

Vermont Yankee Thermal Pollution Campaign Fact Sheet



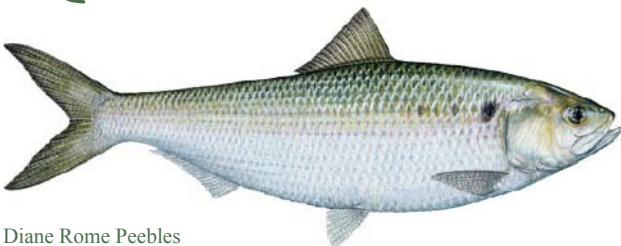
In March 2006, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources granted Entergy, the owners of Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, a variance to their discharge permit. The variance allows for the release of overheated water that would result in raising the river's temperatures by 1° between June 16th and October 14th, on top of an earlier increase of up to 5°.

By discharging the overheated water at rates of up to 543 million gallons a day into the Connecticut River, Entergy is able to bypass its cooling towers. The discharges, some as hot as 105°, create a thermal plume that has been shown to extend downstream at least fifty miles to Holyoke Dam in Massachusetts. Higher river temperatures degrade the ecosystem and hurt

migratory fish by inhibiting spawning and damaging the viability of eggs. They also adversely affect feeding behavior, increase vulnerability to predation, and the incidence of disease.

Cool and cold water fish like American shad and Atlantic salmon are particularly susceptible to temperature increases and are the subjects of restoration programs due to their significant declines. Entergy's own data show that the American shad population has declined by over 99% in Vernon Pool since the early 1990's. CRWC believes that allowing Entergy to continue to ratchet-up temperatures would be a serious misstep that could further impair the health of the Connecticut River and compromise restoration efforts.

Quick facts:



Diane Rome Peebles

- Higher temperatures hurt river systems and kill fish.
- Shad numbers near the Vermont Yankee plant have plummeted by 99% since the early 1990's.
- Vermont Yankee's thermal effluent can reach 105° and extend 50 miles to Holyoke, MA.
- There is a simple solution: Vermont Yankee could use its cooling towers to cool water before returning it to the Connecticut river.

Recent CRWC action

In April of 2006, the Watershed Council took our appeal of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' decision to allow warmer discharges to Vermont Environmental Court, an option of last resort for us. In August of 2006 the Vermont Environmental Court granted its first stay on the issue pending the appeal, stating, "Appellants have shown sufficient potential for irreparable injury to American shad in the Connecticut River, both at present as the juveniles become accustomed to cooler water temperatures prior to their migration down the River in the fall, and in the summer of 2007 for the growth of the next generation of juveniles."

Joining us in the appeal were Trout Unlimited and the Citizen's Awareness Network. CRWC's partner and chief counsel throughout the case have been the skilled staff of Vermont Law School's Environment and Natural Resources Law Center. We await the court's decision.

The shad run at the mouth of the Saxton's River on the Connecticut used to be a spring-time ritual that fishermen looked forward to all year long. Unfortunately, numbers of returning shad have now virtually dropped to zero there.

The spring shad run was once magnificent. Let's make sure our kids and grandkids get to experience the rituals and seasons of the Connecticut as part of their natural heritage. We need your help. Please join us in telling Entergy to stop overheating the Connecticut.



Next steps...

CRWC is committed to protecting the Connecticut River's natural heritage. The three primary goals of CRWC's Vermont Yankee Thermal Pollution Campaign are to require Entergy to: (1) evaluate the combined effects of climate change and a thermal discharge of 5° on native anadromous fish species' ability to successfully spawn in the upper river; (2) conduct a full assessment of impacts from thermal temperature increases; and (3) hold the committee that advises the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on temperature issues accountable to open meeting laws.

CRWC is preparing to take action once we receive the court's decision. If we win, Entergy will likely appeal the decision to the Vermont Supreme Court.

To defend a positive court decision to the Vermont Supreme Court: \$10,200.

Overtaking Vermont Yankee's underlying permit, which allows Entergy to increase the temperature of the Connecticut River up to 5°, is CRWC's long-term objective.

To challenge the underlying permit: \$86,880.

More Information:

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