

## **Appendix A. RECOMMENDATIONS** - Mt. Ascutney Region River Subcommittee

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

#### ***Congress should***

1. act to reduce the amount of air-borne mercury delivered to the Connecticut River Valley.

### **STATE GOVERNMENT**

#### ***State legislatures should***

2. urge the US Congress to act to reduce the amount of air-borne mercury delivered to the Connecticut River Valley.
3. (NH General Court) pass legislation updating the definition of personal water craft to include all such craft under the definition of ski craft, retaining the 300' distance from shore as a requirement for travel over headway speed.
4. (NH General Court) provide full funding for LCHIP
5. (NH General Court) identify a new source of funding for the Trails Bureau that will allow it to equally serve non-motorized users.

#### ***NH Department of Safety should***

6. increase enforcement of boating speed laws, to prevent boating conflicts and minimize boat wake-induced riverbank erosion.
7. seek funding to support full-time marine patrol presence on the river.
8. support legislation updating the definition of personal water craft to include all such craft under the definition of ski craft, retaining the 300' distance from shore for travel over headway speed.
9. NH Marine Patrol should make a special effort to be present at fishing tournaments.

#### ***Fish and Game/Wildlife and Parks/Recreation agencies should***

10. better maintain portable toilet facilities at river access points.
11. provide sites for signage at their river accesses, aesthetically in keeping with the rural nature of the region.
12. assist Windsor in creating a river access for non-motorized boats.
13. avoid construction of further access points for trailered boats, since adequate access for these boats already exists in the areas of the river deep enough to accommodate them.
14. confer with NH Marine Patrol if expansion of Vermont river access is contemplated.
15. educate visitors to the region about visitor responsibility.
16. State environmental and fisheries agencies should continue to cooperate to better understand and address the Didymo infestation.
17. educate landowners about the benefits of leaving land open to the public and the liability protections offered by existing laws; educate landowners about NH's 20% recreational adjustment under current use and Class A/B trails.
18. develop ATV trails on state lands only after ample public discussion, and if the responsible state agency can adequately monitor the trails with active cooperation from a local club.
19. educate private landowners about the effects of allowing OHRV trails over streams on their land.
20. set a mandatory ATV registration fee adequate to provide funds to build trails, provide law enforcement, and create a landowner restitution fund to which landowners can apply for reimbursement if they have sustained damage from OHRVs.
21. require a safety education course for ATV riders similar to boater and hunter safety courses.
22. require ATV riders to be members of a statewide ATV organization that would provide training.

#### ***State transportation agencies should***

23. provide signage identifying waterways which is aesthetically in keeping with the rural nature of the region.
24. improve bicycling safety.
25. add a bicycle lane on Route 5, a popular but dangerous bicycle route.

#### ***State forestry departments should***

26. enforce slash cutting laws on riverbanks.

#### ***State environmental agencies should***

27. assist towns with elimination of combined sewer overflows and improvement of water quality, to ensure that the river becomes safe for swimming once again north of Blow Me Down Brook.
28. determine whether the current advisory on PCB contamination of the river's fish is obsolete.

29. consider establishing a date (Nov. 1) for dock removal on the river similar to that in effect for ice fishing houses.

***VT Agency of Natural Resources should***

30. adopt and enforce rules for docks on the Connecticut River similar to those established by New Hampshire and inform its riverfront towns where the state boundary lies in each town and where the rules apply.

**TOWN GOVERNMENT *should***

31. Windsor should study and create appropriate sites for foot and car-top boat access.
32. discourage construction of new marinas on the river. The depth, width, flow, and fluctuating level of the river in this segment does not lend itself to development of instream marinas, which can threaten water quality and create boat traffic congestion which can stimulate bank erosion.
33. avoid construction of further access points for trailered boats, since adequate access for these boats already exists in the areas of the river deep enough to accommodate them.
34. create guides to town owned properties.
35. explore federal and state funding programs, such as SAFE-TEA, to create trails and other new recreation opportunities.
36. encourage snowmobile groups, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and other recreation groups to provide monitoring, trail watches, and peer education.
37. consider adopting local control of docks, especially in Vermont in the absence of state oversight of dock construction
38. advise riverfront landowners to take in their docks when the floating safety lines at the Bellows Falls Dam are removed at the end of the recreation season.
39. consider and adopt shoreline protection, and encourage retention of riverbank vegetation for its scenic value as well as for its role in protecting water quality for recreation.
40. provide a walking trail from Windsor's visitor center for viewing the Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge.
41. ensure that ATV trails are consistent with local planning and zoning, and consider more stringent regulations on local private lands which are part of the state trail system.
42. inform landowners about liability protections and benefits of allowing public recreation, especially through conservation commissions
43. consider establishing trails on town properties and organizing trail maintenance activities with help of conservation commissions.
44. take advantage of nearby opportunities for local children to learn to ski, through the school system.
45. (local fire departments) have water rescue equipment available for river recreation emergencies at all seasons.
46. notify the public immediately if there is a suspected water quality violation at a wastewater treatment plant during the summer recreation season.

**REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS *should***

47. coordinate multi-community recreation and open space plans.
48. help identify places where bicycle shoulders could be added without destroying the character of a local road.
49. draft a model ordinance on dock construction for towns.

**PRIVATE SECTOR**

***TransCanada Hydro Northeast and its successors should***

50. conserve Sumner Falls and ensure continued public access to the river here; provide safety signage indicating the level of skill needed to safely negotiate the rapids, and work with the Town of Hartland to discourage vandalism and overnight use.
51. provide limited signage at its river access points, especially Herrick's Cove, aesthetically in keeping with the rural nature of the region.
52. continue to maintain public river access at Herrick's Cove and the primitive canoe campsite at Lower Meadow.
53. post notices at boat ramps before a scheduled draw down of the Bellows Falls impoundment.

***Land Trusts should***

54. continue their work in land conservation, providing public recreation access where appropriate.
55. continue to monitor use of their canoe campsites, particularly on potentially sensitive islands.
56. continue to identify possible archeological or natural heritage inventory sites before establishing canoe campsites and confer with state agencies on siting and management plans.
57. help protect scenic views.

***The Connecticut River Byway Council should***

58. promote a network of bicycle routes in the Connecticut River valley.

***Recreation groups should***

59. provide monitoring, trail watches, and peer education.
60. encourage local stewardship of recreation areas including campsites, trail heads, and trails.
61. encourage landowners to keep their land open to the public
62. inform landowners about liability protections and benefits of allowing public recreation.
63. discourage snowmobiling on the river in winter.
64. (fishing tournament organizers) notify the NH Fish and Game Department well in advance of an event and inform visiting fishermen of boating laws on the Connecticut River, especially with respect to legal speed; contact TransCanada Hydro Northeast to be sure that there are no scheduled draw downs that could make launching difficult on the day of a fishing tournament; arrange for boat and trailer checks before boats are launched in the river and after they are removed, to avoid spreading invasive aquatics.
65. promote a connecting network of bicycle paths in the valley. Bicycle tour routes should be identified for the area, and published with maps.
66. post signs at trailheads advising hikers to avoid the trails during mud season or when trails are very wet.

***Citizens should:***

67. obey existing boat speed laws.
  68. avoid creating boat wakes which cause bank erosion.
  69. avoid littering at access sites and along the riverbank.
  70. participate in volunteer cleanups.
  71. avoid operating jet skis on the river, especially at night.
  72. refrain from water skiing north of the Cheshire Bridge.
  73. use designated public access to reach the river, rather than crossing private land.
  74. obey the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act in NH, and avoid cutting and leaving slash near riverbanks.
  75. avoid camping on Hubbard and Jarvis Islands and walking on the upstream ends of cobble islands, and help monitor campsites.
  76. carefully clean their gear after visiting the Connecticut River and report sightings of invasive aquatic species to state agencies. Do not release unused bait into the water.
  77. check boats and trailers before launching and after taking out of the Connecticut or its tributaries to avoid transporting milfoil, Zebra mussels, or other unwanted invasives.
  78. avoid snowmobiling on the river in winter.
  79. (dock owners) remove their docks by November 1, well before the river begins to freeze.
  80. avoid hiking or riding on trails in wet conditions, especially when exposed soils are saturated from snow melt and rain.
  81. (fishermen) replace lead sinkers and jigs with safe tackle. Clean gear carefully to avoid spreading Didymo.
  82. volunteer to help with trail maintenance for their chosen form of recreation, whether it's hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, or snowmobiling
  83. (hunters) seek permission from landowners who have not posted their land, and demonstrate respect and courteous use of their property.
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