

The River Residents Association

Dedicated to preserving a life worth living on a river worth loving
Montague ~ Gill ~ Northfield

25 February 2013

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20426

RE: Connecticut River concerns -

- **EXTREME WATER LEVEL FLUCTUATIONS**
- **CAMPSITE LICENSE TERMS**

Turners Falls Project No. 1889-081
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485-063

Dear Commission,

Vivien Venskowski
Camp 8W – Trenholm Way
Gill, MA 01354

I am a member of The River Residents Association. The Association is comprised of people who own camps, cottages, and homes along the river. There are 24 “licensed” sites on project lands, and, there are also private land owners, and members of private clubs that recreate on the Connecticut River within the Turners Falls/Northfield MA section of the river.

My major concerns are listed as follows:

- **One major concern is the negative effects we see occurring from extreme erratic water level fluctuations.**
- **silt and sediment buildup**
- **how wildlife and habitat is effected by the instability of the river level (too much too little)**
- **erosion along the shores**
- **wetland/cattail/marsh habitat changing/vanishing**
- **vanishing sandy beaches**

Is there a way to create moderation, or eliminate altogether, dramatic water level fluctuations?

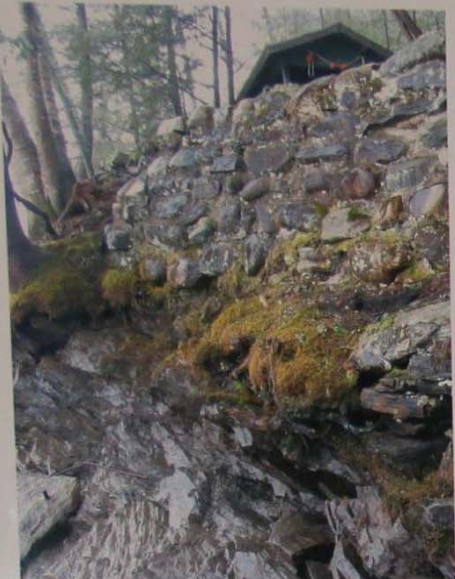
Another concern is about our continued existence as residents along the river. Most of us in this association are “Camp” owners with a “License” agreement allowing us to occupy the land.

We respectfully ask for consideration in lengthening the license term commensurate to the number of years approved for FirstLight Hydro Generation Company's new license to operate beginning in 2018. As licensees, we are mandated to do certain things, inspected once every year and be "in compliance" with the terms FirstLight Hydro Generating Company sets forth. **As you can imagine, it's unsettling to not know if all our love, sweat and money spent on our river homes will be for naught at the end of a 5-year license.** The power company reaps many rewards using the river to generate power. For nearly 100 years our families have lived and recreated on this stretch of the river. We act as caretakers, we are self-appointed "Stewards". We are the eyes and ears of the woods and waters. We investigate smoke sightings in the woods and have aborted forest fires, provide shelter and rides to people in canoes caught in storms, tow boaters out of gas or with broken engines and props, rescue anglers and others who fall over board and can't swim, rescue kayakers who flip during cold water months, pick up countless amounts of trash after the "weekend warriors," assist novice boaters, try to protect the wildlife, remove invasive plants and escort weary paddlers, rescue women in labor off the water to get to hospital, and sadly, even help search for bodies.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivien Venskowski
A member of The River Residents Association
Montague ~ Gill ~ Northfield
Massachusetts



Fall 2012 – Erosion at Stone Wall – no vegetation



Summer 2005 – Waterfront on the "Horse Race"
Root Stump with vegetation – Stone Wall obscured by trees - Site # 14E



Summer 2010 - Cottage Waterfront
Root Stump (submerged) with hemlock tree
Site # 14E

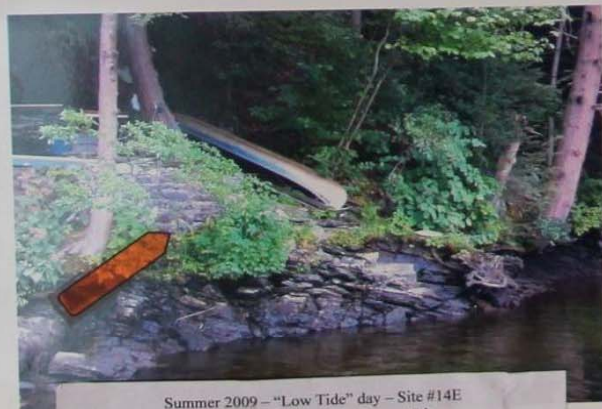
2010: Northfield Mountain is not operational from May to end of November. A planned...
into a debacle, as sediment gunked up the works when they drained the upper reservoir...
dumped sediment from late May to early August to try to free up their works until an EPA...
desist order prevented them from dumping further.



Summer 2010 - Root Stump Erosion, hemlock tree barely holding on
On the "Horse Race" - Montague MA

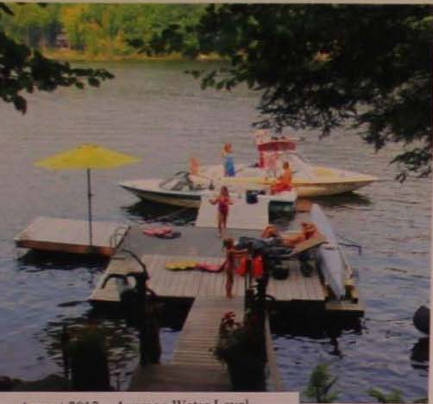


Summer 2012 - Root Stump Erosion, hemlock tree gone
On the "Horse Race" - Montague MA



Summer 2009 – "Low Tide" day – Site #14E
Stone wall visible with some vegetation

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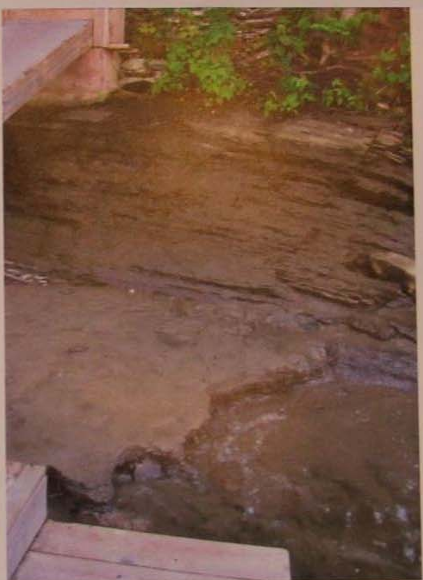
August 2012 - Average Water Level
Site #14E Montague MA



July 2011 - Extreme "Low Tide" day MORNING
Silt deposits from 2010 when Nfld. Pumped Storage flushed their reservoir



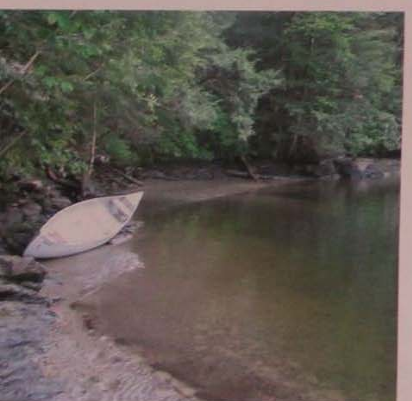
Summer 2008 - "Low Tide"
Site #14E Montague MA



July 2011 - Extreme "Low Tide" day AFTERNOON
Silt washes away as tide rises all day and boat traffic wakes increase



Site #14E - Montague MA



Connecticut River Watershed
Turners Falls/Northfield pool
Submitted to FERC at Scoping Meeting
30 January 2013
by
The River Residents Association
Box 405
Montague MA 01351

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Summer 2011 - Average Summer Water Levels #7E



Summer 2011 - Dramatic "Low Tide" - upstream from TF Rod & Gun Club
Montague MA - Cottage #7E waterfront



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This river
Is Our
Legacy!
From
Our
Grandparents
To
Our
Parents
To us
And on
Into the
Future
To Our
Grandchild
And their
Children's
Children...



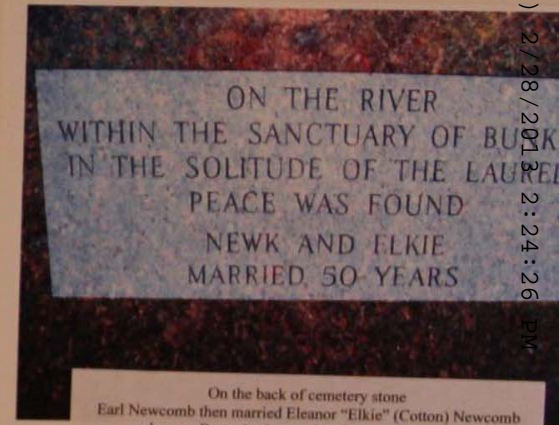
January 2013
Looking north from shore in Gill
Southern tip of Captain Kids Island on the right



Earl Newcomb Camp circa 1934
This handmade sign has hung at the property
in honor of Earl's 1st wife, Bernadine "Bunny" (Cotton) Newcomb
Deceased 1953



Winter 2009 - Mute Swans
Cygnet, the Cob and his Pen
Montague MA



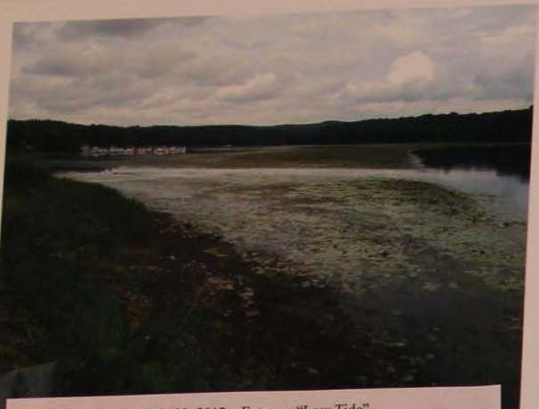
On the back of cemetery stone
Earl Newcomb then married Eleanor "Elkie" (Cotton) Newcomb
who was Bunny's sister. After 50 years of marriage
Earl & Eleanor both died the summer of 2004



Summer 2012
6 and 7 year old resident water skiers
They all learned this summer



1978 - Earl Newcomb Camp #14E
circa 1934



July 29, 2012 - Extreme "Low Tide"
Barton Cove, Gill MA
MA State Public Boat Ramp, Franklin County Boat Club
Barton Cove Camping & Recreation Area



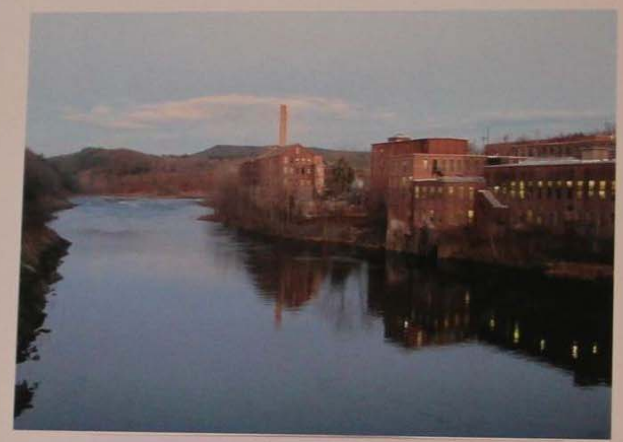
The ByPass Channel - "THE DEAD REACH"
Looking south from the Greenfield/Montague Bridge by the canal
November 2012



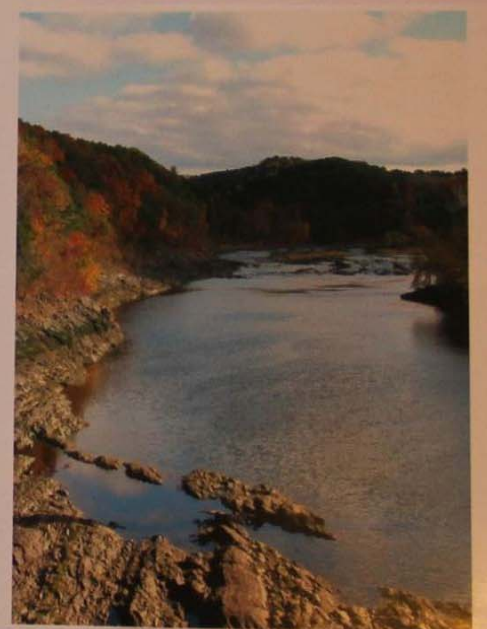
The ByPass Channel - "THE DEAD REACH"
Looking south from the Greenfield/Montague Bridge by the canal
October 2012



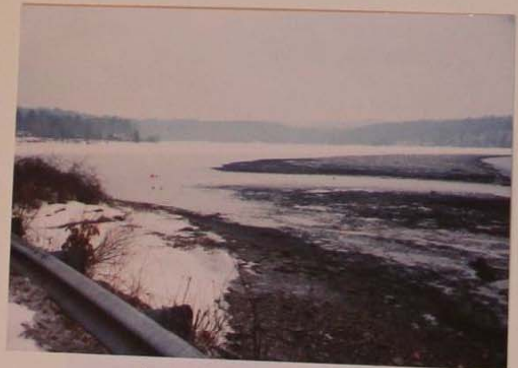
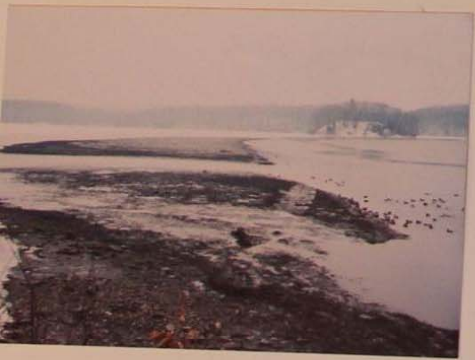
July 29, 2012 - Extreme "Low Tide" - Barton Cove, Gill MA
Very limited boating access, alarmingly limited Emergency Rescue access.
T.V. Channel 22 News aired from Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club due to
extreme low water and poor access from all launching sites from
Gill/Montague MA Dam up river to Vernon VT Dam



The ByPass Channel - "THE DEAD REACH"
Below the Montague/Gill Dam
Old paper mill buildings, Turners Falls Village MA
Looking north from the Montague/Greenfield Bridge by the canal
November 2102



The ByPass Channel - "THE DEAD REACH"
Looking north from the Greenfield/Montague Bridge by the canal
October 2012



January 2012 - Extreme "Low Tide"
Franklin County Boat Club, Barton's Cove, Gill MA

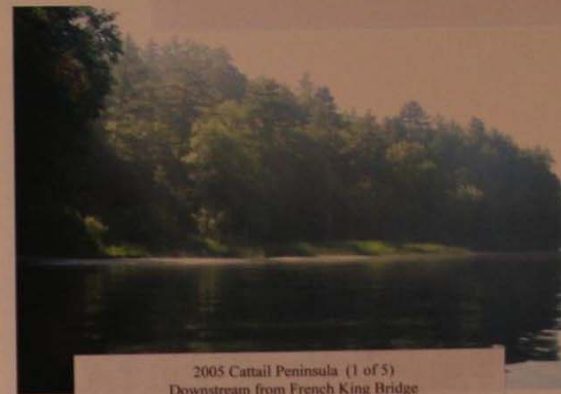
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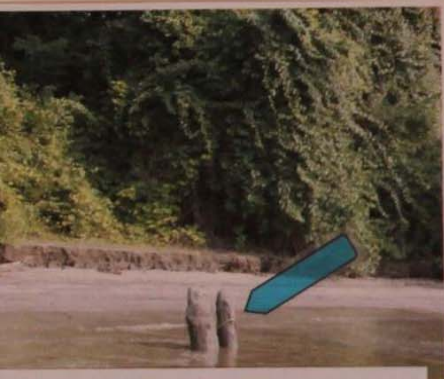
Summer 2011
Captain Kids Island beach area
Note the floating milk bottle stump marker
Northfield MA



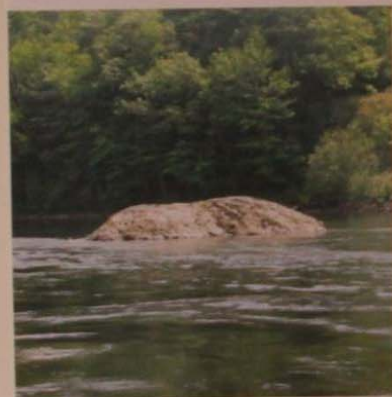
Summer 2008
Shoreline at cow pastures south of Captain Kids Island
Gill MA



2005 Cattail Peninsula (1 of 5)
Downstream from French King Bridge
Gill MA



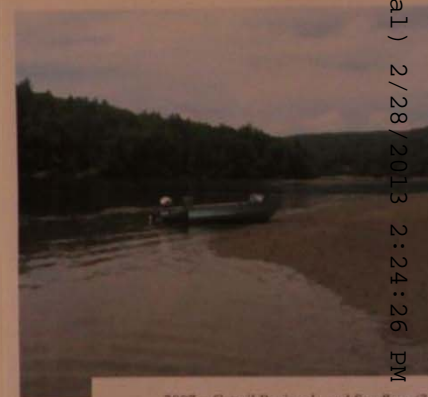
Summer 2011
Captain Kids Island beach area
Stump referenced below
Northfield MA



2009
French King Rock



2005 Cattail Peninsula (2 of 5)
Gill MA

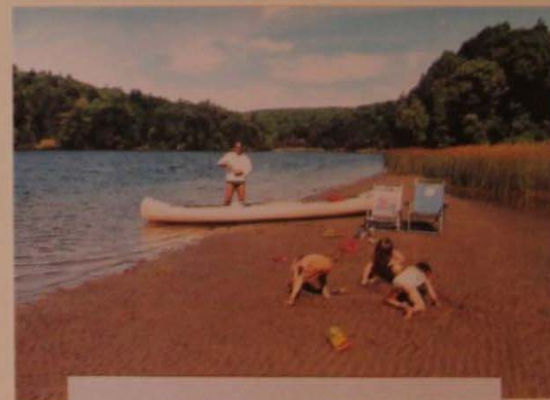


2007 - Cattail Peninsula and Sandbar
Gill MA

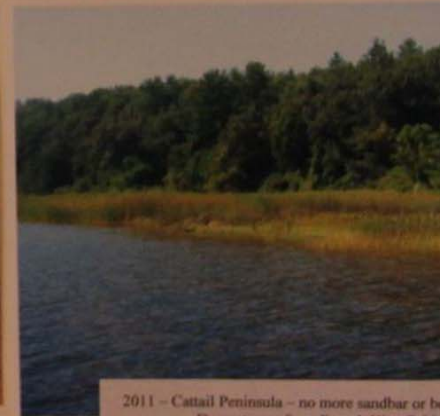


Summer 2012
Captain Kids Island Beach area
As 8 ft of beach depth when we tied our boats up to picnic.
and, we had to keep moving our chairs backwards away from the
rising water.
Northfield MA

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2007 - Cattail Peninsula and sandbar (4 of 5)
Downstream from French King Bridge
Gill MA



2011 - Cattail Peninsula - no more sandbar or beach
Downstream from French King Bridge
Gill MA

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