

Upper Valley Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions
July 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes
Video Conference Call

NH Members:	Present	Absent
Alice Creagh, Hanover, NH		X
Jim Kennedy, Chair, Hanover, NH	X	
Eric Agterberg, Lebanon, NH	X	
Ruth Bleyler, Lebanon, NH		X
Bruce Garland, Lebanon, NH (alt)	X	
Bill Malcolm, Lyme, NH	X	
Vacancy, Lyme, NH		
Christine Bunten, Orford, NH		X
Carl Schmidt, Orford, NH	X	
Karyn Brown, Piermont, NH		X
Helga Mueller, Piermont, NH		X
Melissa Horwitz, Norwich, VT		X
Vacancy, Norwich, VT		

VT Members:	Present	Absent
Vacancy, Bradford, VT		
Vacancy, Bradford, VT		
Nancy Jones, Bradford, VT (alt)		X
Ben Dana, Fairlee, VT		X
Vacancy, Fairlee, VT		
Danielle Allen, Fairlee, VT (alt)		X
David Barrell, Hartford, VT		X
Lynn Bohi, Hartford, VT	X	
Jason Houle, Hartford, VT (alt)		X
Tara Bamford, Thetford, VT	X	
Bill Bridge, Thetford, VT		X
Linda Matteson, Thetford, VT (alt)	X	

Olivia Uyizeye, Staff from UVLSRPC
Ted Cooley, CRJC Commissioner and Orford resident

Minutes

1. Welcome, Review Meeting Guidelines & Introductions

Chair Kennedy called the meeting, conducted via conference call, to order at 7:02 PM under the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A, New Hampshire's Right-to-Know law, as allowed by Emergency Order 11 under Executive Order 2020-04 in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Chair Kennedy conducted a roll call of LAC members, invited any guests to introduce themselves, and welcomed all present.

1. CRJC Strategic Plan

Uyizeye provides a brief summary to the CRJC 5-year strategic plan, adopted by commissioners in June 2020 (see attached). Conversation follows:

- Malcolm and Bohi express confusion on the lack of clarity on pg 2 under LRS Activities, 4th bullet. "Empower members to attend events." What events? Empowered how? Bamford describes that she understood this to be better described as "support". Uyizeye will ask for clarity.
- Agterberg suggests that the Vision, purpose and mission should be displayed in a feedback loop. Bamford adds that the CRJC purpose is made by the state of NH and VT, thus not changeable.
- Malcolm asks if there is anything in this document that would change what members are currently doing. Bamford describes bolstering the LRS staff role, advocating for the LRS to be the priority and the potential to do more in relation to advising municipalities.
- Malcolm asks where funding described in the strategic plan. Bamford clarifies that the strategic plan was meant intentionally kept as a visioning process.

- Uyizeye describes some LRS components that would seek to bolster work being done to maintain membership, increase membership and improve public awareness of the LRS through published articles, letters to municipal boards and public events.
- Kennedy highlights content about the convening role of CRJC, goal 2. Specifically number 4 about the pandemic. This is described as an action the commissioners are working to take more immediate action on and is a hot topic about the potential increased development pressure in the Connecticut River Valley and a role for the CRJC to facilitate a conversation about how to develop with thoughtful consideration for the region's natural resources.
- Schmidt asks if the LRS are set up to deal with this. Bamford responds that the commissioners especially are the appropriate body to fulfill this role and facilitate this conversation. Kennedy adds that convening would help to get the CRJC name out there.

2. May Meeting Minutes

Kennedy opens up discussion on the May meeting minutes. Bohi makes a motion to approve the minutes as written. Agterberg seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous by roll call vote.

3. Permit Review

a. CR Living LLC shoreland application, Orford, NH

Kennedy opens up a discussion on the CR living permit application. Schmidt describes his visit to the site. The location is out in an open field and very flat, as indicated on the plan, with a very sharp drop near the shore. The proposed septic system is in 250ft buffer area. Conversation follows:

- Kennedy confirms this as a shoreland not septic permit. According to the plans, the constructed deck would also be partially within the 250ft buffer area.
- Bamford observes that the well location is not indicated in the application.
- Bohi notes that this is an LLC not just a private home. This could house homeless, transitional people for various purposes, adults who can't live by themselves. This could result in a maximum of 6 people in the house, which does not have much of an effect.
- Kennedy adds that people declare themselves as an LLC for the limited liability. Malcolm says that he is not sure if you can infer anything from being an LLC.
- Kennedy shares several issues. There is no reason given as to why the proposed septic system only occurs within the shoreland protection zone. Why are there not other alternatives talked about? Why is the deck in the shoreland protection zone? Not much to comment in regards to erosion. There are no plans for steps down to the river, which would require another shoreland permit.
- Schmidt shares that no grass path would be possible from what he saw, due to the steepness of the bank.
- Bamford asks about the little square in the corner of the site shown on one map but not the other.
- Schmidt did note this as well but did not notice anything during the site visit. The north property line looked to be a seasonal stream.
- Agterberg asks about potential impact of the septic where it is a clear drainage area.
- Schmidt describes the sites as one of all alluvial soil except for the rocky outcrop next to the river.
- Agterberg asks about the picnic area. What is the intention here?
- Schmidt says there was a green picnic table on site where marked on the map. A slight break in the tree line towards the river is in this spot, but not much.
- Kennedy indicates that this picnic site does show up with the submitted application with photos.
- Schmidt says he saw a fair amount of junk that was thrown over the bank, including part of a car and tanks. Kennedy asks if any of it is fresh. Schmidt says it is hard to say.

- Kennedy says the trash might be a wetlands issue but can get it out to the shoreland staff in the letter. He highlights five items to include that have been discussed - 1. Proposed septic alternatives; 2. Path to the beach not shown on permits or plan; 3. Corner square parcel; 4. Debris on the bank; and 5. Well location.

Bamford makes a motion to submit a comment letter on the items discussed. Malcolm seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous by roll call vote.

b. Lyme Culvert 3, Lyme, NH

Malcolm explains that he did sign the document as a member of the LRS. The document did incorporate the changes requested including the structure pitch.

c. Dock Permit, Lyme, NH

Kennedy explains that he did sign this permit on behalf of the LRS, because it included all items that were normally required. Kennedy offers to share the permit with anyone if desired.

d. DPC Special Permit Application #20-281

Kennedy describes the permit for the use of glyphosate to remove a poison ivy infestation down near the river and along the border of a parcel. Schmidt did visit the site where he met someone who assured him there was an infestation. Unclear if the current owner or renter is pursuing this.

- Kennedy asks whether there is enough poison ivy to spray it, explaining alternatives including smothering it with cardboard or black plastic and manual pulling.
- Schmidt expresses concern for how close the chemicals would be to the river.
- Kennedy notes that roundup aquatic material is proposed in the application with all required documentation.
- Bamford asks why alternatives are not shown and no explanation for the use of this method given. Kennedy agrees noting that he would like to better understand why the LRS is being asked to review this permit.
- Bamford asks what the reason for requesting a waiver is and is unclear about the use of "easement" language.
- Schmidt says he did not see a huge bed of poison ivy, but it was mixed among other vegetation, adding that it may be much worse in other sections along the perimeter of the property where he did not investigate.
- Kennedy asks if there could be chemical drift onto desirable plants.
- Agterberg asks if this application is for a one time application. Malcolm reads from the application that it is "one continuous treatment" which does not provide an answer to the number of chemical applications the applicant requests.
- Bamford suggests sending comments to both NHDES and Department of Agriculture, thanking them for sending it to us.

Bamford makes a motion to submit a comment letter on the items discussed. Malcolm seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous by roll call vote.

4. Other Updates & Business

a. UVRS letter of testimony regarding the 2020 NHDES rules amendments

Kennedy says he received comments on the draft comment letter from Malcolm asking about the 10 day waiver period. Kennedy clarifies that the 10 day period is to inform NHDES that the LRS will comment, with another 30 days to submit those comments. Kennedy expresses concern about waiving the right to intervene as the LRS investigates and comments. Intervention is not the appropriate descriptor. The

letter suggests that a virtual copy be submitted to the LRS for improved ease and comment. Similarly, the improved ability to cross reference the application and RSA is important as very few people understand this. Conversation follows:

- Malcolm says the application is a mix between statute and what has been adopted by NHDES. The application should have the rules attached so the reader knows what they're supposed to do.
- Kennedy notes that NHDES would be concerned that a rule may change and references to that rule would not be updated.
- Matteson adds that every state is goes through. She has seen VT make changes at least 6 times and it never gets any easier.

Malcolm makes a motion to submit the comment letter as presented. Bohi seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous by roll call vote.

5. Other business – Welcome packet & recruiting letter

Kennedy asks Uyizeye to provide an update about the LRS welcome packet. Uyizeye describes that this update is a new iteration that seeks to describe what the LRS are and what members are expected to do. The full packet will be shared with all members for their reference. Uyizeye will ask members to reflect on their own experience to provide feedback that will be most helpful to new members. Agterberg says a short concise document for residents who are considering joining would be helpful so not to overwhelm. Bamford recommends adding a pdf version of the enabling legislation and bylaws rather than a link to the website. Uyizeye expects to share the packet by the end of July.

6. Adjourn

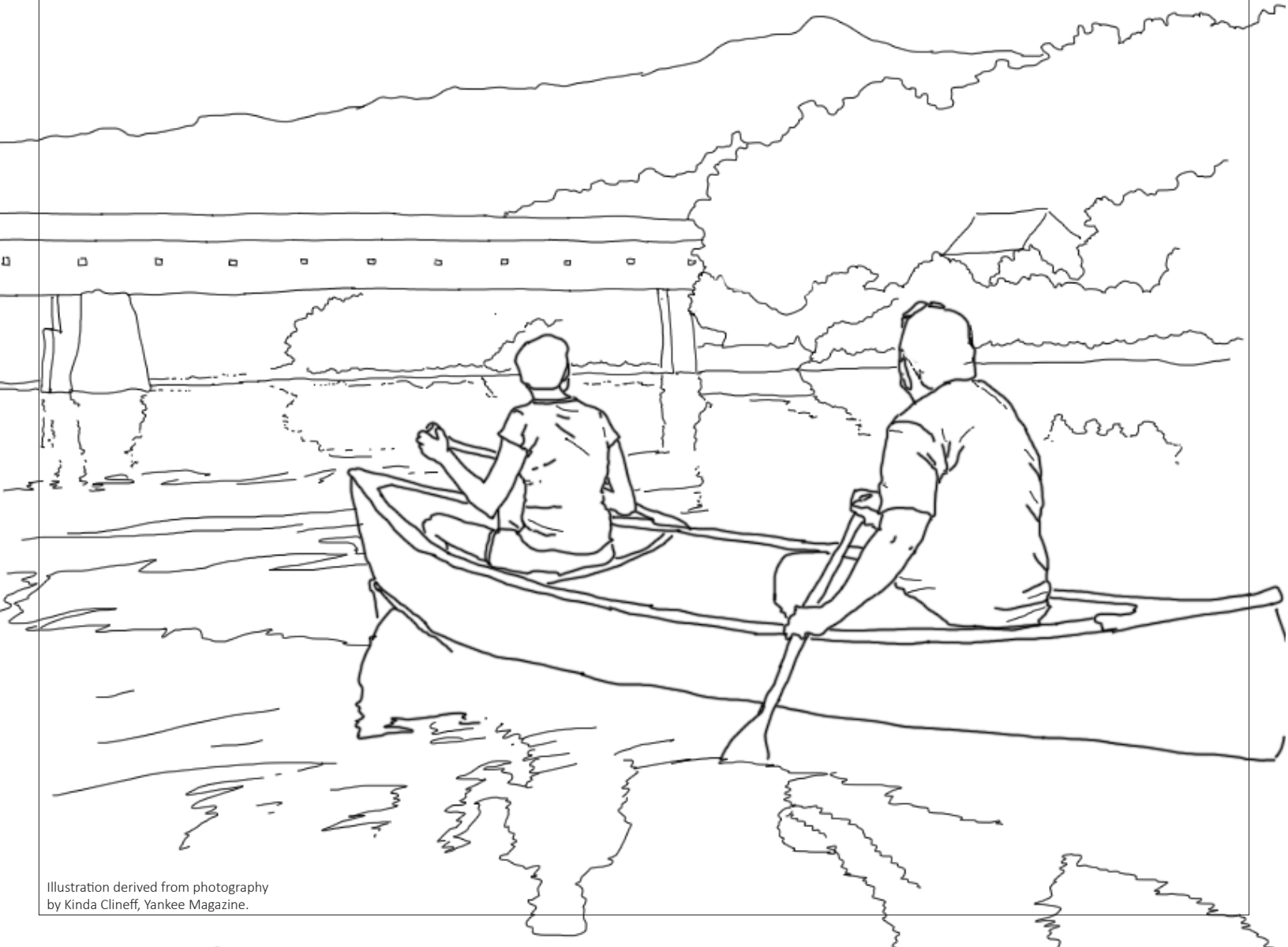
Malcolm makes a motion to adjourn. Matteson seconds the motion. The vote passes unanimous by roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025



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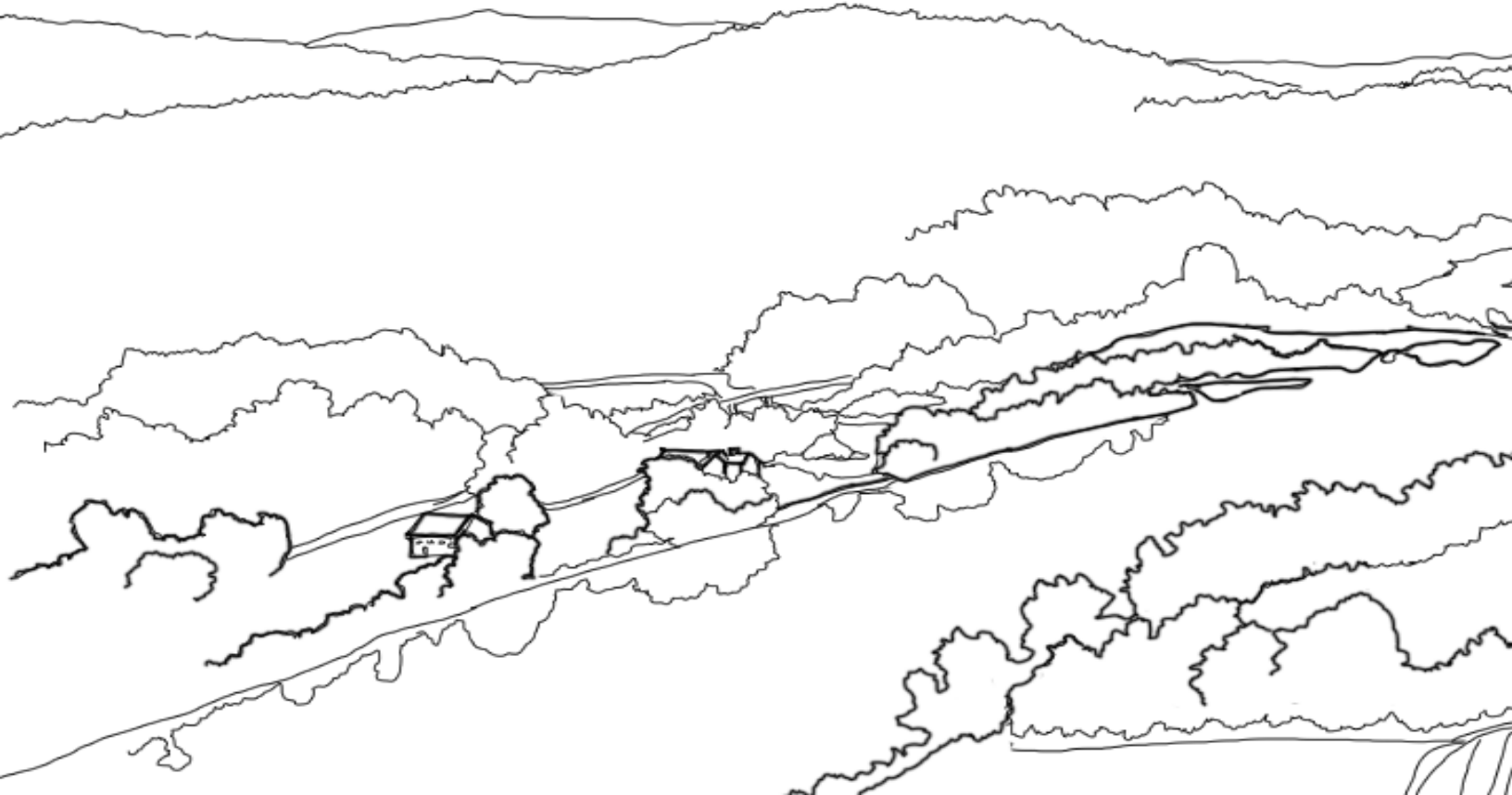
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This strategic plan incorporates feedback and ideas from our partners, collaborators, funders, volunteers, Commissioners, Local River Subcommittee members, and other stakeholders. We are grateful to everyone involved for their time, participation, and contributions to this plan. We look forward to our shared work in the Connecticut River Valley.

This plan was approved by the Connecticut River Joint Commissions on June 01, 2020.
Prepared by Emily Davis.

Illustration derived from photography
by Kinda Clineff, Yankee Magazine.



SUMMARY & NARRATIVE

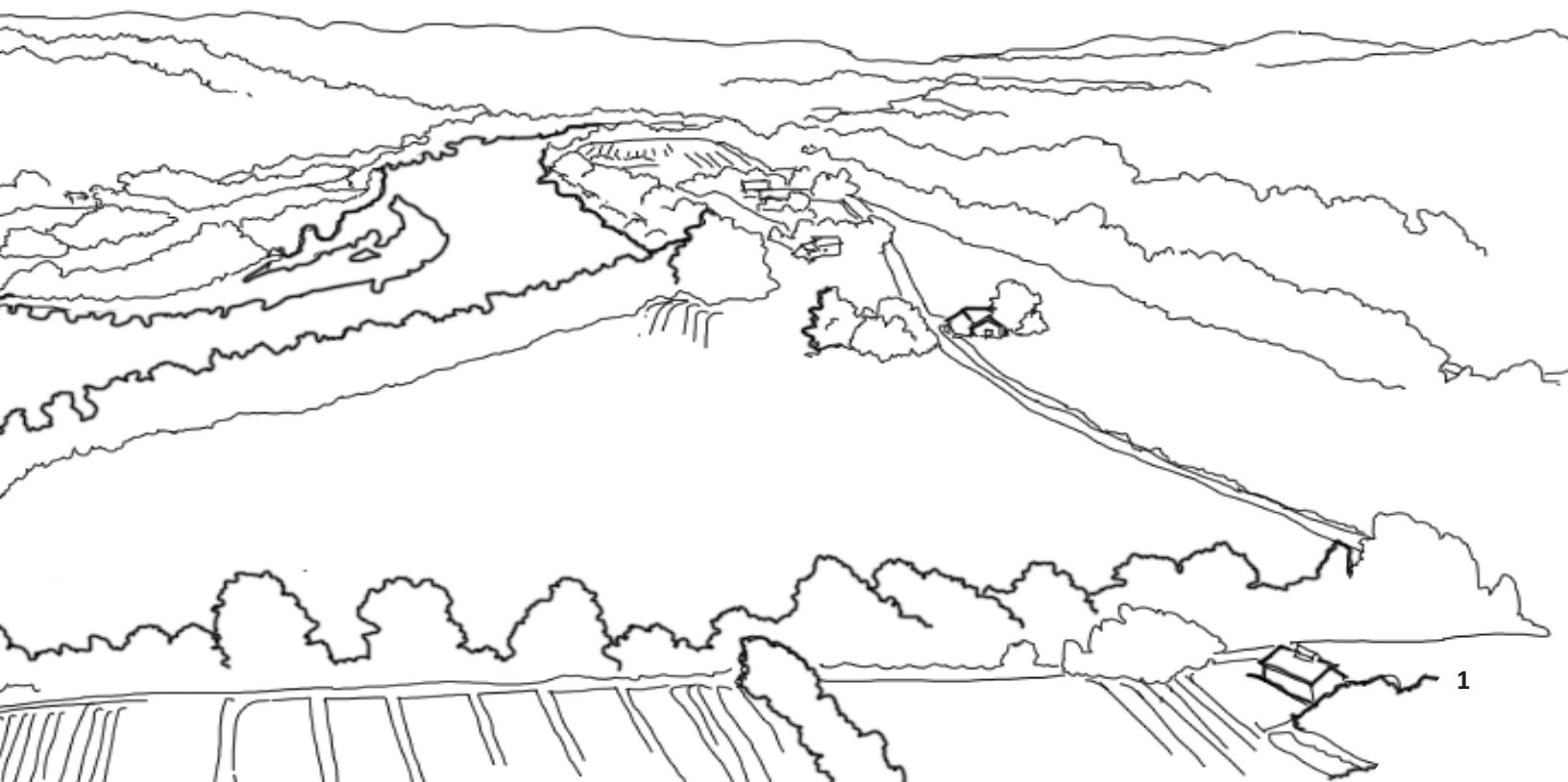
The Connecticut River Joint Commission's (CRJC) Strategic Plan 2020-2025 builds on over 30 years of experience in engaging communities in the Connecticut River Valley of Vermont and New Hampshire in a "shared commitment to safeguard a good place and a good life." (Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan, 1997)

The CRJC is a quasi-governmental organization composed of Governor-appointed and designated Commissioners from Vermont and New Hampshire, and the parent organization to five Local River Subcommittees. They may represent different interests, but are united in a shared regard of the Connecticut River, the surrounding landscape, and the ecosystem as a whole. Together, they identify and pursue collaborative efforts that safeguard the Valley.

We anticipate the Connecticut River Valley will see substantial growth related to migration from metropolitan areas to our east and south driven by climate change and sea level rise, as well as the current pandemic. The need for facilitated cooperation and coordination between the two states on development within the watershed will only increase.

The actions proposed in this plan leverage the group's strongest assets: the passion and commitment of the volunteer members and Commissioners, and its statutorily-enabled purpose and connection to state government. In the short term, these strategic leverage points will build internal capacity to help sustain the organization. Over time and amidst those global challenges, the CRJC intends to continue serving communities of the Valley by helping to guide the growth and development in a way that conserves landscape integrity and stewards the use of its natural resources.

The CRJC is well-situated to play a convening and advocating role, and understands that this work is most effective in partnership with existing organizations and initiatives. The CRJC values connection, advocacy, and mutual support, and is therefore dedicated to elevating collective efforts and collaborating with like-minded partners.



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

STATUTORY PURPOSE <i>Our charge</i>	To facilitate the cooperation of Vermont and New Hampshire to guide development in a manner that conserves the visual, ecological and agricultural resources of the Connecticut River Valley.		
MISSION <i>How we fulfill the purpose</i>	The CRJC informs policy decisions, links local action to state and federal initiatives, and convenes partners in a common effort to protect the Valley's resources.		
CONSTITUENTS <i>Who we serve</i>	LOCAL RIVER SUBCOMMITTEES	PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS <i>(Ex: CRC, WUV, RPCs, state agencies, Friends of Conte)</i>	POLICY MAKERS <i>(Ex: Legislators, state agencies, Governors, federal delegation...)</i>
ACTIVITIES <i>How we serve the constituent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create comprehensive orientation and training materials for members • Create guidance for volunteer recruitment • Establish connections to broader policies and initiatives • Empower LRS members to attend events • Coordinate, organize, and support the LRSs and their statutory responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for partnership and collaboration, by... • Identify and leverage internal strengths and assets • Create systems for information-sharing and learning (both internal and external) • Build internal capacity for communication and facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to systematically stay informed on active and relevant policies • Create guidance for Commissioner recruitment and connection to policymakers • Maintain relationships to Governor's offices and representative delegations
DESIRED RESULTS <i>The results of those activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of municipalities participate in their LRS frequently • Relationships with state and municipal decision-makers is renewed and strengthened • LRSs are a source of helpful input • Corridor management plans are widely used and up-to-date • LRS leadership is cultivated locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common policies are identified and advocated for cooperatively • Collective capacity is increased through information-sharing and partnership • Important decisions are informed by sharing knowledge throughout the network of partners • Knowledge is shared through well-facilitated stakeholder gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy decisions are informed by LRS experience and knowledge • CRJC becomes a regarded and cooperative vector between local communities and state actors • Testimony is provided to state legislative bodies on relevant issues • Initiatives that benefit human and ecological communities of the CT River Valley are created and resourced
SUCCESS FACTORS <i>What needs to be in place to do those activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupied open seats on the LRSs • Active support of the LRSs through Commissioner engagement and liaison • Increased awareness of the LRS in all riverside communities through improved communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of the CRJC and its capacity • Garnered respect of the CRJC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the CRJC • Commitment and support of the policy makers • Stabilized (or, predictable) funding sources • CRJC acknowledged as essential
STRATEGIES <i>How we can leverage our strengths and opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the authority of enabling statute to create relationships with policy-makers • Leverage the immediacy of COVID-related migration and development pressures to initiate conversations and identify potential partners • Improve on-boarding process, and identify individuals with specific skill-sets for Commissioner recruitment (and in turn, delegate discrete tasks) 		

2020-2025 PLAN SUMMARY

VALUES / CULTURE

The CRJC is a bi-state quasi-governmental organization composed of Governor appointed or designated Commissioners. They represent different interests, but pursue a common strategy through a shared regard of the Connecticut River and the surrounding landscape. The CRJC values connection, advocacy, and mutual support.



VISION

A healthy and cohesive Connecticut River Valley, where the CRJC is a respected voice and critical convener.



PURPOSE

To facilitate the cooperation of Vermont and New Hampshire to guide development in a manner that conserves the visual, ecological and agricultural resources of the CT River Valley.



MISSION

The CRJC informs policy decisions, links local action to state and federal initiatives, and convenes partners in a common effort to protect the Connecticut River Valley's resources.



GOALS

ADVOCATE *Be a voice for the Connecticut River Valley; initiate and bolster all efforts to safeguard its protection and conservation.*



OBJECTIVES

- actions
- actions

CONVENE *Gather partners to facilitate knowledge and resource sharing that supports the health of the Valley.*



OBJECTIVES

- actions
- actions

CONNECT *Bridge the divide between local communities and state entities for mutual benefit and project completion.*



OBJECTIVES

- actions
- actions

SUSTAIN *Build and maintain an enduring institution that delivers on its mission.*



OBJECTIVES

- actions
- actions

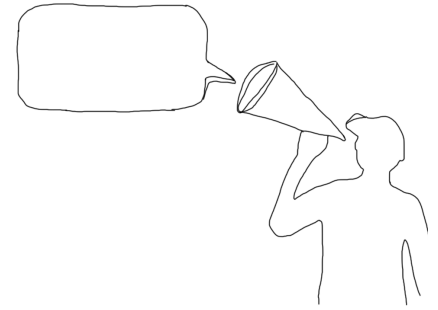


(Built into implementing these strategies, objectives, and actions should be mechanisms for review, feedback, and learning. Over time, this will refine the work plan to continuously align with the mission.)

(The following pages (pgs. 4-7) elaborate on these strategies, and outlines the proposed objectives and actions.)

STRATEGIC GOAL:

ADVOCATE



Be a voice for the Connecticut River Valley; initiate and bolster all efforts to safeguard its protection and conservation.

▶ Start action
▼ Implementing
◀ Ongoing
◀ Completed action

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

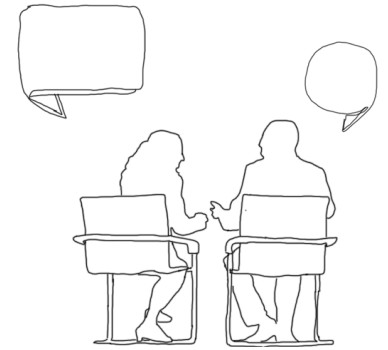
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
1. IDENTIFY RELEVANT POLICY INITIATIVES / ISSUES					
Create a system for internal quarterly policy review / projection	▶	◀			
Host stakeholder gathering amidst COVID-19 pressures, to identify topic areas and issues most relevant to partners	▶				
Host annual stakeholder gathering to identify topic areas and issues most relevant to partners		▶	◀		
2. SUPPORT A COMMON EFFORT					
Disseminate relevant information to stakeholders / partners on policy issues of interest (i.e. policy newsletter*)		▶	◀		
Gather feedback on policy initiatives, or facilitate communication between advocates and decision-makers		▶	◀		
Develop a system to survey organizations to see what is important to them*	▶	◀			
3. SUPPORT COMMUNICATION TO STATE GOVERNMENT					
Identify opportunities to provide information and testimony to legislative bodies	▶	◀			
Create and provide bi-annual CT River Valley updates to Governor's offices*	▶	▼	◀		
Create and provide bi-annual CT River Valley updates to state and federal delegation*	▶	▼	◀		
Create guidance for local leadership to engage in policy initiatives*		▶	◀		

**The pandemic has accelerated anticipated migration into the CT River Valley. Communities should take development pressures and the surge in the real estate market seriously, and may notice and participate in coordinated efforts to guide this growth and development. These proposed updates, guidance documents, and communications should serve this immediate need, and in turn create the internal systems for future work.*

STRATEGIC GOAL:

CONVENE

Gather partners to facilitate knowledge and resource sharing that supports the health of the Valley.



Start action
 Implementing
 Ongoing
 Completed action

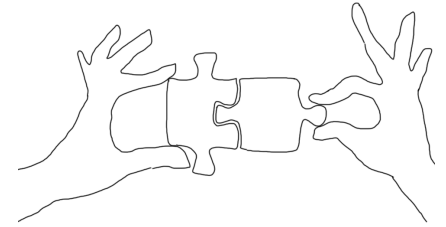
PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
1. ESTABLISH CRJC AS A NETWORK CONVENER					
Host “Advisory Meeting” to review organizational strategy and shared interests for core stakeholders, partners, and funders*					
Utilize Commissioner networks (personal and professional), for expanded reach and awareness*					
Identify and create robust communication platform(s) (website updates, sharing resources via newsletters, etc)*					
2. DEVELOP PLAN FOR ANNUAL GATHERINGS					
Identify and collaborate with potential funders to support this kind of “think tank” gathering					
Create a Steering Committee to initiate and guide event/convening planning					
Host annual stakeholder gathering to identify topic areas and issues most relevant to partners (repeat action from “Advocate”)*					
Host an immediate gathering, aimed at pandemic-related development response*					
Consider surveying where convening is not possible					

**These proposed networking and convening actions should serve the immediate need in light of development pressures, and in turn create the internal systems for future work. In FY21, emphasize creating a network of like-minded organizations and funders that will be proactive in guiding development and safeguarding natural resources. Consider hosting a quick meeting among close partners to begin that conversation and create interest in the CRJC.*

STRATEGIC GOAL:

CONNECT



Bridge the divide between local communities and state entities for mutual benefit and project completion.

Start action
 Implementing
 Ongoing
 Completed action

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

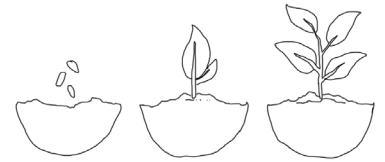
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
1. BOLSTER LRS ACTION & LEADERSHIP					
Delegate Commissioner “Stewardship” of an LRS, as a connective line between their work and the parent organization*					
Create LRS member on-boarding / orientation document, that emphasizes role in municipality and supports local leadership*					
Prepare LRS for Water Resources Management Plan review and update					
Support LRS action / implementation by technical support and access to resources					
Create a suite of LRS recruitment materials (i.e. posters, flyers, news releases) to distribute in municipalities					
Draft a public article presenting the CRJC and its LRS network, including its role, local project highlights, and ways to get involved*					
Draft a letter from the LRS chairs to municipal select boards and conservation commissions, to fill open positions and support the town in guiding development*					
2. CONNECT LOCAL KNOWLEDGE TO BROADER INITIATIVES					
Create internal systems for gathering LRS updates, and share with state agencies as needed					
Create internal system for collecting and reviewing all relevant plans (regional plans, energy plans, transportation plans, water resources management, etc), as a resource for the corridor plan					
Advocate for the inclusion of our recommendations in relevant plans					
Create a system for supporting state-level decision making based on the recommendations in the corridor plan					

**These proposed actions create the “connective tissue” between state actors and local communities, and the lines of communication between the two in light of the pandemic response is critical.*

In FY21, emphasize learning and establishing these lines of communication. Gather knowledge from people on-the-ground, and share with policy makers (and vice versa), within a lens of service to the communities and mutual benefit. In time, revisit plans and policies that need to be adapted to new realities.

STRATEGIC GOAL:

SUSTAIN



Build and maintain an enduring institution that delivers on its mission.

Start action
 Implementing
 Ongoing
 Completed action

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
1. CREATE A ROBUST SYSTEM OF VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT					
Identify desired skillsets, and recruit those individuals as Commissioners*					
Identify needed interest area representation, and recruit those individuals as Commissioners*					
Create a Commissioner on-boarding / orientation document (and, consider Commissioner “mentorship”)					
Review bylaws and align recruitment goals with internal policies					
2. MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXISTING AND PROSPECTIVE FUNDERS					
Identify existing and prospective funding opportunities (including state agencies and private sector organizations)*					
Create annual CRJC factsheet / work / results update for state funders (including LRS work and progress)*					
3. CREATE INTERNAL SYSTEMS FOR FEEDBACK AND LEARNING					
Initiate an annual Full Commission facilitated meeting to summarize legislative outcomes and plan upcoming initiatives*					
Conduct periodic review of mission, work-plan, and implementation of this plan					

**Throughout this document (and specifically outlined within this Strategic Goal) are actions that build internal capacity and leverage the CRJC’s main strengths: the passion and commitment of the people, and it’s connection to government through enabling statute.*

Given the likely financial hardships following pandemic impacts, it is crucial that the CRJC doubles-down on these inherent strengths, and pivots to hosting the important conversations that are most relevant to CT River communities and decision-makers right now. Doing so would garner institutional recognition, and in turn help access future funding opportunities.