



Clean Water. Healthy Habitats. Resilient Communities.

**Connecticut River
Conservancy**

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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Letter from the Executive Director:

MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS CLEANER, HEALTHIER RIVERS

Safeguarding a watershed that holds New England's longest river, over 140 tributaries, and countless wildlife habitats is an effort that transcends generations. That's what is on my mind as I reflect on progress made by the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) and our many partners, supporters, and volunteers throughout 2025. Every restoration project and advocacy win is part of a continuum of stewardship in which everyone has a role to play to foster cleaner, healthier rivers.

This year, as part of the launch of CRC's new strategic plan, among all the goal setting and mission refinement to take us through 2030, we updated our organization's values to include *adaptability* in recognition that embracing change is essential to effective, positive momentum. The social, political, and environmental climate require us to respond to new challenges with creativity, flexibility, and resilience. Coupled with an approach rooted in community, partnerships, and science, we will rely on the spirit of *adaptability* to continue implementing projects that get results for the watershed that sustains us.

In the pages of this report, you will find the accomplishments that show both the tangible benefits of rivers and habitats restored, and the equally vital gains of human experiences involving community science, learn-to-paddle events, and river cleanups. This was the year that we planted the organization's 100,000th tree, expanded our staff to include full-time capacity for aquatic ecology and invasive species removal, overhauled a website dedicated to water quality monitoring, and launched the new Connecticut River Legal Advocacy Fund to ensure that we can continue protecting the watershed with the full force of the law.



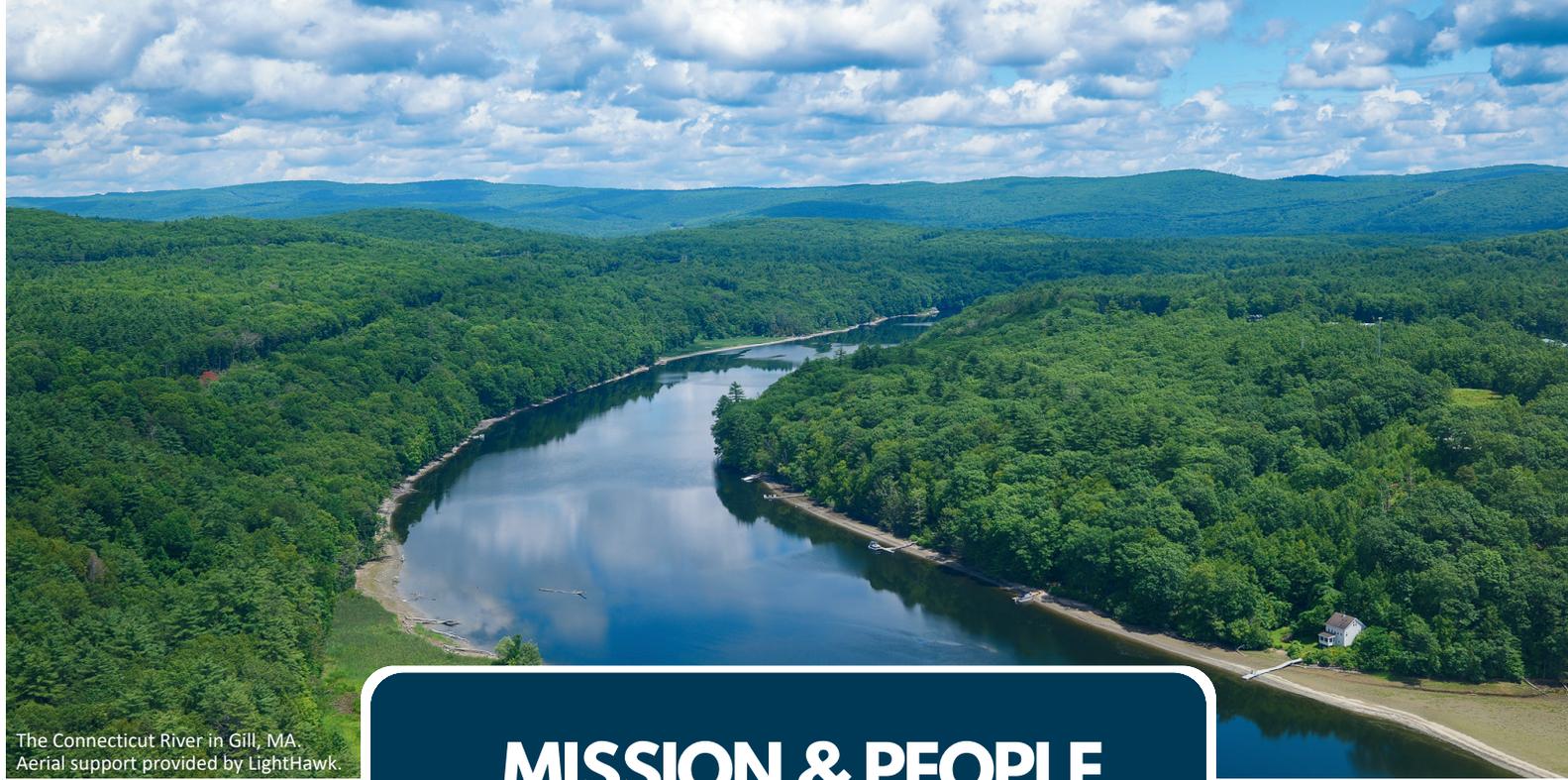
REBECCA E. TODD

Executive Director,
Connecticut River Conservancy

Along the way, we charted a course through 2030 with a strategic plan full of ambition. We must not only respond to the needs and opportunities of the moment, but lift our gaze towards the future, just as our predecessors have done through all the progress made in restoring the Connecticut River and watershed to the thriving freshwater network we enjoy today.

As we approach CRC's 75th anniversary in 2027, please join me in imagining a brighter future for the 400+ watershed communities we call our neighbors, and rolling up our sleeves for the hard work it takes to implement meaningful change for the better. We need a healthy watershed, and we need each other. Thank you for joining us in these important efforts.

Rebecca Todd



The Connecticut River in Gill, MA. Aerial support provided by LightHawk.

MISSION & PEOPLE

CLEAN WATER. HEALTHY HABITATS. RESILIENT COMMUNITIES.

The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) has been a steward of the Connecticut River and tributary streams since 1952 when the organization formed (as the Connecticut River Watershed Council) to address severe pollution. While every year since then brings new environmental challenges or updates to our programs, we continue to stay true to our mission: to restore and advocate for clean water, healthy habitats, and resilient communities in support of a diverse and thriving watershed. Below are some of the people behind the mission and a few of our favorite places. You can find more information about our programs, latest news, and upcoming events at ctriver.org.



CRC staff in Greenfield, MA, in front of our historic headquarters building on Bank Row.



Partial group of CRC's Board of Trustees at the 2025 Annual Meeting.



Programs and Advocacy staff in Norwich, VT.



First Connecticut Lake from Mt. Prospect Trail, Pittsburg, NH



Connecticut River in Hartford, CT.

20 RESTORATION PROJECTS COMPLETED BY CONNECTICUT RIVER CONSERVANCY & PARTNERS

2  Dams Removed **2**  Biostabilizations **4**  Miles of Habitat Restored **450**  Feet of Eroding Bank Restored **7,722**  Native Trees & Shrubs Planted

River restoration projects deliver tangible ecological, community, climate resilience, and economic benefits to the Connecticut River watershed. They include a mix of strategies based on the habitat and project goals, and—coupled with other factors such as funding, partnerships, and landowner collaboration—differ from year to year. During the 2025 field season, CRC and partners completed 20 restoration projects in 15 towns in NH, VT, and MA.

Each project reconnects stretches of habitat once cut off from native and migratory fish, revitalizes water quality, and strengthens the stability and resilience of riverside communities. Paired with ongoing advocacy, scientific monitoring, and local stewardship, these efforts contribute to greater watershed health. Funding for the projects came from federal and state agencies, foundations, and CRC donors, and were implemented with the support of dedicated project partners. Completed restoration projects:

- **2 dam removals** in Dover and Springfield (VT), opening 4 miles of stream habitat for aquatic organism passage
- **2 biostabilization projects** in Orford and Acworth (NH), restoring 450 linear feet of eroding banks
- **4 strategic wood additions** on 13 streams in Vershire and Strafford (VT)
- **12 riparian buffer plantings** with 7,722 trees planted over 16.3 acres in NH, VT, and MA



Map of CRC's 2025 dam removal, biostabilization, & buffer planting projects.



Left to right: Jacob's Brook biostabilization project in Orford, NH; Hickory Ridge tree planting volunteers in Amherst, MA; Jack's Brook dam removal partners in Dover, VT.

RIVER RESTORATION

2 DAMS REMOVED IN VERMONT

There are over 3,000 dams in the Connecticut River watershed, many of which are obsolete. Not only are these obstructions no longer serving their intended purpose or being maintained, but they also block fish passage, disrupt habitat connectivity for wildlife, and reduce downstream water quality.

Two Vermont dam removals in 2025—on Jack’s Brook in Dover and Mile Brook (Valley Street Dam) in Springfield—advanced regional efforts to restore natural stream function, improve habitat, and reduce flood risks across the Connecticut River watershed.

In Dover, CRC partnered with the private dam owner and Trout Unlimited, with funding from The Nature Conservancy of Vermont and the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department’s Watershed Grant, to remove a 6-foot-high, 25-foot-wide 1913 concrete dam on Jack’s Brook. The dam was once used as a household water source but became filled with sediment long ago and was no longer functional. Its removal restored natural sediment flow, improved water quality, expanded cold-water habitat for brook trout, reduced stream temperatures, strengthened flood resiliency, and eliminated risks associated with deteriorating infrastructure. We were also proud to recognize the Trout Unlimited Northeast Coldwater Habitat Restoration Program as our Restoration Partner of the Year in recognition of their excellent partnership in the Jack’s Brook dam removal project.



Jack’s Brook dam before and after removal.



CRC and Trout Unlimited with Restoration Partner of the Year award.

In Springfield, CRC and the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission worked with the Town of Springfield and the State of Vermont to remove the 14-foot-high, 33-foot-wide Valley Street Dam on Mile Brook after eight years of planning, grant writing, design, and permitting. Built in 1938 to create a swimming area and closed since 1953 due to contamination, the obsolete structure had been degrading for decades and trapping sediment. Its removal in September 2025 improved fish passage, water quality, and flood safety. Funding came from the State of Vermont’s Ecosystem Restoration Program, a WUV-administered Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s National Fish Passage Program, with local contractors contributing engineering, preservation, and construction expertise.

Together, these projects reconnect fragmented habitats, restore healthier stream dynamics, and enhance community safety while addressing long-neglected infrastructure. More dam removal projects are in the works for 2026.



Valley Street dam before and after removal.

4 STRATEGIC WOOD ADDITIONS

CRC works with Redstart Inc. and landowners in the greater Upper Valley area (VT/NH) to create habitat and improve water quality in small headwater streams. Felled trees are secured in place at specific intervals and groupings based on state and federal guidelines. Previous projects have resulted in a three-fold increase in brook trout populations! In 2025, CRC and Redstart implemented four strategic wood addition projects in 13 streams, affecting 6.2 miles of habitat in Vershire and Strafford, VT. We even know exactly how many wood pieces were used this year: 1,311!

For more information visit ctriver.org/dam-removal and ctriver.org/restoration.

RIVER RESTORATION

RIPARIAN BUFFER PLANTINGS

Buffer plantings involve planting native trees and shrubs to create a vegetation zone between developed land and waterways, thereby helping to control erosion and slow the flow of water during flood events. In 2025, CRC and partners continued to restore floodplain forests and forested riparian buffers by planting 7,722 native trees and shrubs on 16.3 acres in 11 towns in VT, NH, and MA. Towns in Vermont that included buffer plantings were Westminster, Plymouth, Bridgewater, Woodstock, Norwich, and Newbury. Towns in New Hampshire included Acworth, Orford, and North Stratford. Towns in Massachusetts included Holyoke and Amherst.

These projects raised CRC's total number of trees and shrubs planted since 2011 to 104,908. To mark this important milestone, we planted the 100,000th tree at the former site of the Blake & Higgins Dam in Westminster, Vermont (CRC and partners removed the dam in 2024). This tree is dedicated to CRC's Trustee and former Board Chair, Bob Sproull, in recognition of his extraordinary service to the organization.

BIOSTABILIZATION

Biostabilization projects help stabilize eroding riverbanks caused by flooding or improper land use. Unlike riprap or other "hard protections," which can worsen erosion downstream, biostabilization relies on natural materials to strengthen the riverbank and slow the flow of water, reducing the ability of floodwaters to cause erosion. A common approach involves placing rootwads—the root mass and lower trunk of a tree—into the streambank, covering them with soil, and planting native vegetation on top. The rootwads immediately reinforce the bank, while the growing vegetation provides increasing stability over time. In addition to reducing erosion, these projects help decrease nitrogen and sediment loading in waterways, improve riparian and in-stream habitat, and create shade and cover for fish and other aquatic species.

CRC led two biostabilization projects in 2025, both in NH. On the Cold River in Acworth, flooding and severe erosion put a Revolutionary war era gravesite at risk of falling into the river due to undercutting of the bank, along with other erosion impacts to water quality, sediment transport, and loss of vegetation. We added rootwad structures to improve in-stream habitat for native brook trout, regraded the eroding bank, installed stone toe to stop erosion, added a stone wall to protect the gravesites, and planted a 35' riparian buffer for long-term resiliency.

In Orford, the Jacobs Brook restoration project focused on stabilizing severely eroding streambanks by installing 22 large rootwads, terracing the riverbank, and planting a 50' buffer of native trees and shrubs. The result will slow floodwaters, reduce future erosion, and improve cold-water habitat, addressing damage that had worsened in recent years due to major flooding in 2017. This restoration will also help to preserve historic farmland in the Connecticut River Valley.



Top: CRC's 100,000th tree planted in Westminster, VT. Bottom: seedlings ready to be planted in Amherst, MA.



Root wads & erosion repair in Orford, NH (before the buffer planting).

For more information visit ctriver.org/restoration and ctriver.org/news/categories/restoration.



CRC's "Champion Tree" in Colebrook, NH, a silver maple planted in 2019 (top), monitored in 2024 (center), and monitored again in 2025 (bottom). Growing strong!

MONITORING GROWTH AND SURVIVAL OF TREE PLANTING PROJECTS IN THE WATERSHED

In 2025, we also expanded our quantitative monitoring to 24 sites, including 9 new sites, planted during 2017-2024. Both growth and survival were good or better at 13 sites. However, we did observe high mortality due to voles and bindweed at 2 sites, and due to drought at another 1.5 sites.

Based on the 2024 monitoring, we replanted two sites in the fall and removed bindweed at a third site over the summer. We plan to conduct additional monitoring and maintenance in 2026. We also continued to explore alternative strategies for improving the success of our floodplain restoration work, including the addition of forest soils to our plantings and the response of planted trees to the invasive Japanese knotweed.

It is exciting to visit the same trees year after year to observe how they are faring. The "Champion Tree" pictured left is a silver maple planted in the Connecticut River Drivers Wildlife Management Area in Colebrook, NH. It was only 47" tall when planted in the fall of 2019, and has since grown to 24' tall (288") when remeasured last summer. That's a growth rate of almost 4 feet per year!

RIVER RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS

CRC's work would not be possible without the help of many federal, state and local agencies, local businesses and landowners, and other non-profit organizations who help make these projects a success.

In 2025, we partnered with Intervale Conservation Nursery, Mt. Ascutney Regional Commission, New England Wetland Plants, Northwoods Stewardship Center, The Orianne Society, Passumpsic Valley Land Trust, Redstart Inc., the Town of Amherst, Trout Unlimited, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as private landowners, local businesses, engineering firms, and project contractors.

In addition, CRC's funders include our generous donors, John T. and Jane A. Wiederhold Foundation, a supporting organization of Northwest CT Community Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, PUR, The Davis Conservation Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/National Fish Passage Program, U.S. Forest Service, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and Watersheds United Vermont.

To all those who supported these restoration projects in any way, THANK YOU!



Dam in Bellows Falls, VT.

CONTINUING ADVOCACY IN HYDRO RELICENSING

Throughout 2025, CRC's River Stewards continued to advocate for the Connecticut River as part of the hydropower relicensing process for 5 hydroelectric facilities in NH, VT, and MA. The new licenses will last for the next 30-50 years, which is why this sustained effort is critical to securing the best possible outcome for our rivers, wildlife, and communities. In May of 2025—along with partners American Rivers, American Whitewater, Conservation Law Foundation, and Vermont Natural Resources Council—we filed appeals of the Clean Water Act §401 Water Quality Certifications issued by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC), and New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). As of this update in early 2026, each state is proceeding through their own process.

We have a trial date set for Vermont in late summer and are working through a process to come to some agreement or narrow the issues that would go to trial in MA. The appeal process in NH will not begin for at least six months due to a backlog in that docket.

As part of CRC's new Strategic Plan through 2030, we are developing our advocacy efforts to include strategic litigation, presenting our case in the courthouse when necessary to demand accountability and defend the river with the full force of the law. We are investing in legal expertise, building coalitions with environmental partners, and ensuring that every case we take on is rooted in the well-being of the watershed.

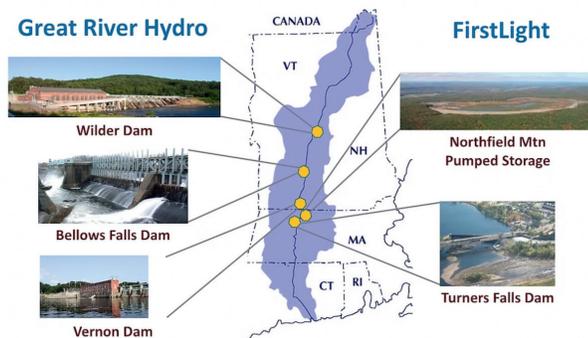
CONNECTICUT RIVER LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

In order to fund expenses for the appeals—including expert witness, attorney, and court filing fees—CRC has launched the Connecticut River Legal Advocacy Fund. Anticipated costs are 333K per year through 2028. We invite you to stand with the Connecticut River in the courtroom by supporting this fund. Scan the QR code or visit ctriver.org/advocacy-fund to give.



SUCCESSES TO DATE

- Negotiated with partners for change in operations for upper river projects.
- Barrier net required for Northfield Mountain intake.
- Comprehensive Recreation Plan for MA projects.
- Positive eDNA identification of Shortnose sturgeon in the river north of Turners Falls dam.
- Federal acknowledgement of hydropower impacts on riverbank erosion.
- Public engagement with hundreds of thoughtful comments and CRC as a leading voice throughout the 13+ years hydropower relicensing process, including encouraging towns, legislators, citizens, and organizations to write to FERC.
- 3 legal appeals filed challenging the Water Quality Certifications issued by MassDEP, VTDEC, and NHDES.



5 hydropower facilities in the process of relicensing.

Visit ctriver.org/hydropower to learn more, read the latest updates on relicensing, and get involved.

The Connecticut River Conservancy's River Stewards advocate for a cleaner, healthier Connecticut River through permitting, comments on legislation, environmental events, community outreach, and much more. Here are some advocacy highlights from 2025:

RESTORATION PROJECTS AND RIVER ADVOCACY IN NH

💧 We welcomed Marilla Harris-Vincent as our new River Steward for NH in January. Testimony was submitted on over twelve bills during the legislative session including issues related to landfill rules and limits, cyanobacteria, and water pollution. NH staff successfully advocated for the unfreezing of \$11.5 million in funding to support restoration projects in the state.

We supported a bi-state effort to educate staff from the Senate Agriculture Appropriations committee through a field trip of restoration projects in NH funded through the Farm Bill. We continue to advocate on a variety of issues related to hydroelectric facilities including filing an appeal of the Water Quality Certification issued for the Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon dams. We supported community engagement at public events and through dedicated meetings with community members concerned about the river and our waterways.

CSO'S AND GREYWATER REUSE IN MA

💧 CRC completed reports on Holyoke and Springfield's Long Term Control Plans for Combined Sewer Overflows. Both cities are on track, making big changes to help solve the CSO issue affecting the Connecticut River.

We also continued efforts to legalize greywater reuse in MA, including leading a working group to craft new legislation. Greywater is gently used water from sources like lavatory sinks, showers, and laundry machines. These sources of water can be treated and reused on-site for irrigation (and other uses depending on the type of filtration). Reusing greywater lowers the input of water needed to a home and decreases the water going into the municipal sewer system, which can ultimately lower the occurrences of CSO's.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND CAPACITY IN VT

💧 In Vermont we continue to support policies that increase community resilience to climate change, such as legislation for a voluntary chloride reduction program. We organized community members to engage in public comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon dams while filing an appeal of the VT issued Water Quality Certification for those same projects. We did outreach to communities at events, including the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Farmer's Markets, and outdoor festivals. We collaborated with VT advocacy partners on a response to the Governor's Executive Order eliminating some protections for wetlands. We supported the kick-off of CRC's Connecticut River Legal Advocacy Fund to enable strategic litigation for our advocacy efforts. We also hosted two public paddles to educate community members about three Outstanding Resource Waters petitions we're submitting to the state.

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CT

💧 CRC provided testimony for twelve legislative bills related to environmental health and water quality in Connecticut. These include state water planning processes, neonicotinoids, nature-based solutions, environmental standards for hydropower, single-use plastics, and the study of riparian areas among other issues. As part of a collaborative process with nonprofit partners, we also embarked on watershed-based planning for the Scantic River watershed, including studying the river's sources of pollution and making recommendations to improve its health. We also launched a new educational boat trip program for youth groups and students in environmental justice communities such as East Hartford and Middletown, aiming to foster environmental awareness and stewardship.

For more information visit ctriver.org/advocacy and ctriver.org/news/categories/advocacy.

SEA LAMPREY NEST SURVEYS AND CANAL RESCUE

6 Nest Surveys	5 Tributaries	84 Volunteer + Staff participants	1,700 Fish Rescued from Drained Canal
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CRC’s work with sea lamprey, a woefully misunderstood migratory fish in the Connecticut River watershed, continued in 2025. Staff and community volunteers conducted six **sea lamprey nest surveys** in five different tributaries including Roaring Brook in CT, the Green and Sawmill Rivers in MA, and the Sugar and Ashuelot Rivers in NH. Documenting nests entails walking in rivers and streams in search of nests, also referred to as redds. Polarizing sunglasses and careful attention to riverbed structures help participants find the nests in average depths of 1-5 feet.

Using their suction-like mouths, lampreys move surrounding rocks and pebbles together in a round/oval formation to form an "egg pit" and "tailspill" of the nest where spawning and egg incubation respectively occur. Nest count data is utilized to understand which habitat is being used by sea lamprey, and to monitor long term trends in nest abundance. Due to the somewhat delayed (climate-related) movement of migratory fish in the spring, some of the volunteers saw sea lamprey in the process of building their nests during these surveys, which is always a treat to witness! Early analysis indicates that more nests were found in southern tributaries and fewer in the northern tributaries compared to previous years.



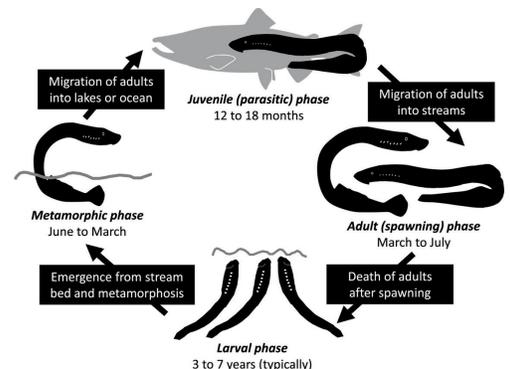
Volunteers and staff from the Connecticut River Conservancy, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and FirstLight Power at the sea lamprey rescue in Turners Falls, MA.

In September, CRC coordinated with FirstLight Power, USFWS and the USGS “Conte Lab” to host the annual **sea lamprey rescue** during the maintenance drawdown of the power canal. This year, 41 participants assisted with collecting and sorting approximately 1,700 stranded fish.

Staff from the Conte lab facilitated the release of the fish in the mainstem after the event concluded. Proportionally, spottail shiner and sea lamprey were the most common species collected, followed by bullhead, bluegill, and juvenile shad. Tessellated darter, pickerel, pumpkinseed, perch, bass, American eel, and channel catfish were also rescued in relatively low numbers.



Dr. Kate Buckman (top left), Aquatic Ecologist, leading nest surveys in 2025. Bottom photo shows a closeup of a sea lamprey nest/redd!



Sea lamprey life cycle. Source: Sciencedirect.com.

For more information visit ctriver.org/migratory-fish and migratoryfish.org.

MIGRATORY FISH

1,000 ANGLER SURVEYS COMPLETED FOR MIGRATORY FISH RESEARCH ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

Understanding the dynamics of how many fish, what species, and the timing of when migratory fish are showing up at different locations within the watershed helps resource agencies make better-informed decisions when considering regulatory changes to help meet population recovery goals. Not all factors affecting migratory fish populations are within our control, but some are, and good data on what's happening currently and over longer timescales helps further restoration efforts.

CRC Angler Survey Technicians contributed to this effort in 2025 by conducting 1,000 interviews of local fisherfolk. Between April and June, four technicians were deployed to locations in the Holyoke/Chicopee (MA) and Windsor/Enfield (CT) areas asking anglers about what, why, and how they're fishing. Angler surveys are an important tool to understand recreational fishing pressures by allowing for estimates of catch and harvest rates, fishing effort, and angler preferences for specific fish species to be calculated. These data can help evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory and management strategies and provide insight into fish population trends. Angler surveys also help illuminate the contribution of recreational fishing efforts to local and regional economies, as well as to understanding whether public use needs and preferences are being met.

The collected data is shared with members of the Connecticut River Migratory Fish Restoration Cooperative who analyze the data gathered over multiple years to get a more comprehensive picture of what people are fishing for, who is using the river, and how it is being used.

The surveys are anonymous by design, but since CRC's Angler Survey Techs visit the same spots over the course of weeks, they often meet folks who are out fishing regularly and form a connection around a shared interest in fish and fishing. Forming a rapport with community members as the Techs visit with anglers also helps build trust in how this work will ultimately support healthy rivers and benefit both fish and fisherfolk, leading to better understanding and participation. Fostering connections and generating the knowledge needed to safeguard our rivers are at the heart of what long-term collaborative science is meant to achieve.



Angler Survey Technicians with the Connecticut River Conservancy in 2025. From top left to bottom right: Corina, Noah, Mac, and Luis.



Shortnose sturgeon photo by James Garner.

CRC is continuing to focus on the endangered shortnose sturgeon following the 2024 publication of environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis confirming the presence of shortnose sturgeon in the Connecticut River between Turners Falls, MA, and Bellows Falls, VT. Engagement throughout 2025 entailed assisting partners with habitat mapping and pursuing funding for our eDNA research. These efforts will advance and provide additional insight into the presence of these ancient fish in our rivers.

For more information visit ctriver.org/migratory-fish and migratoryfish.org.

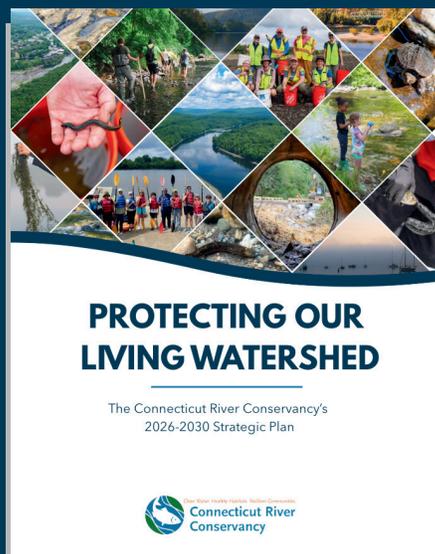
NO SIMPLE SWIM: TRACKING AMERICAN EEL, RIVER HERRING, AMERICAN SHAD, AND SEA LAMPREY MIGRATION IN 2025



Left to right: American eel (silver phase), river herring (top: alewife, bottom: blueback herring), and sea lamprey photos by Jill DeVito.

Thanks to a grant from the Connecticut River Migratory Fish Restoration Cooperative, CRC has been able to expand educational content related to migratory fish—including a series of articles by guest writer and environmental educator, Jill DeVito. Three new articles available online follow 2025's migration journey for some of the Connecticut River's most renowned fish species.

The articles include fish population data, life cycles, photos, graphics, and a video created by CRC's Alix Kaplan documenting river herring research by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. You can find it all at ctriver.org/news/categories/migratory-fish.



A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN TO PROTECT OUR LIVING WATERSHED THROUGH 2030

CRC is thrilled to announce the launch of a new strategic plan, *Protecting our Living Watershed*, which will guide the organization's work from 2026 through 2030. The plan sets a clear and ambitious course to address the challenges facing the Connecticut River and its tributaries, supporting a healthier, more resilient watershed for generations to come.

The plan outlines four primary goals:

- Promote a shared agenda for protecting and restoring the watershed
- Improve ecological health of riparian and aquatic habitats
- Deliver CRC's full mix of strategies across the entire watershed
- Build a strong foundation for growth

Key initiatives include launching a State of the Watershed report, pursuing strategic litigation to strengthen protections, and celebrating CRC's 75-year legacy of river stewardship. Equally importantly, CRC will focus on those areas of our mission where we can have the biggest impact, and allocate existing and necessary new resources intentionally. Through *Protecting Our Living Watershed*, our efforts will foster a swimmable, boatable, and fishable Connecticut River, and sustain a healthy watershed for future generations. Please explore the full strategic plan at ctriver.org/strategic-plan.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Volunteers in NH, VT, MA, and CT collect water samples from the Connecticut River and its tributaries every year in spring and summer. The samples are tested for E. coli bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorus, chloride, turbidity, specific conductance, and/or cyanobacteria.

Anyone collecting E. coli data in the watershed is able to upload and share their results through the “Is It Clean” website at isitclean.us. The data is used to inform CRC’s restoration and advocacy work. It also provides insights about water quality in the Connecticut River watershed for the public, policymakers, or state and federal agencies such as the EPA. Below are monitoring metrics from 2025.

 **190**
Unique sites tested

 **975**
E. coli tests

 **47**
Chloride monitoring sites

 **13**
Cyanobacteria monitoring sites

 **8**
Watershed partners

 **180**
Water quality volunteers



Sample collection in the Connecticut River.



Samples at CRC’s water quality monitoring lab.

WATER QUALITY LAB & PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to CRC’s own monitoring initiatives at our water quality lab in Greenfield, MA, our staff assists with coordination, provides technical support, and/or helps fund the monitoring programs for:

- Deerfield River Watershed Association
- Fort River Watershed Association
- Chicopee 4 Rivers Watershed Council
- Millers River Watershed Council
- Scantic River Watershed Association
- Black River Action Team
- Ottauquechee NRCD
- Connecticut River Joint Commissions

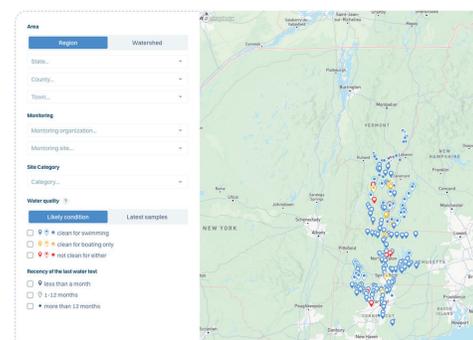
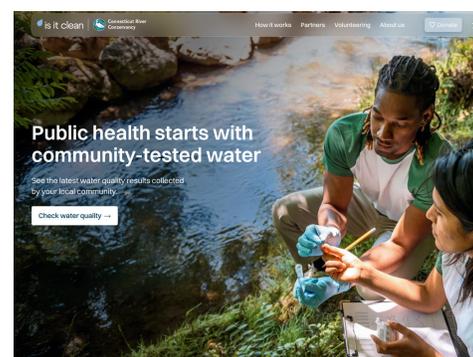
NEW WEBSITE FOR WATER QUALITY DATA

Is it clean? It will now be easier than ever to determine whether the waterbody near you is clean for swimming, boating, or recreation. 13 years after CRC first launched the Is It Clean database to share E. coli bacteria results from water samples collected throughout the Connecticut River watershed, the website has been updated with a modern new look, dynamic user experience, mobile-friendliness, and predictive features to show the likelihood of water quality conditions.

You can see it live at isitclean.us. Samples from over 250 locations throughout NH, VT, MA, and CT are collected by volunteers and partner organizations between May and October annually, most of which are processed at CRC’s water quality lab in Greenfield, MA. The results are then uploaded to the Is It Clean website to inform recreation activities for the public, as well as equipping state and federal agencies and policymakers with water quality data in their jurisdiction.

Users can search by region, watershed, or waterbody with the website instantly showing the likely water quality conditions based on past sample results and recent weather at each location—along with specific sampling dates and results.

For more information visit ctriver.org/water-quality-monitoring and isitclean.us.



Website example above. See it live on isitclean.us. New data added during the sampling season of May through October.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the Connecticut River watershed can cause significant harm to local plants, animals, and ecosystems. Their aggressive growth and spread can lower biodiversity by reducing the availability of natural resources for beneficial native species and negatively impacting recreational opportunities in rivers, lakes, and ponds. CRC's Aquatic Invasive Species program continued to focus on water chestnut in MA and CT in 2025, and began to expand northward to support efforts of AIS management and prevention in NH & VT.

WATER CHESTNUT

CRC organizes dozens of annual community science events with volunteers in the spring & summer. Sign up at ctriver.org/email for updates and to join us in 2026!

2025's water chestnut removal impact:

603K

Water chestnut plants removed from the watershed

213

Volunteers participated in removal events

1,815

Person hours contributed to this collaborative work

36

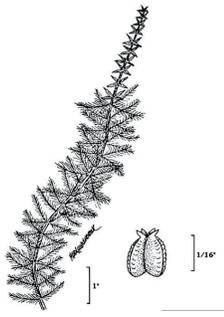
Separate events to remove water chestnut plants



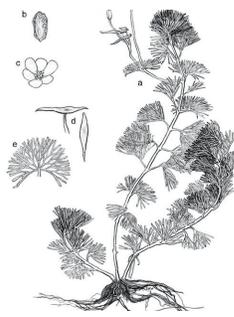
Water chestnut removal volunteers and CRC staff at manual plant-pulls in 2025.



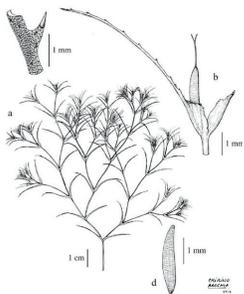
Eurasian watermilfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum



Variable leaf milfoil
Myriophyllum heterophyllum



Fanwort
Cabomba caroliniana



Brittle naiad
Najas minor



Curly leaf pondweed
Potamogeton crispus



Water chestnut
Trapa natans



Hydrilla
Hydrilla verticillata

THE UNLUCKY 7

There are over 40 plant and animal aquatic invasive species threatening the health of the Connecticut River watershed. CRC's AIS program prioritizes the 7 plant species which are the most widely spread and problematic plants you are likely to encounter.

We collaborate with local and state agencies to develop and support management plans, raise awareness with the public, and implement prevention strategies. We encourage you to help reduce the spread of these plants by following the **CLEAN DRAIN DRY** method: clean, drain, and fully dry your boat, kayak, or canoe after use to lower the chances of any "hitchhikers" especially in between recreating at different waterbodies.

Aquatic Invasive Species plant image sources: commons.wikimedia.org, Research Gate, Alikei Fornier.

For more information visit ctriver.org/aquatic-invasive-species.

RECREATION & PADDLING WITH A PURPOSE



Photos correspond to descriptions on the right.

9 BEGINNER AND INTERMEDIATE PADDLING EVENTS IN VT, MA, & CT

In 2025, CRC organized a new series of beginner and intermediate paddles throughout the summer months. Most events aimed to help participants develop technical paddling skills in tandem with safety and risk awareness for on-water activities. All events were community-centered and free of charge as part of our commitment to making river recreation more accessible and inclusive for all watershed communities. Lessons were followed by a guided paddle along the Connecticut River, its coves, or tributaries. Approximately 158 participants joined these events, with 42% of those borrowing kayaks, and 9 partner organizations and outfitters contributing to making the paddles a success, including: Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Metacomet Canoe & Kayak, Pioneer Valley Riverfront Club, Andy's Kayak Rental, Holyoke Rows, Adventure East, Vermont Windham Regional Conservation Commission, Nolumbeka Project, No Loose Braids, and All Out Adventures.

EDUCATIONAL BOAT TRIPS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE CONNECT TO NATURE

A new educational boat trip program was also launched for youth groups and students in Connecticut, supported by a grant from the Neag Foundation. The initiative focuses on children from environmental justice communities such as East Hartford and Middletown, aiming to foster environmental awareness and stewardship. CRC's staff collaborated with five organizations—including Compass Youth Collaborative, Middletown Public Schools, and Manchester Youth Services Bureau—with trips captained by Bill Keyt of Slipaway River Tours. Departing from Connecticut River Academy and Wethersfield Cove, the trips featured wildlife observation, River Bingo, reflection journals, Enviroscape presentations, and lessons on pollution and invasive species. A trip with Steam Train Inc. also included a fishing activity led by National Park Service members, enriching the experience for both youth and staff.

COLLABORATIVE RIVER ACCESS PROJECTS IMPROVE COMMUNITY RECREATION

After years of partnership, planning, and implementation, 2025 saw the completion of two river access projects that will enhance community enjoyment of the Connecticut River for years to come. In East Hartford, CT, a new primitive campsite was built by the Appalachian Mountain Club and Connecticut River Conservancy, filling a 28-mile gap in the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail much beloved by river enthusiasts and source to sea paddlers. And in Holyoke, MA, CRC partnered with Holyoke Rows to finalize infrastructure improvements and program expansions at the Jones Ferry River Access Facility. The project included a redesign and installation of a multi-use dock system, new channel and no-wake markers, and installation of new safety signage and an ADA-accessible river viewing platform. Spring 2026 will be the first season with these new amenities in place as part of a wonderful hub for recreation and environmental engagement.

For more information visit ctriver.org/news and connecticutriverpaddlerstrail.org.

THE SOURCE TO SEA CLEANUP & OTHER EVENTS

In addition to paddling activities, CRC organizes many other types of events (both in-person and virtual) throughout the year, and supports even more events through collaborative partnerships. Upcoming events can be found at ctriver.org/events. We hope to see you there!

29th ANNUAL SOURCE TO SEA CLEANUP

CRC's largest annual event is the Source to Sea Cleanup, a trash removal initiative along the Connecticut River and tributaries. Group leaders and volunteers come out each fall to clean up rivers, trails, parks, and communities, and collect trash big and small to stop pollution before it washes downstream and into the ocean. Trash data is gathered to help inform our advocacy work, as well as updating the public about the trash problem in our region. In 2025, over 2,000 volunteers throughout NH, VT, MA, and CT participated over numerous weekends.

2025 highlights:



Mark your calendar for the 30th anniversary of the cleanup, **Sept 18-19, 2026!**



CRC also organized and supported many other in-person and virtual events, bringing the people to the river and the river to the people! Here are some more event metrics from 2025:



Events Sampler: Angling & Donuts, Community Paddles, LiveStreams & Hydropower Office Hours, Riverside Celebration/Annual Meeting, River Rights and Revelry, Earth Day events, River Friends Mixers, Wild & Scenic Film Festival, and more.

For more information and to see upcoming events, visit ctriver.org/events.

MEMBERSHIP & FINANCIALS

Across the towns, farms, forests, and cities that make up the Connecticut River watershed, it is our rivers that bring landscapes to life. CRC works on behalf of everyone who relies on these waters—those who explore them, protect them, and simply feel connected with them.

Your commitment makes real progress possible, ensuring that our rivers are better prepared for the challenges ahead and will continue to thrive for future generations. Thank you!



“My wife, Barb, and I have lived on the Connecticut River for 20 years, and our connection to it inspired us to launch *estuary* magazine, a quarterly publication for people who care about the river’s history, health, and ecology.”

The Watershed Fund, owner of *estuary*, is proud to collaborate with the Connecticut River Conservancy. CRC’s work protecting water quality, restoring habitats, and advocating for the long-term health of the entire watershed is both vast in scope and vitally impactful. Because the river is so essential to our communities, wildlife, and way of life, we are extremely pleased to support the CRC.”

-Dick, Old Lyme, CT

The Connecticut River Conservancy received \$2,382,890 in grants in 2025. Of those, the funds were distributed as follows:

- 60%** Dam Removal and Habitat Restoration
- 15%** Community Science, Aquatic Invasive Species, & Water Quality Monitoring
- 14%** Recreation, Planning, and Other
- 11%** Advocacy, Education, & Outreach

Members Excluding sponsors + in-kind	1,131
Annual Fund	\$798,651
Gifts to Endowment	\$91,566
Average donation	\$405
New first-time donors	461
Sustaining donors	63
States with CRC members Within and beyond the Connecticut River watershed	28
Sponsorships For the Source to Sea Cleanup & other events	\$92,393
Organization Gifts from businesses, churches, civic groups, & others	\$123,684
Businesses Providing in-kind + financial support	162
Legal Advocacy Fund	\$107,876
Matching Gifts	\$88,808
Grants Local, state, and federal	\$2,382,890

“I love being part of the CRC community. Growing up in New England, I’ve always embraced every season recreating along the river - from source to sea.”



One of my earliest memories is splashing in the shallow waters with my mother. As I’ve grown older, I’ve come to truly appreciate how critical organizations (like CRC) are to the work of protecting and restoring our waterways.”

-Victoria, South Hadley, MA

HOW TO SUPPORT CLEANER, HEALTHIER RIVERS



Oxbow north of Bradford, VT. Photo by Bob Farnham.

The Connecticut River and tributaries are a public trust, which means these waterways belong to all of us. We enjoy cleaner, more swimmable and boatable waters today than in decades past because of the efforts of countless advocates, ecologists, and volunteers who played a role in implementing change for the better. Now it's up to us, and there is much more work to do. Renewed financial support and vigilance are vital to continue preserving healthy habitats for the next generation and beyond.

Learn more about the watershed



Visit our website at ctriver.org to find information about our programs, and details about how we're addressing threats to your rivers.

Volunteer or join a river-friendly event



Volunteer for community science or join a Source to Sea Cleanup at ctriver.org/get-involved. We organize events and activities year-round that are both on the water and on land, in-person and virtual.

Report a problem on the river



We work to address pollution and many other issues. Get in touch with our River Stewards at ctriver.org/advocacy to let us know what you see.

Stay informed with river news



Sign up for CRC's e-news at ctriver.org/email to get the latest updates, events, volunteer opportunities, and state-specific action alerts.

INVEST IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED

The Connecticut River Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our work is made possible thanks to generous donors like you! As we navigate changes in state and federal funding, we are grateful for the support of individuals who care about the sustained stewardship of the Connecticut River watershed and the vibrant ecosystems it supports.



Connecticut River Conservancy staff in September, 2025.



BE PART OF THE SOLUTION FOR CLEANER RIVERS. VISIT CTRIVER.ORG.

If you'd like to support our work on the Connecticut River, please consider making a contribution.

To donate, please return the enclosed envelope with your gift, or support us online at ctriver.org/donate.

You can also contact Susan Heitker, Chief Development Officer, at sheitker@ctriver.org or 413-490-9197 to get in touch or become a sponsor.

Connecticut River Conservancy
15 Bank Row, Greenfield, MA 01301
413-772-2020
CRC@ctriver.org
ctriver.org

River Updates: ctriver.org/news
Events: ctriver.org/events
E-newsletters: ctriver.org/email



Connecticut River Conservancy
15 Bank Row, Greenfield, MA 01301



Community science volunteers at 2025's sea lamprey nest survey and rescue (described in more detail on page 11).

VOLUNTEER FOR COMMUNITY SCIENCE THIS FIELD SEASON

CRC engages volunteers with unique community science events throughout the Connecticut River watershed in spring and summer.

Volunteers can help remove water chestnut (an aquatic invasive species) to restore clean water and healthy habitats; conduct sea lamprey nest surveys; or collect samples from the river to provide vital water quality monitoring data.

These activities directly support CRC's work through people power or research. They also serve as an opportunity to learn about our local ecosystems and connect with fellow nature enthusiasts near you.

To learn more and sign up, visit ctriver.org/get-involved, and sign up for the volunteer newsletter at ctriver.org/email. Additional events are added throughout the year at ctriver.org/events.



Clean Water. Healthy Habitats. Resilient Communities.

**Connecticut River
Conservancy**