



SHORE LINES

Newsletter of the Vermont River Conservancy

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VRC Completes 2nd Nulhegan/Connecticut River Easement Project

The Vermont River Conservancy recently negotiated the purchase of a public access easement for boating, camping and fishing just upstream from the mouth of the Nulhegan River where it enters the Connecticut River. Grants were generously provided by the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund and the Connecticut River Joint Commissions Partnership Program. Funds were also raised through a fly rod raffle held jointly with Trout Unlimited.

The 2.3 acre easement, situated along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, is now owned by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Future generations will be grateful to Sherry and Darlene Belknap, owners of the DeBanville General Store, who made this transaction possible.

The easement area, which includes extensive shorelands and an island, was once the site of a large lumber mill operating in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It includes a pull-



Sherry Belknap and Steve Libby talk at the access easement area on the Nulhegan River.

This is the first easement acquisition of the "Nulhegan River Corridor Conservation Project" which involves the acquisition of river corridor easements and fee simple interests in land to defend the corridor against unwise

development. The goal is to conserve and protect for future generations water quality, recreational access, wildlife habitat corridors, forested riparian buffers, archeological resources, and scenic views along the historic and ecologically significant Nulhegan.

out/parking area that also provides access to a previously established easement leading directly to the Connecticut River.

The Nulhegan River, with headwaters in the protected former Champion lands, is one of Vermont's finest "bench-mark" rivers, a river against which the health of all others could be measured.

Kayakers and canoeists at the Belknap and DeBanville access get ready to launch for a paddle down the Connecticut River.



Water Color of the Nulhegan by Annette Lorraine

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NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The last few months of 2007 were very busy here at VRC with the completion of two projects, the hiring of an office/communications manager, the launching of our river management program, board approval for a capital campaign to create an endowment, and the mailing of the largest number ever of end-of-the-year appeal letters.

Last fall VRC added an additional part-time staff member to help "hold down the fort" while I am in the field and working on projects. Linn Syz, our new Office/Communications Manager, organized the end-of-the-year appeal, and has been streamlining office systems so that we are better able to stay on top of all the current projects. We will also have an intern from Vermont Law School this semester who will help research potential land owners to approach with conservation option ideas.

As a result of the fund-raising efforts of the VRC Board, staff and many of our supporters in early 2007, 129 donors generously contributed funds to help purchase the 70-acre Green Crow property at the headwaters of the North Branch. Last fall, with the support of 66 project contributors, VRC purchased the "Upper Pot" swimming hole on

Hancock Brook, now owned by the Town of Worcester (see article on Page 3). In addition, over 100 supporters, many of them first-time contributors, recently donated to our year-end appeal. The overall donor base of VRC has increased by 40% from 2006 to 2007. Many thanks to all.

Seeded by a generous anonymous donation, the VRC Board has approved the establishment of an Endowment Fund. The interest generated by this fund will support VRC operations and provide critical support for VRC protection projects.

Looking ahead to 2008, VRC will continue to work with individual landowners, municipalities, and other groups to protect special places along our rivers and lakes. In addition, a long-term effort to identify and protect critical river corridors is on-going in partnership with the State of Vermont River Management Program and local watershed groups.

VRC will hold "River Corridor Easements" on several properties in the Winooski and White River watersheds within the next few months as part of this program.

The North Branch of the Winooski River and the Nulhegan River in the Northeast Kingdom will remain high priority watersheds for future VRC conservation projects. With grants from the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund, VRC is conducting detailed planning studies of the geomorphic stability of the Nulhegan River, studies which delineate river reaches in need of protection. Similarly, in the "Headwaters" area of the North Branch, we are in contact with landowners of significant parcels and actively discussing conservation options.

2008 looks to be a very exciting year. Thank you all for your support. We will be in touch as we plan some summer outings to our recently conserved lands.

GOT EMAIL??

Send your email address to:
vrc@vermontriverconservancy.org so we can send you project updates, newsletters and announcements about upcoming events.

The VRC is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the protection of Vermont's exceptional water-related lands. Since 1996 VRC has been working to ensure that Vermont's precious waterfalls and gorges, swimming holes, paddling and fishing areas, and undeveloped river corridors are protected in perpetuity for future generations to enjoy. The VRC works in partnership with landowners, municipalities, state and federal agencies, other conservation organizations, and private businesses to protect these unique lands.



HANCOCK BROOK “UPPER POT” PRESERVED

VRC recently acquired and transferred to the Town of Worcester a favorite swimming hole and waterfall along the Hancock Brook in Worcester. Over sixty-one concerned citizens, a small foundation, and countless volunteer hours all helped VRC to protect this unique, undeveloped, 1.7-acre parcel bracketing Hancock Brook. The clean waters, darting trout, private scenic views, a waterfall and swimming hole will now be permanently conserved in its natural state for this and future generations to enjoy.

This conservation project is the second significant acquisition in the North Branch Corridor by the Vermont River Conservancy this year. In April 2007 VRC purchased and transferred to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources 70 acres adjoining the Putnam State Forest (see “**North Branch Update**” below).

The “Upper Pot” project came about as the result of the landowner’s desire to preserve this special place for public use. Shirley Bellemeur, currently residing in California, and her nephew, Worcester resident Jerry Nelson, worked with VRC to make this happen. Both of them wanted to see the proceeds of the sale used to support the music program at Dody Memorial School in Worcester. The purchase price of \$5,000 will be put into an endowment fund for the future needs of the elementary school’s music program.

Thanks to Ms. Bellemeur’s generosity and Mr. Nelson’s assistance, Worcester residents, both young and old, will benefit from this VRC project for generations to come.

Seasonal photos of “Upper Pot” by Stephan Syz (top) and Sue Premo.



NORTH BRANCH UPDATE

Traveling south along Vermont Rt. 12, you can’t miss the North Branch River as it cascades down its valley from Elmore to Montpelier. Slow travel through miles of northern hardwoods, spruce and fir gives you glimpses of the river’s exquisite waters and of Vermont in an earlier day.

This is a very special place – its clean waters, scenic views, and habitat

for ambling moose and darting trout. It is a place where one can spend hours admiring the sparkling cataracts, the wide pools reflecting the surrounding forest and the glittering stones in clear water. For five peaceful miles, you can fish or swim or sit in this forested valley. It is a place without houses or lights or too many people – a river setting once common in Vermont but now rare.

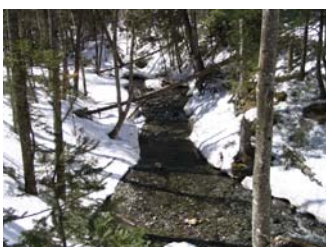
When a parcel within the undeveloped corridor, owned by Green Crow, a timber and real estate development company based in Washington State, came on the

market the VRC Board realized that if these seventy acres on the hip of the Worcester range were developed into house lots, the North Branch River Corridor would never be the same. Our children and we would be poorer for its loss.

The Vermont River Conservancy was able to negotiate an agreement for purchase of the property. Community support poured forth. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board awarded \$108,000, the Fields Ponds Foundation awarded \$11,000 and over 120 businesses and individuals contributed the balance needed for the project to succeed. As contributions

poured in, it became evident that people cared deeply for this corridor. It was also clear that this project would accomplish a critical first step in protecting this magnificent community resource. Our success together is a first action toward keeping the corridor undeveloped, ensuring its public accessibility, protecting its scenic values, maintaining the wildlife corridor connection with Putnam State Forest and the Worcester Range, and keeping the North Branch waters clean for swimming and for native brook trout.

This parcel is located just north of the Worcester – Elmore town line on the West side of Route 12.





*Kayaking on the New Haven River
Photo by Matt Kiedaisch*

Visit our website:

www.vermontriverconservancy.org

HELP US PROTECT MORE EXCEPTIONAL

WATER PLACES!

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES CONSERVATION HAPPEN

The VRC depends on donations of all sizes from those who love the lands beside Vermont's waters. We ask those of you who share a passion for water places to send your contribution today in the enclosed envelope or donate securely via our web site. Your support of VRC offers you an opportunity to make a lasting, positive difference for this state we love.

Gifts of cash, securities, land and other vehicles described on our web site can be designated by you to facilitate projects in progress or for the Endowment Fund recently established by the Board. The Endowment Fund, with an initial goal of \$2,000,000, achieved the six figure level in the last quarter of 2007. Once fully funded, the Endowment Fund will enable VRC to perpetually conserve more access sites on Vermont's waters and more river and lake shores with the interest that it generates and its capital appreciation. We appreciate the contributions of those who have started the Fund and of those who will help us reach our goal.

In addition to greatly assisting the work of VRC, the method of giving you choose may offer you and your family significant financial benefits. Please contact our staff for more information. Call 802-229-0820 or email vrc@vermontriverconservancy.org. Our waters are magical and we welcome you as partners in VRC's conservation work.



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