



# *Local River Subcommittees*

YOUR VOICE ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

## Becoming Familiar with CRJC Local River Subcommittees

This welcome packet is meant to orient you to the work of the five Local River Subcommittees that are a part of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, collectively protecting the Connecticut River Valley's natural resources.

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Contact Local River Subcommittee Staff

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## Who is the Connecticut River Joint Commissions or "CRJC"?

### Organizational History

Connecticut River Commissions were created by NH and VT in 1987/1988 and directed to cooperate with each other to preserve and protect the visual, ecological and agricultural resources of the Connecticut River Valley, as well as guide its growth and development. They have met together as the Joint Commissions since 1989. Both Commissions are advisory for decisions which affect their river and valley.

See the enabling legislation on the [CRJC website](#) or attached (Appendix Page 115).

### Mission & Geography

The CRJC inform policy decisions, links local action to state and federal initiatives, and convenes partners in a common effort to protect the Valley's resources. See the CRJC Strategic Plan 2020 (Appendix Page 2).

The CRJC work falls within the Connecticut River Watershed and/or Valley situated in the states of NH and VT. It is an accepted "Designated River" in NH meaning it is managed and protected for its outstanding natural and cultural resources in accordance with The NH Rivers Management & Protection Act.

## Organizational Structure and Bylaws

The business of the CRJC are managed under the direction of an Association of Commissioners comprised of all those appointed from both states to serve as members of their respective Commission. Find out more about the CRJC bylaws on the [CRJC website](#) or attached (Appendix Page 125).

## Who are the Local River Subcommittees or "LRS"?

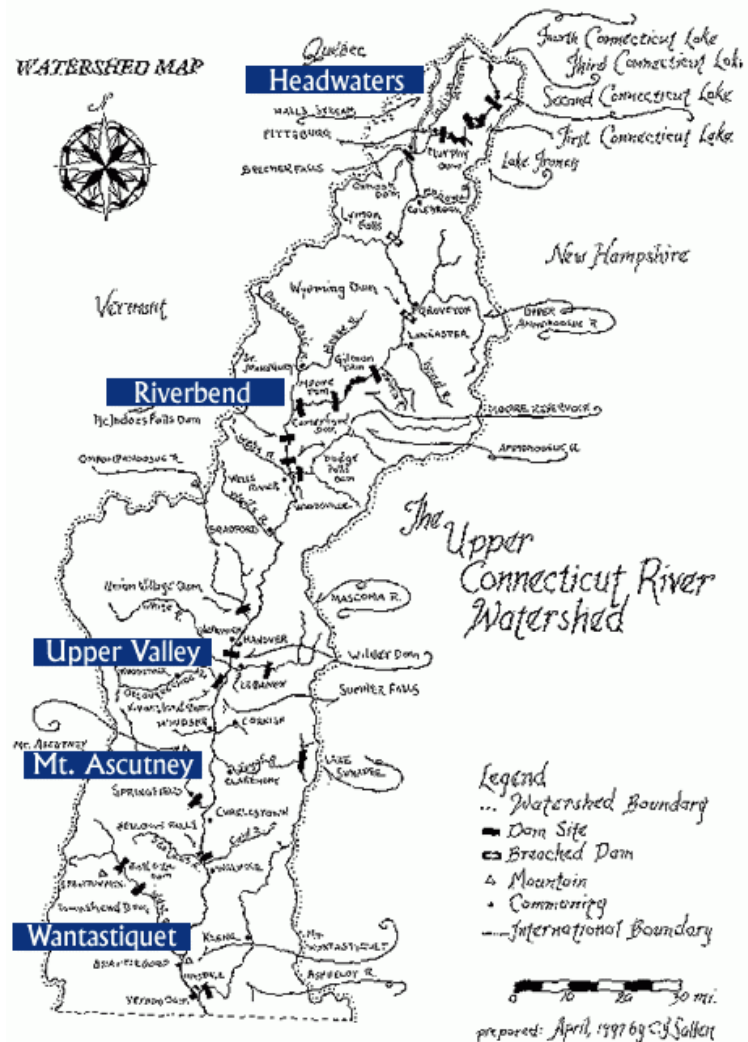
### History

The CRJC work to bring decision-making back home to the people of the Connecticut River Valley. To ensure local leadership of river issues, the CRJC established five Local River Subcommittees (LRS) in January 1993, with the specific approval of the NH legislature. The VT legislature also directed its 27 riverfront communities to participate. They are advisory and have a statutory role in NH (see details [here](#) or Appendix Page 143). Each LRS makes up a portion of participating riverfront communities.

### Membership

The CRJC asks the Selectboard of all 53 of the riverfront towns for nominations and appoints up to two members and several alternates from each town. The strength of the LRS lies in the diversity of their membership. NH law requires that they represent local business, local government, agriculture, riverfront landowners, recreation, and conservation interests. There is never a dull moment around the table!

As a whole, our LRS are composed of over a hundred appointed citizens representing their riverfront towns, voicing their perspective. Their leadership, planning, and expertise are local in nature, and their ideas range far beyond town boundaries as they advise the array of federal, state and municipal agencies, as well as CRJC, on river issues.



## Voting

For Local River Subcommittees, a quorum shall be defined as: any number of members present, provided that half of participating municipalities are represented. Participating municipalities are those with duly-appointed members. Determinations of any matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of members present at that meeting. If it is apparent that VT members are voting differently from NH members, the Chair may direct that separate votes be taken and the results will become part of the record. LRS shall observe Vermont and New Hampshire open meeting laws.

## Member Officers

Annually, each LRS shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from the voting members, and other officers as it deemed necessary. These officers shall hold their respective offices for one year or until their successors are elected and qualified by a majority vote on a formal motion. The Chair shall call the meeting together and preside over all meetings of the LRS. The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties and powers of the Chair in the Chair's absence. Any vacancy among the LRS officers shall be filled by election, for the unexpired term, at the next regular meeting.

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## What does Local River Subcommittee membership involve?

### Member Responsibilities

To be most effective, each LRS needs representation from each town and many perspectives. Your voice is an important component. Meetings are no more than two hours in the evening and take place 4 to 6 times per year. In addition, members spend time on the following:

- ❖ Contact person for your town officials about river-related issues.
- ❖ Help your town put the Connecticut River Management Plan into action.
- ❖ Provide advice about permit applications for projects that could affect the river, including site visits that occur outside of normal meeting times.
- ❖ Provide guidance to VT basin planners for basin plan content and priorities.
- ❖ Advise the CRJC on issues of concern to you or your town, such as water quality problems or main street revitalization.
- ❖ Shape the work being done for our valley by federal and state agencies (guide the Conte Refuge, US Fish & Wildlife Service, EPA, NRCS, National Park Service, and others on how they can best do their job in the region).
- ❖ Contribute to the meeting agenda on specific matters of discussion, concern or acknowledgment.

If you are no longer able to serve, please notify your town and CRJC office with a letter of resignation.

### Techniques of an effective member

#### *Keep Informed, Participate, Build Support and Strengthen Relationships*

Your attendance and participation in meetings is central to our LRS functioning. Take some time to read through the meeting agenda and materials ahead of time. Ask questions – all are relevant and necessary. Create space for other members voice their questions and reflections. Where you can, help other members see the whole issue and all sides of complex items. If you cannot attend, call or email the CRJS office so staff knows. Arrange to get your opinions to the meetings and follow up to learn what

you missed.

As a member representing your home community, it is important to keep up to date with your community's activity including, but not limited to, Selectboard, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Conservation Commission. You may also want to share brief reports with your community about LRS activities, whether it be by chatting at the post office or presenting to the Selectboard. Find a method that works for you. Work with your town to identify local and regional needs or concerns to be taken back to your LRS.

If you are willing and able, become acquainted with the state officials who deal with your region and build a friendly relationship with them. Assess the LRS priorities and link them, whenever possible, to the priorities of these officials. Let them know LRS contributions on a topic and where you stand on legislative issues. When your representatives take a position you support, let them know you support them and ask how you can help.

## Major Subcommittee Responsibilities

### *NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PERMITTING PROCESS*

The LRS are established by law as Local River Management Advisory Committees, abbreviated to LACs. The LACs are given the authority to review New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) shoreland, wetland and alteration of terrain permit applications for projects within ¼ mile of the Connecticut River. The LAC's conduct investigations, usually with a visit to the site, and report to NHDES with recommendations. Our local knowledge and input is a vital part of the permitting process, and NHDES must incorporate our recommendations in their decisions. For more information visit the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program on [the NHDES website](#).

### *VERMONT TACTICAL BASIN PLANS*

Vermont Department of Environment Conservation (DEC) identifies 12 areas where tactical basin plans are organized around, seven of which include land within the Connecticut River watershed. Basin planners undergo a 5-year planning process including assessment of water quality and habitat, compilation of monitoring data, community feedback and improvement strategies. The LRS are consulted as a local stakeholder and partner to the plan. The outcome includes a list of projects that would benefit the basin. For more information [visit the DEC website](#).

## Learn more about your Local River Subcommittee

The CRJC hosts a library of past meeting minutes and watershed management publications on our website [www.crjc.org](http://www.crjc.org). Before your first meeting, you are encouraged to review minutes from the prior two meetings of your LRS.

Publications include river wide and LRS plans in regards to Corridor Management, Recreation Management and Water Resources Management. Other publications have been produced on topics including riparian buffers, boating and historic sites. These are useful resources to review prior and over the course of your membership. See the Riverwide Water Resources Management Plan (Appendix Page 11).

Our staff welcomes you to contact the CRJC office with specific questions any time.

