Connecticut River above 2nd Lake.
One of our colleagues with the Green River Watershed Alliance has begun giving juggling lessons to the CRWC staff in our Greenfield, MA office. Recently I realized how apt a metaphor juggling is for our work: keeping our focus while managing multiple tasks, learning how to correct mistakes without losing momentum. What struck me most as we struggled to keep the brightly colored balls aloft, as we laughed and offered each other encouragement, was the power of working in partnership with others towards a common goal.

Connecticut River Watershed Council is based on the principal of people working together for a shared vision. We understand that the single most important force behind the River’s health is individuals like you and me, working collectively, to get results.

As you read this report, imagine all of us – members, staff, and board – working together to juggle the activities that help restore and preserve the Connecticut River watershed in crucial ways. And, while we’ve had some important victories, we aren’t about to rest on our laurels. We understand that responding to threats to the Connecticut River and opportunities to connect people to our natural world requires ongoing focus. We are already hard at work to ensure that our watershed will continue to thrive in 2007 and beyond.

In September, CRWC’s board of trustees adopted our strategic plan. Core program goals include increasing the number of pollution and development permits we review that will ensure we have a voice in all major actions that impact our watershed, creating a water quality monitoring program, and expanding CRWC membership events.

With your support, CRWC will continue to ensure that human use of the River is balanced with our care for it. In working together for a thriving, sustainable watershed we enrich our world today and we leave a positive legacy for future generations.

The Connecticut is our River; let’s care for it together. Thank you.

Chelsea Gwyther
Executive Director
...to its many voices from the roar of spring flood to the patter of fall rain and the silence of winter snow. But the river, and the needs of future generations, have no voice in government hearings or corporate boardrooms unless we speak up. And for more than a half century we’ve been doing just that.

This past year we have spoken out about ill-planned development projects and plans to sell “excess” water from the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts. We appealed a permit that allowed Vermont Yankee to further increase the temperature of the Connecticut River. We have also worked in favor of a plan to stop sewer overflows in Connecticut and hosted a statewide conference to discuss the allocation of Connecticut’s water resources (see page 3).
Advocacy

Keeping sewage out of our rivers

The Connecticut River won a huge victory on November 7, 2006 when 70% of the voters in Hartford’s Capital Region passed an $800 million bond referendum to upgrade its sewer systems, and thus stop one billion gallons of raw sewage from polluting the river annually for 30 miles downstream from Hartford.

CRWC headed up the education campaign for the referendum, and river steward Megan Hearne spent much of her time last year collaborating with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), their consultants, and the Citizen’s Advisory Committee to educate voters on the bond issue. Megan’s work included overseeing production of an educational video, public presentations, mailings, news coverage, networking with other groups, and mobilizing volunteers. We could not be more pleased with the results.

CRWC has a history of supporting combined sewer overflow abatement in the Hartford area – we helped pass the 1990 bond referendum for MDC to make repairs and upgrades to the sewer system. The MDC is now under a federal consent order to meet water quality standards in 15 years. One of the MDC’s major responsibilities will be to add de-nitrification capacity to the wastewater treatment plants, benefiting both the river and Long Island Sound. We will continue our involvement in the Clean Water Project as an advocate for river health and sustainable use of this natural resource.

Water law: balancing needs for fish and faucet

It’s hard to imagine that Connecticut has no plans for the use and allocation of its water resources statewide. CRWC is working to address the issue, and, in late 2005, we collaborated with the Yale Center for Coastal and Watershed Systems, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and the Natural Resources Council of Connecticut to host a statewide conference “Water Law in CT: Balancing Needs for Fish and Faucet.”

The conference drew a standing-room-only crowd of 175+ individuals from a wide variety of interests including water companies, policy makers, regulatory agencies, environmental advocates, and farmers. In Connecticut, water use is granted mostly on the basis of first come, first served, but, as former CRWC trustee Russ Brenneman, the conference’s unofficial ombudsman, said, “We look at the pie as if it’s ours to cut up; I’m also interested in the needs of future generations.”

Water experts agreed with Russ, and Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Gina McCarthy added, “Water is the number one issue in Connecticut. It drives everything.”

Furthermore, no one even knows how much water there is to allocate. State Representative Mary Mushinsky summed it up: “Everybody is writing checks on the account but nobody knows the balance.”

The wide-ranging conference made good progress tackling such questions as:

- Who owns the water in our rivers?
- Is water a property right or a commodity?
- What should Connecticut do now to ensure healthy waters for the future?

We’ll continue to work with our partners to advocate for a water allocation plan that balances current and future needs. That’s a plan we can all live with.
This year, CRWC concluded two separate five-year grants with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. These two important and wide-reaching grants allowed us to undertake eleven fisheries restoration projects. Nothing is more satisfying than watching the river recover its fisheries, as we saw last year in the successful breaching of the Pizzini Dam in Connecticut; brown trout at the base of the dam immediately moved upstream, as though they had been waiting decades for just such an event. It would be nice if every effort at restoration met with such success. Unfortunately, the restoration process is arduous, and we often have to wait years to see our efforts rewarded.

**Dam projects through the years and the watershed**

**Vermont (1, 2)**

Unfortunately the projects that were recruited in Vermont never made it all the way through the difficult process to full removal. At Lower Eaton Dam (1), on a tributary of the White River in S. Royalton, VT, the dam owners changed their minds after all of the studies were complete. The other disappointment was Island Corp Dam (2) on the Saxtons River in Westminster, VT where the owner became distracted and could not focus on the removal project until after the grant period expired.

**New Hampshire (3, 4)**

We met with greater success in New Hampshire where CRWC and the New Hampshire Dams Task Force have received the dam owner’s approval to remove the Homestead Woolen Mill Dam (3) on the Ashuelot River in Swanzey, NH. Once the dam is removed, approximately 27 miles of the Ashuelot River will be restored to free-flowing conditions. In addition, a rock ramp has been installed at the Johns River Dam (4) in Whitefield, NH that will allow resident and anadromous fish to migrate past the remains of a low-head dam in the river, restoring four miles of river.

**Massachusetts (5, 6, 7, 8, 9)**

CRWC and the University of Massachusetts have just completed a feasibility study that recommended the removal of the Hatfield Dam (5) on the Mill River in Hatfield, MA. A natural channel bypass in Montague, MA at Spaulding Dam (6) on the Sawmill River has stalled because permit requirements had caused the project’s cost to skyrocket and additional funding to complete the project has not been raised. On a brighter note, the DSI Eelway (7) in West Springfield, MA and the Mt. Holyoke College Eelway (8), on Stony Brook in South Hadley, MA have been completed. Construction on the Bronson Brook fish passage (9), which will re-establish fish passage through two perched culverts in Worthington, MA is also underway. Bronson Brook is a high quality coldwater tributary to the East Branch Westfield River, supporting habitat for Atlantic salmon and resident coldwater species such as Eastern brook trout and black nosed dace.

**Connecticut (10, 11)**

In Connecticut, CRWC and our partners removed Pizzini Dam (10) in 2005. Pizzini Dam was the last barrier on the
Eightmile River from the Connecticut River to Hopyard Falls. Its removal restored 3.5 miles of pristine stream habitat and allowed alewives, herring, Atlantic salmon and American eel to access their entire historic range on the Eightmile River. The planning and design phase for a fishway project at Roger’s Lake Dam on Mill Brook is also nearing completion. Sea run alewives are currently unable to proceed up Mill Brook beyond this dam. Downstream dams have working fishways and installation of the Roger’s Lake Dam fishway (11) will restore 7.5 miles of stream habitat in the historic migratory range of the anadromous alewife.
Jamison Colburn, pictured below with daughter Quinn at Forest Park in Springfield, MA, joined CRWC’s Board of Trustees this year “to be a part of an organization that makes environmental stewardship possible for regular people by connecting them to their environment.” A Professor of Law at Western New England College School of Law, Jamison is working with River Steward Andrea Donlon, his former student and CRWC extern Rob Costello, and other colleagues to develop a user-oriented citizen’s guide to the law of Clean Water Act permitting.
Outreach

Invasive Plants

Aquatic invasive plants have been documented in the Connecticut River and its tributaries in recent years. Early detection of aquatic invaders can lead to a more cost effective and successful strategy to manage their presence and control their spread. Once established, invasive plants can crowd out native vegetation, disrupt habitat for aquatic invertebrates and fish, degrade water quality, impede recreational use and spread to other areas.

Water Quality

This year CRWC has been working to identify water quality monitoring priorities, secure equipment, and build partnerships to launch a monitoring program in 2007. Thanks to a monitoring equipment loan grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), CRWC now has the tools to test dissolved oxygen, conductivity, salinity, and temperature in the Connecticut River in Gill, Northampton and Springfield, MA. Currently, Massachusetts only calls for water quality testing on the River once every five years. CRWC staff is excited to work proactively with others to ensure increased monitoring of Connecticut River water quality. As the program becomes established, we will increase sampling locations, volunteer involvement and monitoring parameters. We are also working in collaboration with the Deerfield River Watershed Association to secure funding to build a water quality testing laboratory at our headquarters located in Greenfield, MA.

River-wide Fish Tissue Contaminant Study

Partnering with the EPA and the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, CRWC hosted a public information forum to release the first river-long study of contaminants, such as mercury, PCBs, dioxins, and pesticides, in common Connecticut River fish. The study was undertaken by the EPA at the request of Connecticut River valley states and local advocacy groups, including CRWC. It assessed the risk to human health from eating Connecticut River fish and the threats eating these fish might pose to other mammals, birds and fish.

This year, CRWC’s small grants program helped fund field assessments in New Hampshire and Vermont to provide information about the presence of invasive aquatic plants there and educate the public in plant identification techniques. Laurie Callahan, an aquatic biologist and the project coordinator, found the invasive Eurasian milfoil (illustrated above) as far north as Fairlee, VT and Orford, NH.

The study confirmed that mercury poses a human health risk, particularly to women of childbearing age, subsistence fishers, and children. While mercury concentrations are higher in the northern stretch of the River, PCB concentrations are highest downriver.

Using less energy and eliminating backyard trash burning are two positive steps towards reducing the amount of contaminants in the environment. Links to the report and to local fish advisories can be found at our website www.ctriver.org.
International Rowers to Tour the Connecticut River

CRWC and Masters Rowing Association (MRA) will host the International Rowing Federation’s (FISA) annual world rowing tour on the Connecticut River from Bellows Falls, VT to Long Island Sound the third week in July 2007. Following a successful 2005 rowing tour on the river, sponsored by the MRA, Concept2, and WinTech Racing Shells, rower and event organizer Marilyn Shapiro teamed up with CRWC director Chelsea Gwyther to get FISA’s agreement for the 2007 tour on the Connecticut River. Switzerland hosted the FISA Tour last year. This year we get to help host this premiere event that attracts 60 to 75 long-distance rowers from around the globe. CRWC supporters will have a chance to participate in Tour events along the river and support CRWC by pledging money for each mile the boats row. For updates please go to the FISA website: www.fisarowingtourusa2007.org.

10th Annual Source to Sea Cleanup

Great weather and committed volunteers made this year’s cleanup, sponsored by New England Family Farms Milk, one of the best. More than 1,685 volunteers at 68 sites joined forces to clean up water bodies from Pittsburg, NH to Old Lyme, CT. The Governors in all four river states proclaimed September 30th “Connecticut River Watershed Source to Sea Cleanup Day.”

The level of effort and enthusiasm was incredible. A team of divers in Holyoke, MA went after inaccessible items, boats were outfitted with cranes, canoes were lashed together to carry trash, and many individuals got dirty to make the rivers cleaner. The trash tally shows that more than 45 tons of trash were hauled out of the Connecticut River and its tributaries. As usual, volunteers found thousands of fast food containers, bottles, cans, cups, and plastic bags. The number of tires -- over 900 -- “flattened” all records. This year’s assortment of oddball items included a meat slicer, a claw foot tub, a fry-a-lator, a cash register, plastic hot dogs, the door of a safe, ski boots, and a rubber ducky. Groups found a large number of styrofoam pieces this year, too.

We would like to thank all our volunteers for donating their time and energy. Please join us again next year on September 29, 2007 for our 11th annual cleanup.

Pictured at left: stove and refrigerator parts, buckets, tarps and more collected by volunteers cleaning up the Green River.

For over a year, CRWC has been hard at work on a completely revised edition of CRWC’s most popular publication, our Boating Guide. Boating enthusiasts John and Wendy Sinton and Elizabeth Farnsworth have authored this third edition, which includes:

- Accurate maps with GPS-verified access sites and points of interest.
- Boating facilities tables with maps for easy reference while on the water.
- Updated descriptions of 28 river reaches from the Fourth Connecticut Lake to Long Island Sound
- Introductory essays on the watershed’s natural and human history
- New and revised narratives that deepen your understanding of each river reach.
- Updated contact information on boating services, references for further reading, and websites for up-to-date information.

The Globe Pequot Press and CRWC are co-publishing the guide, which is available to CRWC members in December 2006 and the general public in April 2007. Royalties go to CRWC.

Freshwater mussels of the Connecticut River.

CRWC and Ethan Nedeau of BioDraw-versity, an environmental consulting and graphic design company, are teaming up to create the first complete guide to Connecticut River mussels. Freshwater mussels, a key indicator of water quality, are also some of the watershed’s most imperiled species – 8 of our 12 species are listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern, and the largest known concentrations of the endangered dwarf wedgemussel in the world occur here.

The 60-page guide and poster will describe mussel ecology, conservation, and management, along with the watershed’s environmental history and current health. Due out in late 2007, this project will strengthen science-based stewardship of aquatic resources by educating lay enthusiasts and providing conservationists with tools for better management. We are grateful to the Connecticut River Joint Commissions for their support and hope to raise additional funds to provide guides and posters free of charge to schools, conservation groups, planning agencies and others.

Photo above: dwarf wedgemussel, Ethan Nedeau
The East Deerfield Railyard, owned by Pan Am Railways, and located at the confluence of the Deerfield and Connecticut Rivers has had several petroleum and solvent spills over the past 30 years. It sits on an aquifer that Deerfield hopes to use for drinking water, and this section of the River is a primary spawning grounds for the federally endangered species shortnose sturgeon. Pan Am now has a discharge permit from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) of the federal Clean Water Act, but in 2005 that permit was 20 years out of date and 25 years out of compliance. Since that original permit was issued in the 1970s, wastewater discharge volume had increased sixfold, a new treatment system had been installed, there had been several spills, and stormwater had never been characterized or regulated. It was time to bring this permit into the 21st century.

In 2005, CRWC was awarded a grant through the Massachusetts Environmental Trust to oversee and comment on the proposed ground-water cleanup plans and the updated NPDES permit for the Railyard. River Steward Andrea Donlon worked in collaboration with the Deerfield Sustainable Development Committee (DSDC), led by local resident Lynn Rose. We hired consultants at GeoInsight to look at technical aspects. For years DSDC had pressured EPA into issuing the updated permit, and, when the permit was finally re-issued, CRWC and DSDC issued several comment letters and had EPA hold a public meeting. Even after all the public input, however, the final draft permit fell far short of expectations: it established no limits on stormwater contaminants, only monitoring; some of the suspected stormwater contaminants would be sampled only one time annually, in March when spring runoff can dilute samples; and EPA did not account for recovery plans for endangered and threatened species, such as dwarf wedgemussels and shortnose sturgeon, which are particularly susceptible to heavy-metal contamination. DSDC’s Rose recalled that the permit “was pretty devastating. Here, EPA had an opportunity to regulate impacts of site-specific...
issues such as spills and contaminated soil. Regular monitoring was critical to see if known and uncharacterized contamination was getting into stormwater.”

In response, CRWC and board member Jamison Colburn (profiled on page 10) filed an appeal of the permit. After a meeting between CRWC and EPA in late 2005, we agreed upon a new permit that EPA issued in August 2006. Under the new permit, Pan Am will submit a data summary report, a stormwater protection plan, and discharge monitoring reports to the EPA and federal resource agencies concerned with endangered species. Stormwater will now be sampled quarterly for petroleum hydrocarbons and PCBs, rather than just once a year. Pan Am can petition EPA to reduce the number of chemicals required to be sampled if certain chemicals are not detected in two years of sampling.

It turns out that Pan Am simply needed to be prodded a bit. David Fink, executive vice president of Pan Am, was quoted in the Greenfield Recorder as saying that CRWC’s requests were reasonable. “We didn’t find it to be onerous or a problem, so we agreed to do it.” CRWC is glad that EPA and Pan Am were amenable to our suggested changes.

Andrea Donlon has since filed comments, but no appeals, on a dozen other NPDES permits. Donlon suggests that input from citizens and watershed groups can lead to better permits. If any CRWC member would like to learn more about the permits in his or her area, please get in touch with the River Steward covering your state:

Megan in CT (860) 704-0057
Andrea in MA (413) 772-2020
David in NH & VT (802) 869-2792
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006

Support and Revenue

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Sales &amp; other earned revenues</td>
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<td>Investment income &amp; unrealized gain</td>
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<td>Special events</td>
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Expenses

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<td>Supplies, communication &amp; education</td>
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<td>Occupancy and insurance</td>
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<td>Depreciation &amp; amortization</td>
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<td>Misc expenses, taxes, filing fees</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
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Change in Net Assets                        | (239,294) |
Net Assets beginning of year                | 2,044,207 |
Prior Year Adjustments                      | (85,169)  |
Net Assets end of year                      | 1,719,744 |
Individual and business donors

The Board of Trustees and staff of CRWC would like to thank our more than 1,500 members. The following individuals and businesses have provided leadership support to CRWC:

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Metropolitan District Commission
Middlesex Community Fndn.
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New England Family Farms
NH Charitable Foundation,
Hardy Hill Fund, UV Region
NRG Middletown Operations
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Pioneer Valley Yacht Club
Robinson & Cole, LLP
Robinson Donovan, P.C.
Southworth Paper Co.
State of Vermont
The Gryphon Fund
The Norcross Wildlife Fndn.
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Webster Family Foundation
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WGBY Channel 57

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MDC
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New England Family Farms Milk is a group of family farmers who believe that milk produced by healthy cows in their clean and natural environment has a special freshness unique to New England. New England Family Farms Milk’s support is designed to make a difference by helping to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of the Connecticut River watershed.
Our Mission:
The Connecticut River Watershed Council works to protect the watershed from source to sea. From alpine forests to tidal estuaries, rural farmlands to urban riverfronts, spotted salamanders to bald eagles, and mussels to salmon, the Connecticut River watershed unites a diversity of habitats, communities and resources. As stewards of this heritage, we celebrate our four-state treasure and collaborate, educate, organize, restore, and intervene to preserve the health of the whole for generations to come. The river connects us.