

Connecticut River Cleanup pulls 37 tons of trash out of the river!

The results are in from the 26th annual Source to Sea Cleanup in September 2022: 1363 volunteers with 126 cleanup groups hauled 37.4 tons of trash out of 85 miles of the Connecticut River and its tributaries!

What did they pull out? The Connecticut River Conservancy, the organizer of this event, provides the following details. Pulled out of the river were: 204 tires; 4,301 plastic bottles, 3,482 aluminum cans, 3,393 glass bottles, and 1,665 nips. In addition, there were 89 large plastic bags of styrofoam, 7,853 pounds of scrap metal, 50 electronics & appliances, 333 pharmaceuticals, 24 automotive items, 233 items of clothing & shoes, 221 construction materials, 11 mattresses, 166 toys & balloons, and 1,202 PPE (personal protective equipment). Astonishing results, and there are similar results every year!

Relicensing of five Connecticut River dams nears end

Legislation in 1920 gave to the federal government the authority to regulate all hydroelectric facilities in the country. These five dams were last relicensed in 1969; these licenses last for 30-50 years. There is dual authority in the relicensing process: on the federal level with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and on the state level with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Two dams are in Massachusetts (Turners Falls Dam & Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility) and are owned by First Light Power. Three of the dams are on the Vermont/New Hampshire border (Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon dams) and are owned by Great River Hydro, a subsidiary of Hydro-Quebec.

The negotiations among the state and federal authorities, the applicant/owners of the hydroelectric facilities, and public interest organizations and individuals have gone on for five to ten years. The update this month is that the public comment period is most likely to take place after May.

Key issues to be resolved include: improved fish passage upstream and downstream; reduced stream bank erosion; improved public access & recreational opportunities at the river; reduced highs and lows in river flow. For more information, look for news articles in the Hampshire Gazette and other local news sources. Check websites for local organizations with water and river expertise, like the Connecticut River Conservancy. Stay tuned.....

