide range of stakeholders and experts to comment on the many ongoing studies to ensure there is the information to craft responsible licenses that reduce the ecological footprint of these facilities.

Stay tuned for more updates as these sales proceed and license applications move forward.

River Celebration... continued from page 1

dragon plants. We are pleased to present Laurie with CRWC's Bud Foster Award, given annually since its inception in the 1950s to individuals who demonstrate "outstanding devotion, service and accomplishment."

You and your fellow river friends will enjoy live music, a picnic lunch, lawn games, great raffle prizes, and a variety of activities for the whole family. Back by popular demand, an ice cream social will wrap up the event.

We hope you'll plan to join us for this fun event celebrating our beautiful rivers.

RSVP early to get your spot on the Lady Bea. Respond online at www.ctriver.org/celebration. See you soon!

### Welcome!

As the newest members of our river family, you join a community of people committed to protecting the Connecticut River watershed. The following new members joined us between January 1, 2016 and March 31, 2016. Thanks for joining us.

Marianne and Hoyt Alverson Kyle P. Brady Matthew Brown Chick Montana Group LLC David Clem Chip Conquest Owen and Valerie David Steven Dayno Jeff Feldmann Al Lapa Melissa McClung Elizabeth Mills Guy Payne

Michael and Nicci Pepin

William Remick

Terry and Laura Smith Meg Sullivan Alice Thomas Frederick Wootton

### Gifts in honor:

Annette Spaulding, from
David & Allison Deen
"Your help for SEVWA," from
Jeremy Schrauf

### **Gifts in Memory:**

James R. Martin, from Carol Charlton Robert M. and Gale S. McClung, from Melissa McClung

Joined and don't see your name? Prefer a different listing? Contact Marion at 413-772-2020 ext.201 or <a href="mgriswold@ctriver.org">mgriswold@ctriver.org</a>. Not a member yet? Join us in protecting your rivers. CRWC commits to spending your donation wisely. Donate online at <a href="myww.ctriver.org">www.ctriver.org</a> or call 413-772-2020. Thank you!

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## The River Flows Through Us



The Mitchells honor their fond memories of good times on the river by including CRWC in their will.

From fishing the river's banks to paddling the river with their children, the Connecticut River flows through Tom and Elaine Mitchell's memories. Longtime residents of Springfield, MA,

they've seen many changes in the river over the years. "The river has come such a long way since the 1970s," says Tom.

Tom and Elaine love seeing how the river changes so dramatically along its length. When their children, Michael and Jennifer, were young, they went to the headwaters of the Connecticut River so they could stand with one foot on each side of the river. A tiny brook located near the border served as a stand-in for the exact source of the river.

Tom, an avid angler, fondly recalls catching a 40-inch striped bass near Enfield, CT. While size limits required throwing the fish back, the memory has stayed. Elaine and Tom have spent many hours paddling and boating on the river. "When you are out on the water," says Elaine, "the views are

beautiful. Seeing the wildlife, the herons...we need our natural areas, our rivers."

"I don't want to live in a town with a sewer running through it," says Tom. So he and Elaine do their part to help protect the river.
They've been loyal CRWC members for nearly 20 years and recently became monthly donors.

A few years ago, Tom and

I can do."



Michael Mitchell, floating down the Connecticut River, in the early '8os. Many family memories were made on the Connecticut River.

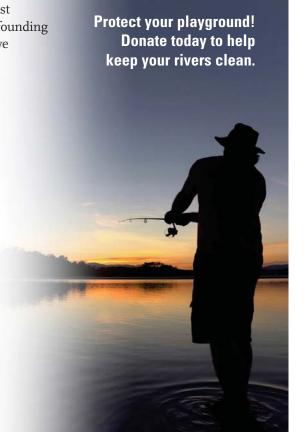
Elaine decided it was time to put a will together. "We didn't want to give 100% to our children," says Tom. "They don't need it. We each came up with the charities that were most important to us – for me the river mattered. We don't know how much will be left, so we left a percentage to charity rather than a set figure. It's something

If the river flows through your life, please consider joining Tom and Elaine in making a lasting impact on the river. When you make a bequest or legacy gift to CRWC, we'll welcome you into the Long River Society. For more information, please contact Dana Gillette at 413-772-2020, ext. 202 or dgillette@ctriver.org.

Individuals like you have helped to transform the Connecticut River from "the best landscaped sewer in the nation" into a nationally-recognized treasure. Since our founding in 1952, CRWC members have come together to form a powerful force for positive environmental change in New England. Please join us today. Yes! I want to help protect and preserve the Connecticut River and its watershed. ☐ I'd like to become a sustaining member with a monthly gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Enclosed is my gift of \$\_\_\_ Payment method: □Check □Visa □Mastercard Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name(s)\_\_\_\_\_ Address City, State, Zip\_\_\_\_\_ Email Phone Checks: payable to CRWC. Donate online: www.ctriver.org

☐ Send me more information about making a bequest, gift annuity, or

other legacy gift and joining the Long River Society.



## **Upcoming Events**

We've packed 2016 with fun & educational events about our rivers. Here are some coming soon. **Visit our online calendar for more information, www.ctriver.org/news-events, or call 413-772-2020.** 

#### LOVE A LITTLE LAMPREY

Tuesday, June 7, 2016 Greenfield/Gill, MA

Join CRWC's MA River Steward Andrea Donlon to learn about sea lamprey, their habits and habitats. Ken Sprankle with the US Fish & Wildlife Service will be transporting lamprey from Holyoke to the Fall River. He will release the lamprey and discuss why they get relocated. Due to the unpredictability of lamprey capture & transport, the time of this event will be set as the event nears. RSVP for event updates: Elayne at 413-772-2020 or <a href="mailto:eryba@ctriver.org">eryba@ctriver.org</a>.

## HYDROELECTRICITY & OUR RIVERS - BOAT TOUR

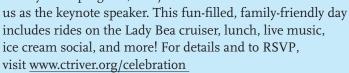
Saturday, August 27, 2016; 1pm Fairlee, VT

Join CRWC on an informative boat tour to discuss the relicensing of five hydroelectric dams on the CT River. See first-hand some effects of current hydropower generation on our rivers and shores. Learn how you can get involved to have a say for our rivers. Registration required. RSVP to Elayne at 413-772-2020 or eryba@ctriver.org.

## CRWC ANNUAL RIVER CELEBRATION 2016

Saturday, June 25, 2016 Brunelle's Marina; South Hadley, MA

Laurie Sanders, former host of "Field Notes," a weekly natural history radio program, will join





## **20TH ANNUAL SOURCE TO SEA CLEANUP** September 23 & 24, 2016

Visit <u>www.ctriver.org/cleanup</u> for more information about this fun and meaningful river cleanup event.

### PLEIN-AIR PAINTING WORKSHOP

Saturday, July 23, 2016; Noon RAIN DATE: Sunday, July 24

Brattleboro Museum; Brattleboro, VT

Enjoy the fresh air with beautiful river views and instruction with artist Jamie Young. A discussion of materials and techniques for painting outdoors will be ongoing. Jamie will work individually with each participant. All skill levels & methods are welcome. Fee includes a box lunch. Registration required RSVP to Elayne at 413-772-2020 or <a href="mailto:eryba@ctriver.org">eryba@ctriver.org</a>. See Jamie's work at <a href="mailto:theharrisongallery.com">theharrisongallery.com</a> or <a href="mailto:jamieyoung.net">jamieyoung.net</a>. Cost \$150 per person.



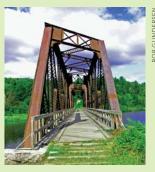
## Where in the Watershed?



The spring photo (left) is a recently re-discovered underwater petroglyph near the confluence of the Connecticut & West Rivers near Brattleboro, VT. Congratulations Phil Tomlinson of Greenfield, MA who guessed correctly!

## Can you guess where this photo was taken?

Send us your guess in the enclosed envelope or email where@ctriver.org.
All entries received by June 30 will be entered for a prize! Winner will be announced in the next newsletter.



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