



# Upper Connecticut River Partnership Program

## *Engaged citizens for a healthy watershed*

**The Connecticut River Partnership Program** has enabled Valley residents and organizations to act on their vision and implement their plans for safeguarding the river valley's natural and historic resources to ensure the region's economic future.

The Partnership Program, created by the Connecticut River Joint Commissions in 1992, has responded to the needs of the 271-mile long, bi-state, Upper Connecticut River watershed by funding scores of projects aimed at water quality protection, recreational development, marketing and economic development, historic preservation, agricultural support, and floodplain conservation.

In the Program's 14 active years, CRJC dispersed \$1,288,500 to support 400 locally-driven projects with grants of \$500-\$8000.



Led by CRJC, local officials, business people, and citizens have developed plans with hundreds of recommendations to enact their vision of the valley's future, with the help of the Partnership Program.

Since its inception, the Partnership Program has been supported by federal agencies. Initial funding came through the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program and later through the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration.

### **Eligible Projects**

Innovative, community-generated projects must address economic and conservation challenges in ways compatible with the river valley's historic, scenic, and natural resources.

Eligible applicants include town boards, committees, or commissions, non-profit tax-exempt organizations, schools (public or private), and regional organizations located in the upper Connecticut River watershed of New Hampshire and Vermont. Informal citizen groups, state and federal agencies, and private businesses may also apply through one of the above organizations. Examples of Partnership projects include:

### **Water quality**

- Grants to volunteer watershed groups to purchase monitoring equipment
- Work by the Elizabeth Mine Study Group to engage citizens, State of Vermont, and ultimately EPA Region I for Superfund designation and cleanup of an abandoned copper mine and monitor an affected tributary

### **Fish & Wildlife Habitat**

- Aquatic invasive plant surveys and public outreach by the Connecticut River Conservation District Coalition
- Trout habitat improvements
- Connecticut River Important Bird Area identification by NH & VT Audubon societies



- Habitat inventory by The Nature Conservancy
- Research into invasive rusty crayfish
- Specific habitat studies
- River clean-ups

### Agriculture & Forestry

- Locally grown food guide
- Farm workshops on integrated crop & pest management
- VT/NH milk marketing workshops
- Vermont Fresh Network
- Logging history from stump to mill
- Farmland conservation
- Grazing conference

### Heritage Tourism & Historic Preservation

- Fire protection for the nation's oldest surviving covered bridge
- Grants to Haverhill Heritage, Inc. to restore the 1820 Grafton County Courthouse for use as a cultural & interpretive center on a national scenic byway (below)
- Visitors' guide, "From Mills to Main Streets on the Connecticut River Byway"



### Education

- School programs & river-related curricula
- Conservation festivals
- Landowner workshops
- Op-ed series in valley newspapers
- Northern Woodlands publication for landowners
- "Valley Quest" discovery tours

### Land Conservation

- Grants to help with survey and appraisal costs of conserving floodplains, prime agricultural soils, critical habitats, and other key lands, in cooperation with interested landowners

### Recreation

- Creation of safe public river access and portages around breached dams by the Vermont River Conservancy



- Construction of canoe campsites by Northern Forest Canoe Trail
- Hiking trail restoration by youth conservation corps

### Other CRJC Initiatives Supported by the Partnership Program

- Five local river subcommittees of citizens appointed by their riverfront towns to advise on river issues
- Consensus-based river management plans for water resources and recreation.
- Connecticut River Byway, a National Scenic Byway, to stimulate and support heritage tourism
- Fluvial geomorphic studies to identify sources of river instability and devise science-based, river-friendly remediation for erosion problems
- *Proud to Live Here in the Connecticut River Valley*, an illustrated guide to river history and stewardship (2004)
- *Where the Great River Rises, an Atlas of the Upper Connecticut River Watershed* (2009)
- *Riparian Buffers for the Connecticut River Watershed*, a series of fact sheets for various landowner audiences, now adapted for use in at least 12 states
- Boating safety guide to the river

### The Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Established by the legislatures of Vermont and New Hampshire, twin watershed advisory commissions have been working together as the Joint Commissions for 20 years to safeguard the working landscapes and natural and cultural resources that are the essence of our valley, by inspiring and advancing partnerships throughout the two-state watershed.

