Draft Application for New License for Major Water Power Project – Existing Dam

Northfield Project

Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (FERC Project Number 2485)
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project Number 1889)

EXHIBIT E- ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

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EXHIBIT E – ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The following excerpt from the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 18 CFR § 5.18(b) describes the required content of this Exhibit.

Exhibit E—Environmental Exhibit. The specifications for Exhibit E in §§4.41, 4.51, or 4.61 of this chapter shall not apply to applications filed under this part. The Exhibit E included in any license application filed under this part must address the resources listed in the Pre-Application Document provided for in §5.6; follow the Commission's "Preparing Environmental Assessments: Guidelines for Applicants, Contractors, and Staff," as they may be updated from time-to-time; and meet the following format and content requirements:

(1) General description of the river basin. Describe the river system, including relevant tributaries; give measurements of the area of the basin and length of stream; identify the project's river mile designation or other reference point; describe the topography and climate; and discuss major land uses and economic activities.

(2) Cumulative effects. List cumulatively affected resources based on the Commission's Scoping Document, consultation, and study results. Discuss the geographic and temporal scope of analysis for those resources. Describe how resources are cumulatively affected and explain the choice of the geographic scope of analysis. Include a brief discussion of past, present, and future actions, and their effects on resources based on the new license term (30–50 years). Highlight the effect on the cumulatively affected resources from reasonably foreseeable future actions. Discuss past actions' effects on the resource in the Affected Environment Section.

(3) Applicable laws. Include a discussion of the status of compliance with or consultation under the following laws, if applicable:

> *(i) Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The applicant must file a request for a water quality certification (WQC), as required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act no later than the deadline specified in §5.23(b). Potential applicants are encouraged to consult with the certifying agency or tribe concerning information requirements as early as possible.*
>
> *(ii) Endangered Species Act (ESA). Briefly describe the process used to address project effects on federally listed or proposed species in the project vicinity. Summarize any anticipated environmental effects on these species and provide the status of the consultation process. If the applicant is the Commission's non-Federal designee for informal consultation under the ESA, the applicant's draft biological assessment must be included.*
>
> *(iii) Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Document from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and/or the appropriate Regional Fishery Management Council any essential fish habitat (EFH) that may be affected by the project. Briefly discuss each managed species and life stage for which EFH was designated. Include, as appropriate, the abundance, distribution, available habitat, and habitat use by the managed species. If the project may affect EFH, prepare a draft "EFH Assessment" of the impacts of the project. The draft EFH Assessment should contain the information outlined in 50 CFR 600.920(e).*
>
> *(iv) Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). Section 307(c)(3) of the CZMA requires that all federally licensed and permitted activities be consistent with approved state Coastal Zone Management Programs. If the project is located within a coastal zone boundary or if a project affects a resource located in the boundaries of the designated coastal zone, the applicant must certify that the project is consistent with the state Coastal Zone Management Program. If the project is within or affects a resource within the coastal zone, provide the date the applicant sent the consistency certification information to the state agency, the date the state agency received the certification, and*

the date and action taken by the state agency (for example, the agency will either agree or disagree with the consistency statement, waive it, or ask for additional information). Describe any conditions placed on the state agency's concurrence and assess the conditions in the appropriate section of the license application. If the project is not in or would not affect the coastal zone, state so and cite the coastal zone program office's concurrence.

(v) National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Section 106 of NHPA requires the Commission to take into account the effect of licensing a hydropower project on any historic properties, and allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed action. "Historic Properties" are defined as any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). If there would be an adverse effect on historic properties, the applicant may include a Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) to avoid or mitigate the effects. The applicant must include documentation of consultation with the Advisory Council, the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, National Park Service, members of the public, and affected Indian tribes, where applicable.

(vi) Pacific Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Act (Act). If the project is not within the Columbia River Basin, this section shall not be included. The Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Program) developed under the Act directs agencies to consult with Federal and state fish and wildlife agencies, appropriate Indian tribes, and the Northwest Power Planning Council (Council) during the study, design, construction, and operation of any hydroelectric development in the basin. Section 12.1A of the Program outlines conditions that should be provided for in any original or new license. The program also designates certain river reaches as protected from development. The applicant must document consultation with the Council, describe how the act applies to the project, and how the proposal would or would not be consistent with the program. (vii) Wild and Scenic Rivers and Wilderness Acts. Include a description of any areas within or in the vicinity of the proposed project boundary that are included in, or have been designated for study for inclusion in, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, or that have been designated as wilderness area, recommended for such designation, or designated as a wilderness study area under the Wilderness Act.

(4) Project facilities and operation. Provide a description of the project to include:

(i) Maps showing existing and proposed project facilities, lands, and waters within the project boundary;

(ii) The configuration of any dams, spillways, penstocks, canals, powerhouses, tailraces, and other structures;

(iii) The normal maximum water surface area and normal maximum water surface elevation (mean sea level), gross storage capacity of any impoundments;

(iv) The number, type, and minimum and maximum hydraulic capacity and installed (rated) capacity of existing and proposed turbines or generators to be included as part of the project;

(v) An estimate of the dependable capacity, and average annual energy production in kilowatt hours (or mechanical equivalent);

(vi) A description of the current (if applicable) and proposed operation of the project, including any daily or seasonal ramping rates, flushing flows, reservoir operations, and flood control operations.

(5) Proposed action and action alternatives.

(i) The environmental document must explain the effects of the applicant's proposal on resources.

For each resource area addressed include:

(A) A discussion of the affected environment;

(B) A detailed analysis of the effects of the applicant's licensing proposal and, if reasonably possible, any preliminary terms and conditions filed with the Commission; and

(C) Any unavoidable adverse impacts.

(ii) The environmental document must contain, with respect to the resources listed in the Pre-Application Document provided for in §5.6, and any other resources identified in the Commission's scoping document prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and §5.8, the following information, commensurate with the scope of the project:

(A) Affected environment. The applicant must provide a detailed description of the affected environment or area(s) to be affected by the proposed project by each resource area. This description must include the information on the affected environment filed in the Pre-Application Document provided for in §5.6, developed under the applicant's approved study plan, and otherwise developed or obtained by the applicant. This section must include a general description of socio-economic conditions in the vicinity of the project including general land use patterns (e.g., urban, agricultural, forested), population patterns, and sources of employment in the project vicinity.

(B) Environmental analysis. The applicant must present the results of its studies conducted under the approved study plan by resource area and use the data generated by the studies to evaluate the beneficial and adverse environmental effects of its proposed project. This section must also include, if applicable, a description of any anticipated continuing environmental impacts of continued operation of the project, and the incremental impact of proposed new development of project works or changes in project operation. This analysis must be based on the information filed in the Pre-Application Document provided for in §5.6, developed under the applicant's approved study plan, and other appropriate information, and otherwise developed or obtained by the Applicant.

(C) Proposed environmental measures. The applicant must provide, by resource area, any proposed new environmental measures, including, but not limited to, changes in the project design or operations, to address the environmental effects identified above and its basis for proposing the measures. The applicant must describe how each proposed measure would protect or enhance the existing environment, including, where possible, a non-monetary quantification of the anticipated environmental benefits of the measure. This section must also include a statement of existing measures to be continued for the purpose of protecting and improving the environment and any proposed preliminary environmental measures received from the consulted resource agencies, Indian tribes, or the public. If an applicant does not adopt a preliminary environmental measure proposed by a resource agency, Indian tribe, or member of the public, it must include its reasons, based on project specific information.

(D) Unavoidable adverse impacts. Based on the environmental analysis, discuss any adverse impacts that would occur despite the recommended environmental measures. Discuss whether any such impacts are short- or long-term, minor or major, cumulative or site-specific.

(E) Economic analysis. The economic analysis must include annualized, current cost-based information. For a new or subsequent license, the applicant must include the cost of operating and maintaining the project under the existing license. For an original license, the applicant must estimate the cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed project. For either type of license, the applicant should estimate the cost of each proposed resource protection, mitigation, or enhancement measure and any specific measure filed with the Commission by agencies, Indian tribes, or members of the public when the application is filed. For an existing license, the applicant's economic analysis must estimate the value of

developmental resources associated with the project under the current license and the applicant's proposal. For an original license, the applicant must estimate the value of the developmental resources for the proposed project. As applicable, these developmental resources may include power generation, water supply, irrigation, navigation, and flood control. Where possible, the value of developmental resources must be based on market prices. If a protection, mitigation, or enhancement measure reduces the amount or value of the project's developmental resources, the applicant must estimate the reduction.

(F) Consistency with comprehensive plans. Identify relevant comprehensive plans and explain how and why the proposed project would, would not, or should not comply with such plans and a description of any relevant resource agency or Indian tribe determination regarding the consistency of the project with any such comprehensive plan.

(G) Consultation Documentation. Include a list containing the name, and address of every Federal, state, and interstate resource agency, Indian tribe, or member of the public with which the applicant consulted in preparation of the Environmental Document.

H) Literature cited. Cite all materials referenced including final study reports, journal articles, other books, agency plans, and local government plans.

(6) The applicant must also provide in the Environmental Document:

(A) Functional design drawings of any fish passage and collection facilities or any other facilities necessary for implementation of environmental measures, indicating whether the facilities depicted are existing or proposed (these drawings must conform to the specifications of §4.39 of this chapter regarding dimensions of full-sized prints, scale, and legibility);

(B) A description of operation and maintenance procedures for any existing or proposed measures or facilities;

(C) An implementation or construction schedule for any proposed measures or facilities, showing the intervals following issuance of a license when implementation of the measures or construction of the facilities would be commenced and completed;

(D) An estimate of the costs of construction, operation, and maintenance, of any proposed facilities, and of implementation of any proposed environmental measures.

(E) A map or drawing that conforms to the size, scale, and legibility requirements of §4.39 of this chapter showing by the use of shading, cross-hatching, or other symbols the identity and location of any measures or facilities, and indicating whether each measure or facility is existing or proposed (the map or drawings in this exhibit may be consolidated).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 FirstLight's Application for a New License

FirstLight Hydro Generating Company (FirstLight), in accordance with Sections (§§) 5.17 and 5.18 of Title 18 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), is filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) an Application for New License for Major Project- Existing Dam. The current license for the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (Turners Falls Project) was issued on May 5, 1980 and expires on April 30, 2018. The license for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project was issued on May 14, 1968 and also expires on April 30, 2018. Although the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Project are currently licensed as separate projects, FirstLight is seeking a single license for both developments, and will hereafter refer to the Turners Falls Project as the Turners Falls Development and the Northfield Project as the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development or collectively as the Northfield Project (or Project).

The Turners Falls Development includes the Turners Falls Dam, which creates the Turners Falls Impoundment (TFI) on the Connecticut River. The Turners Falls Dam consists of two individual concrete gravity dams, referred to as the Gill Dam and Montague Dam, which are connected by a natural rock island known as Great Island. The 630-foot-long Montague Dam connects Great Island to the west bank of the Connecticut River and includes four bascule type gates, each 120 feet wide by 13.25 feet high and a fixed crest section which is normally not overflowed. The Gill Dam is approximately 55-feet-high and 493-feet-long extending from the Gill shoreline (east bank) to Great Island and includes three tainter spillway gates, each 40-foot-wide by 39-foot-high.

Adjacent to the Montague Dam is the 214-foot-long gatehouse equipped with 15 operating gates controlling flow to the power canal. Six (6) of the gates are 10'-8" high by 9' wide wooden gates and nine (9) of the gates are 12'-7" high by 9'-6" wide wooden gates. The Gatehouse fishway, described below, passes through the gatehouse at the east bank.

The power canal is approximately 2.1 miles long and ranges in width from approximately 920 feet in the Cabot Station forebay (downstream terminus of canal) to 120 feet in the canal proper. The canal has a design capacity of approximately 18,000 cfs. Several entities withdraw water from the power canal. The major ones are FirstLight's Station No. 1 and Cabot Station. Station No. 1 is located closer to the beginning of the power canal and Cabot Station is located at the downstream terminus of the power canal. The generation and hydraulic capacity of Station No. 1 are 5,963 kW and 2,210 cfs, respectively. The generation and hydraulic capacity of Cabot Station are 62.016 MW and 13,728 cfs, respectively.

The Turners Falls Development is equipped with three upstream fish passage facilities, including (in order from downstream to upstream): the Cabot fishway, the Spillway fishway, and the Gatehouse fishway. The Cabot and Spillway fishways move migrating fish from the Connecticut River into the power canal and the Gatehouse fishway moves fish from the power canal to above the Turners Falls Dam. A downstream fish passage facility is located at Cabot Station, at the downstream terminus of the power canal. Assuming no spill is occurring at Turners Falls Dam, fish moving downstream pass through the gatehouse (which has no racks) and into the power canal.

The TFI extends approximately 20 miles upstream to just below the Vernon Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1904), which is owned and operated by TransCanada. To provide storage capacity for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, the TFI elevation may vary, per the FERC license, from a minimum elevation[1] of 176.0 feet to a maximum elevation of 185.0 feet constituting a 9 foot fluctuation as

[1]The Project datum is the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD29). All elevations in the license application are based on the NGVD29 datum unless otherwise noted.

measured at the Turners Falls Dam. The usable storage capacity in this 9 foot fluctuation, as measured at the Turners Falls Dam, is approximately 16,150 acre-feet.

The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development consists of an Upper Reservoir and dam/dikes, an intake, pressure shaft, underground powerhouse and tailrace. The crest elevation of the Upper Reservoir's Main Dam is at elevation 1010 feet. In addition to the Main Dam there are several dam/dikes forming the Upper Reservoir. The Upper Reservoir elevation may vary, per the FERC license, from a minimum elevation of 938 feet to a maximum elevation of 1000.5 feet constituting a 62.5 foot drawdown. FERC has allowed temporary variances to increase the maximum elevation to 1004.5 feet during certain periods to meet electric grid system needs.

The intake channel directs water from the Upper Reservoir into the pressure conduit intake and eventually to the underground powerhouse. At the time of filing this document, the electrical capacity of the four (4) reversible pump-turbines is as follows: Unit 1: 267.9 MW, Unit 2: 291.7 MW. Unit 3: 291.7 MW and Unit 4: 291.7 MW for a total station nameplate capacity of 1,143.0 MW. When operating at maximum pumping mode, the approximate hydraulic capacity is 15,200 cfs. Alternatively, when operating at maximum generation mode, the approximate hydraulic capacity is 20,000 cfs.

Because many studies needed to inform a FirstLight proposal are incomplete[2], FirstLight is not proposing any changes to the Project at this time with the exception of the Upper Reservoir and minor changes to the Project Boundary. FirstLight is proposing to utilize more of the Upper Reservoir storage capacity year round. As noted above and again in Exhibit A, the current FERC license allows the Upper Reservoir to operate between 1000.5 feet to 938 feet, for a 62.5 foot drawdown. FirstLight proposes to increase the useable storage of the Upper Reservoir from 1004.5 feet to 920 feet year-round, for an 84.5 foot drawdown.

1.2 Purpose of Action and Need for Power

1.2.1 Purpose of Actions

FERC must decide whether to issue a new hydropower license to FirstLight for the Project and what conditions should be placed on any license issued. In deciding whether and under what conditions to issue a license for a hydroelectric project, pursuant to Section 10(a)(1) of the Federal Power Act (FPA), FERC must determine that the Project will be best adapted to a comprehensive plan for improving or developing the waterway. In addition to the power and developmental purposes for which licenses are issued, FERC is required under Section 4 (e) of the FPA to give equal consideration to the purposes of energy conservation, the protection, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of, fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), the protection of recreational opportunities, and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality.

Issuing a new license for the Project would allow FirstLight to continue to generate and transmit electricity at the Project for the term of the new license, making electric power from a renewable resource available to serve regional demand.

Exhibit E of this license application has been prepared in accordance with 18 CFR § 5.18(b) and in general conformance with the Commission's Preparing Environmental Assessments: Guidelines for Applicants, Contractors and Staff (FERC, 2008). Exhibit E is designed to support FERC's required analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended. The Exhibit when finalized will analyze the environmental and economic effects associated with the continued operation of the Project, as proposed by FirstLight. This Exhibit when finalized will include measures proposed by FirstLight for the Protection, Mitigation and Enhancement (PM&E) of resources that would potentially be affected by FirstLight's proposed Project. The effects of a no-action alternative will also be considered.

[2] Due to the closure of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear in December 2014, FERC delayed the start of 13 fish and aquatic and water quality studies until 2015 (11 studies) and 2016 (2 studies).

1.2.2 Need for Power

The Project is located within the ISO-New England (ISO-NE) power system, which is responsible for dispatch and movement of wholesale power in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. ISO-NE prepares a 10-year load projection in energy demand, which it utilizes to plan improvements to the existing transmission system. ISO-NE currently predicts that the New England region, peak summer energy usage demand for the 10-year period from 2014 through 2023 will increase annually by 1.3%[3]. Over the term of the license, the Project will provide power and ancillary services to help meet this growing demand.

The Turners Falls Development is operated as a baseload, voltage control, and reserve capacity facility within the regional electrical system.

The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development is vitally important to the reliability and efficient operation of the New England electric grid. With the Upper Reservoir at its current maximum elevation of 1000.5 ft, it can operate at full generating capacity output from its four (4) generating units for approximately 8.5 hours and produce 8,475 MWH of power. During high electrical demand periods, such as excessively warm periods in the summer, the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development is called upon by ISO-NE to meet electrical demands, including significant ramping demands, or held for quick start contingency response as needed to meet the circumstances.

ISO-NE is an independent, non-profit, Regional Transmission Organization, responsible for reliably operating New England's approximately 32,000 MW bulk electric power generation and transmission system. During many periods of the year, ISO-NE calls upon the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development to balance the system to accommodate both changes in load and generation. In the last 12 years, FirstLight has obtained four (4) temporary amendments from FERC to utilize additional Upper Reservoir storage that the Project was designed to provide for generation during periods of high electrical demand in New England. During these times, possessing reliable energy supplies and significant operating flexibility at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development to address both load and supply changes (e.g. changing interchange schedules, accommodating block loading of other units' commitment and decommitment) is critical to ISO-NE's reliable operation of the power system. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development provides critical energy, operating reserves and operational flexibility to ISO-NE system operation.

In December 2014, the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (619 MW), located in Vernon, VT was taken off-line. In addition, the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (680 MW), located in Plymouth, MA is reportedly closing no later than June 2019. Several of the region's older generators—and some of its largest—have already ceased operations or plan to exit the markets by 2018. They take with them over 3,500 MW of regional capacity including: Braydon Point Station (1,535 MW from oil and coal), Mount Tom Station (143 MW from coal), Norwalk Harbor Station (342 MW from oil), Salem Harbor Station (749 MW from oil and coal) and Vermont Yankee (609 MW from nuclear). In addition these facilities, ISO-NE notes several other facilities at risk.

The value of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development was demonstrated following the August 14, 2003 major blackout in the New York ISO (NY-ISO) grid. On August 15, ISO-NE parted all electrical ties to the New York electrical system to prevent the blackout from spreading further. When it was time to rejoin the two power grids, ISO-NE requested the connection be made at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. Once the lines were energized, final adjustments were made by having the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development reduce generation to allow for a smooth

[3]ISO-NE Regional System Plan for 2014 at Section 1.3.1.1 (page 9) – *(Comment – the section states "The ISO forecasts the 10-year growth rate to be 1.3% per year for the summer peak demand, 0.6% per year for the winter peak demand, and 1.0% per year for the annual use of electric energy. The annual load factor (i.e., the ratio of the average hourly load during a year to peak hourly load) continues to decline from 56.1% in 2014 to 54.7% in 2023.")*

synchronization of the two systems. The interconnection of the two systems allowed NY-ISO to begin restoration of the north portion of the NY power grid.

1.3 Applicable Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

Issuance of a new license for the Project is subject to numerous requirements under the FPA and other applicable statutes. The major acts and related requirements are described below. Actions undertaken by FirstLight or the agency with jurisdiction related to each requirement also are described.

1.3.1 Clean Water Act

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires FirstLight to obtain certification from the state in which the Project discharges water of the Project's compliance with applicable provisions of the CWA, or a waiver of certification from the appropriate state agency, which for the Project is the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP). FERC regulations require that a request for CWA Section 401 certification be filed within 60 days of FERC's issuance of a notice of acceptance of the final license application and ready for environmental analysis (REA). FirstLight has consulted with the MADEP throughout the relicensing. FirstLight is prepared to file its application for CWA Section 401 certification with the MADEP in a timely manner.

1.3.2 Endangered Species Act

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires Federal agencies to consult with the USFWS and NMFS to ensure that their actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat for these listed species. FirstLight has been designated as FERC's non-federal representative for purposes of informal consultation with the USFWS and NMFS under Section 7 of the ESA, which is ongoing.

Several species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA occur or may occur in the Project area. FirstLight will develop a draft Biological Assessment to evaluate the impacts of relicensing the Project on such species once relicensing studies are complete.

1.3.3 Magnuson-Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The Magnuson-Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires Federal agencies to consult with the Secretary of Commerce with respect to any action it undertakes that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Although NMFS has designated EFH for Atlantic salmon on the Connecticut River, the designation only applies to the mixing water and brackish salinity zone and tidal freshwater salinity zone of the Connecticut River; it does not apply to the Project area. The CRASC has ceased its Atlantic salmon restoration efforts due to low return rates and the shifting focus to other anadromous fish. Accordingly, FirstLight does not anticipate that relicensing the Project will adversely affect EFH for Atlantic salmon. EFH has not been designated for any other species in the Project area.

1.3.4 Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972

Under § 307(c)(3)(A) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, (CZMA), (16 U.S.C. § 1456(3)(A)), the Commission cannot issue a license for a Project within or affecting a state's coastal zone unless the state CZMA agency concurs with the license applicant's certification of consistency with the state's CZMA program or waives its concurrence.

The official Massachusetts coastal zone includes the lands and waters within an area defined by the seaward limit of the state's territorial sea, extending from the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border south to the Massachusetts-Rhode Island border, and landward to 100 feet inland of specified major roads, rail lines, other visible rights-of-way. The Project is not located within the state's coastal zone boundary and does not affect any land or water use or natural resource of the state's coastal zone. Therefore, the Project is not subject to Massachusetts coastal zone program review. In correspondence dated June 9, 2015, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management confirmed that the relicensing the Project is not an activity subject to the state's federal consistency review. The state's letter is attached as Attachment A of Exhibit E.

1.3.5 National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

As the lead Federal agency for hydropower relicensing, FERC is required to take into account the effects of its undertakings on historic properties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). FERC designated FirstLight as its non-Federal representative for prefiling consultation under Section 106 by notice issued December 21, 2012.

As part of its role as FERC's non-federal representative, FirstLight developed and executed several studies to identify and assess, in consultation with the MHC, VDHP and NHDHR, Nolumbeka Inc., and potentially affected Indian tribes, any adverse effects on historic properties resulting from continued operation of the Project, as required under 36 CFR § 800.5. The results of those studies are discussed in Section 3.3.8.

1.4 Public Review and Consultation

The Commission's regulations (18 CFR § 5.1(d)) require an applicant to consult with appropriate Federal and state agencies, Indian tribes, and members of the public that may be interested in the proceeding before filing an application for a license. In addition, Section 5.18(b)(5)(ii)(G) requires documentation of such consultation in the form of a list of consulted entities. Confirmation of FirstLight's prefiling consultation is included in Section 6.

1.4.1 Scoping

Issuance of a license requires preparation of either an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), in accordance with the NEPA. The preparation of an EA or EIS is supported by a scoping process to ensure the identification and analysis of all pertinent issues.

On December 21, 2012, the Commission issued a notice of commencement of proceeding stating FERC intended to prepare an EIS for the Project together with three other hydroelectric projects owned and operated by TransCanada, located in series on the Connecticut River above the Turners Falls Dam previously had the same license expiration date as the FirstLight Project (April 30, 2018). However, on January 16, 2015, TransCanada requested a 1-year license extension, which was granted by FERC on July 22, 2015 making the new license expiration date April 30, 2019. The projects in downstream to upstream order include Vernon Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1904), Bellows Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1855) and Wilder Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1892).

Also on December 21, 2012, the Commission issued Scoping Document 1 (SD1). SD1 provided Relicensing Participants with FERC's preliminary list of issues and alternatives to be addressed in an EIS, for the Project relicensing and enabled Relicensing Participants to more effectively participate in and contribute to the scoping process.

The Commission held three public scoping meetings as follows:

- Projects: Vernon Project, Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and Turners Falls Development - Turners Falls, MA (January 30, 2013)
- Projects: Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and Turners Falls Development-Turners Falls, MA (January 31, 2013)
- Projects: Cumulative River Projects' Cumulative Effects- Turners Falls, MA (January 31, 2013)

A site visit to the FirstLight Developments was conducted on October 4, 5 and 11, 2012. Though typically the site visits are held after the filing of the Pre-Application Document (PAD) and in association with the scoping process, FERC held the site visits prior to formal scoping meetings before the onset of winter limited access to the project facilities. The scoping meetings (January 30-31, 2013) and site visits (October, 4, 5, 11, 2012) were noticed in a local newspaper and the Federal Register. The scoping meetings were recorded and the transcript posted by the Commission on its Internet E-Library.

The Commission requested that written comments on SD1 and FirstLight's PAD be provided to the Commission no later than March 1, 2013. In addition to the oral comments received during the scoping meetings, the Commission received over 50 comment letters by the March 1, 2013 deadline. Table 1.4.1-1 lists Relicensing Participants that filed comments on SD1.

Based on the Commission's review of oral comments during the January 30 and 31 scoping meetings and written comments on SD1 and the PAD, on April 15, 2013, the Commission issued Scoping Document 2 (SD2), which replaced SD1.

1.4.2 Interventions

At this time, the Commission has not solicited motions to intervene.

1.4.3 Relicensing Studies

1.4.3.1 FERC's Determination on Revised Study Plan

Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 5.11 of the Commission's regulations, FirstLight filed its Proposed Study Plan (PSP) on April 15, 2013, and distributed the PSP to interested resource agencies and stakeholders for review and comment. In addition, pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 5.11(e), FirstLight held an initial meeting on all studies in the PSP at the Northfield Mountain Visitor Center at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development on May 14, 2013. Thereafter, FirstLight held ten resource-specific study plan meetings to allow for more detailed discussions on each PSP and on studies not being proposed. On June 28, 2013, although not required by FERC regulations, FirstLight filed with the Commission an Updated PSP to reflect further changes to the PSP based on comments received at the meetings. On or before July 15, 2013, stakeholders filed written comments on the Updated PSP. FirstLight filed with FERC a Revised Study Plan (RSP) on August 14, 2013, which addressed stakeholder comments.

On August 27, 2013 Entergy Corp. announced that the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant (VY), located on the downstream end of the Vernon Impoundment on the Connecticut River and upstream of the FirstLight Project, would be closing no later than December 29, 2014. With the closure of VY, certain environmental baseline conditions were anticipated to change during the relicensing study period. On September 13, 2013, FERC issued its first Study Plan Determination Letter (SPDL) in which 20 studies were approved, or approved with FERC modifications. However, due to the impending closure of VY, FERC did not act on 18 proposed or requested studies pertaining to aquatic resources. The SPDL for these 18 studies was deferred until after FERC held a technical meeting with stakeholders on November 25, 2013 regarding any necessary adjustments to the proposed and requested study designs and/or schedules due to the impending VY closure. FERC issued its second SPDL on the remaining 18 studies on February 21, 2014, approving the RSP with certain modifications. Table 1.4.3.1-1 lists the 38 studies included in FirstLight's RSP and the additional one (1) study emanating from the study dispute described next. Thus, the total number of FERC-approved studies is 39.

1.4.3.2 FERC's Determination Regarding Study Disputes

On March 13, 2014, the USFWS filed with FERC a notice of study dispute regarding FERC's February 21, 2014 SPDL. The USFWS dispute focused on an entrainment study of the early life stage of American Shad at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. Table 1.4.3.2-1 summarizes the communications relative to the Study Dispute. In the end, FirstLight and the USFWS came to agreement on conducting the study and thus FERC did not act on the dispute.

On January 22, 2015, FERC issued its Determination on Requests for Study Modifications and New Studies. In it, FERC approved the ichthyoplankton study plan submitted by FirstLight on October 16, 2014, with modification. Thus, the total number of FERC-approved studies is 39.

1.4.3.3 FERC's Determination on Initial Study Report

FirstLight filed with FERC an Initial Study Report (ISR) on the 38 studies required by the FERC determination on September 16, 2014 (the ichthyoplankton study had not been approved by this date). Of the 38 required studies, FirstLight filed study reports for studies 3.1.1, *2013 Full River Reconnaissance*, and 3.6.2 *Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment*. FirstLight held ISR meetings on September 30, October 1 and October 15, 2014. FirstLight filed a meeting summary for the September 30 and October 1 meetings on October 15, 2014. FirstLight filed a meeting summary for the October 15 meeting on November 4, 2014. Fifteen (15) stakeholders filed letters regarding FirstLight's ISR with FERC. On January 22, 2015, FERC issued a Determination on Requests for Study Modifications and New Studies. In that letter FERC approved modifications to Study No. 3.3.9 *2D Modeling of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development Tailrace*, and Study No. 3.3.12 *TFI Littoral Zone and Spawning Habitat*. In addition FERC approved, in part, certain modifications to Study Nos. 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.3.4, 3.3.14 and 3.6.2[4]. Requested modification to Study Nos. 3.3.1, 3.3.12 and 3.6.1[5], and the requested new study to identify habitat suitability parameters for state-listed mussel species were not approved by FERC.

1.4.3.4 FERC's Determination on Updated Study Report

FirstLight filed with FERC an Updated Study Report (USR) on September 14, 2015, and held an USR meeting on September 29-30, 2015. FirstLight filed an USR meeting summary on October 14, 2015. FirstLight filed study reports for the following studies:

- Study No. 3.3.2 Hydraulic Study of Turners Falls Impoundment, Bypass Reach and below Cabot
- Study No. 3.3.4 Evaluate Upstream Passage of American Eel at Turners Falls (Year 1 results)
- Study No. 3.3.14 Aquatic Habitat Mapping of Turners Falls Impoundment
- Study No. 3.3.17 Assess the Impacts of Project Operations of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project on Tributary and Backwater Area Access and Habitat
- Study No. 3.3.18 Impacts of the Turners Falls Canal Drawdown on Fish Migration and Aquatic Organisms
- Study No. 3.4.2 Effects of Northfield Mountain Project-related Land Management Practices and Recreation Use on Terrestrial Habitats
- Study No. 3.6.3 Whitewater Boating Evaluation
- Study No. 3.6.4 Assessment of Day Use and Overnight Facilities Associated with Non-Motorized Boats
- Study No. 3.6.7 Recreation Study at Northfield Mountain, including Assessment of Sufficiency of Trails for Shared Use
- Study No. 3.7.3 Traditional Cultural Properties

FirstLight anticipates the USR process for those studies will be complete before FirstLight files its Final License Application (FLA) in April 2016. Comments on the USR and USR meeting summary were required to be filed with FERC by November 13, 2015, 30 days after FirstLight filed its meeting summary.

[This section will be completed in the FLA. FirstLight]

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[4] Study Nos. 3.1.1: *2013 Full River Reconnaissance*, 3.1.2 *Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing Erosion and Potential Bank Instability*, 3.3.4 *Evaluate Upstream Passage of American Eel*, 3.3.14 *Aquatic Habitat Mapping of the Turners Falls Impoundment* , and 3.6.2 *Recreation Facilities Inventory*.

[5] Study Nos. 3.3.1: *Instream Flow Studies in Bypass Channel and below Cabot Station*, 3.3.12 *Evaluate Frequency and Impact of Emergency Water Control Gate Discharge Events and Bypass Flume Events on Shortnose Sturgeon Spawning and Rearing Habitat in the Cabot Tailrace*, 3.6.1 *Recreation Use/User Contact Survey*.

1.4.3.5 Study Status

Twelve (12) of the 39 FERC-approved studies have been completed and reports filed. Anticipated completion dates[6] for the remaining studies were included in FirstLight's cover letter transmitting the USR meeting dates as shown in Table 1.4.3.5-1. Two (2) studies are slated for field work in 2016.

Because many of the study results will not be processed until after the FLA is required to be filed, FirstLight anticipates filing a supplement to its FLA to incorporate key study results.

[6] As corrected at the USR meetings, the filing date for Study 3.1.2 was incorrectly noted in the transmittal letter as 3/1/2016. It should have read 6/30/2016.

Table 1.4.1-1: Scoping Comment Summary

Relicensing Participant	Association	Date of Letter
Jennifer Tufts	Northfield Open Space Committee	1/31/2013
Thomas and Patricia Shearer	Public	1/31/2013
Warren Ondras	Public	1/31/2013
Board of Selectman	Town of Montague	2/06/2013
Mike Bathory, Alan Wallace	Landowners and Concerned Citizens for License Compliance (LCCLC)	2/11/2013
Mary Joe Maffei, Manager	Manager of Amherst High School Nordic Ski Team	2/16/2013
Peter Conway Stanley and Geri Johnson Robert and Linda Emond Walter and Mary Ann Patenaude Michael and Diane Kane Cynthia Dale Robert Strafford and Family Leena Newcomb Vivien Venskowski Betsy and Jean Egan	The River Residents Association (RRA)	2/16/2013- 3/01/2013
Nathan L'Etoile, Co-Owner	Four Star Farms (FSF)	2/20/2013
Jeffrey Squire, President	Western Massachusetts Climbers' Coalition	2/20/2013
Board of Selectman	Town of Montague	2/21/2013
Bill Llewelyn, Chair	Town of Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC)	2/22/2013
Barbara Skuly, Chairman	Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee (ARLAC)	2/24/2013
Karl Meyer	Public	2/25/2013
Richard Bonanno, Director	Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, Inc (MAFBF)	2/25/2013
River Resident (no name given)	Public	2/26/2013
Louis Chiarella, Mary Colligan	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	2/27/2013
Glen Normandeau, Executive Director	New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFGD)	2/27/2013
Caleb Slater, Thomas French	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MADFW), Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)	2/28/2013
Chris Curtis	Public	2/28/2013
Ken Kimball, Norm Sims	Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)	2/28/2013
Ken Kimball, Norm Sims, Bob Nasdor, Thomas Christopher	AMC, American Whitewater Association (AWWA), New England Flow (NE FLOW)	2/28/2013
Dr. Richard Palmer	University of Massachusetts at Amherst (UMass)	2/28/2013
Carolyn Shores Ness, Vice Chair	Franklin Conservation District (FCD)	2/28/2013

Relicensing Participant	Association	Date of Letter
Ken Kimball, Norm Sims, Noah Pollock, Stephan Syz	AMC, Vermont River Conservancy (VRC), Friends of the Connecticut River Paddlers (FCRP)	2/28/2013
Kevin Mendik	National Park Service (NPS)	2/28/2013
Joseph Graveline, President	The Nolumbeka Project, Inc	2/28/2013
Bill Perlman, Jerry Lund, Tom Miner	Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)	3/01/2013
Mike Bathory	LCCLC	3/01/2013
Gill Selectboard	Town of Gill	3/01/2013
Robert Kubit	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP)	3/01/2013
Roger Noonan, President	New England Farmers Union (NEFU)	3/01/2013
Don Pugh	Deerfield River Chapter of Trout Unlimited (DRTU)	3/01/2013
Rebecca Brown, President	Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC)	3/01/2013
Elizabeth Muzzey, Director and State Historic Preservation Officer	New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR)	3/01/2013
Brian Fitzgerald, Streamflow Protection Coordinator	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC)	3/01/2013
Gregg Comstock, PE, Supervisor, Water Quality Planning	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)	3/01/2013
Kim Lutz, Director, Kathryn Mickett Kennedy, Applied River Scientist	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	3/01/2013
Howard Fairman	Public	3/01/2013
Richard Bonanno, President	Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation Inc. (MAFBF)	3/01/2013
Andrea Donlon, River Steward	Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC)	3/01/2013
Stephanie Krug, President	New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA)	3/01/2013
Stephanie Krug, President	NEMBA	3/01/2013
Tim Welsh	FERC	3/01/2013
Thomas Chapman, Supervisor	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	3/01/2013
Joanne McGee	Public	3/01/2013
Kurt Heidinger, Director	BioCitizens	3/01/2013
Don Stevens, Chief	Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk- Abenaki Nation	3/18/2013

Table 1.4.3.1-1: FERC Study Determination Summary

Study No.	Study Name	Studies Proposed by FirstLight in its RSP	Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its September 13, 2013 Determination		Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its February 21, 2014 Determination		Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its January 22, 2015 Determination on Request for Study Modification and New Studies	
			Approved	Modified	Approved	Modified	Approved	Modified
3.1.1	2013 Full River Reconnaissance	X		X				X
3.1.2	Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing and Potential Bank Instability	X		X				
3.1.3	Northfield Mountain Project Sediment Management Plan	X		X				
3.2.1	Water Quality Monitoring Study	X				X		
3.2.2	Hydraulic Study of Turners Falls Impoundment, Bypassed Reach and the Connecticut River below Cabot Station	X		X				
3.3.1	Conduct Instream Flow Habitat Assessments in the Bypass Reach and below Cabot Station	X				X		
3.3.2	Evaluate Upstream and Downstream Passage of Adult American Shad	X				X		
3.3.3	Evaluate Downstream Passage of Juvenile Shad	X				X		
3.3.4	Evaluate Upstream Passage of American Eel at the Turners Falls Project (two year study)	X	X		X			
3.3.5	Evaluate Downstream Passage of American Eel	X				X		
3.3.6	Impact of Project Operation on Shad Spawning, Spawning Habitat and Egg Deposition in the Area of the Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls Projects	X				X		
3.3.7	Fish Entrainment and Turbine Mortality Study	X				X		
3.3.8	Computational Fluid Dynamics Modeling of the Fishway Entrances and Powerhouse Forebays	X		X				
3.3.9	Two-Dimensional Modeling of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project Intake/Tailrace Channel and Connecticut River Upstream and Downstream of the Intake/Tailrace	X		X				
3.3.10	Assess Operational Impacts on Emergence of State-Listed Odonates in the Connecticut River	X				X		
3.3.11	Fish Assemblage Assessment	X				X		

Study No.	Study Name	Studies Proposed by FirstLight in its RSP	Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its September 13, 2013 Determination		Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its February 21, 2014 Determination		Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its January 22, 2015 Determination on Request for Study Modification and New Studies	
			Approved	**Modified**	**Approved**	**Modified**	**Approved**	**Modified**
3.3.12	Evaluate Frequency and Impact of Emergency Water Control Gate Discharge Events and Bypass Flume Events on Shortnose Sturgeon Spawning and Rearing Habitat in the Tailrace and Downstream from Cabot Station	X			X			
3.3.13	Impacts of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project on Littoral Zone Fish Habitat and Spawning Habitat	X				X		
3.3.14	Aquatic Habitat Mapping of Turners Falls Impoundment	X			X			
3.3.15	Assessment of Adult Sea Lamprey Spawning within the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project Areas	X				X		
3.3.16	Habitat Assessment, Surveys, and Modeling of Suitable Habitat for State-listed Mussel Species in the CT River below Cabot Station	X				X		
3.3.17	Assess the Impacts of Project Operations of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project on Tributary Backwater Area Access and Habitat	X			X			
3.3.18	Impacts of the Turners Falls Canal Drawdown on Fish Migration and Aquatic Organisms	X				X		
3.3.19	Evaluate the Use of an Ultrasonic Array to Facilitate Upstream Movement to Turners Falls Dam by Avoiding Cabot Station Tailrace	X				X		
3.3.20	Entrainment of American Shad Ichthyoplankton at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project						X	
3.4.1	Baseline Study of Terrestrial Wildlife and Botanical Resources at the Turners Falls Impoundment, in the Bypass Reach and below Cabot Station within the Project Boundary	X	X					
3.4.2	Effects of Northfield Mountain Project-related Land Management Practices and Recreation Use on Terrestrial Habitat	X	X					

Study No.	Study Name	Studies Proposed by FirstLight in its RSP	Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its September 13, 2013 Determination		Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its February 21, 2014 Determination		Studies Approved or Modified by FERC in its January 22, 2015 Determination on Request for Study Modification and New Studies	
			Approved	**Modified**	**Approved**	**Modified**	**Approved**	**Modified**
3.5.1	Baseline Inventory of Wetland, Riparian, and Littoral Habitat in Turners Falls Impoundment, and Assessment of Operational Impacts on Special-Status Species	X		X				
3.6.1	Recreation Use/User Contact Survey	X		X				
3.6.2	Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment	X		X				X
3.6.3	Whitewater Boating Evaluation	X		X				
3.6.4	Assessment of Day Use and Overnight Facilities Associated with Non-Motorized Boats	X		X				
3.6.5	Land Use Inventory	X	X					
3.6.6	Assessment of Effects of Project Operation on Recreation and Land Use	X	X					
3.6.7	Recreation Study of Northfield Mountain, including Assessment of Sufficiency of Trails for Shared Use	X		X				
3.7.1	Phase 1A Archaeological Survey	X		X				
3.7.2	Reconnaissance-Level Historic Structures Survey	X		X				
3.7.3	Traditional Cultural Properties Study	X		X				
3.8.1	Evaluate the Impact of Current and Potential Future Modes of Operation on Flow, Water Elevation and Hydropower Generation	X		X				

Table 1.4.3.2-1: Summary of Communications Regarding Study Dispute

Date	Action
March 26, 2014	Teleconference held with USFWS, FERC and FirstLight regarding the study dispute.
March 28, 2014	FirstLight files letter with FERC including: Attachment A- graph of MWh pumping for the months of May, June and July for 1991-1993 and 2011-2013, Attachment B: Excel files for developing the Attachment A figures, and Attachment C: discharge comparison between the original and upgraded pumps at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development.
March 31, 2014	FERC issues notice of Dispute Resolution Panel Meeting and Technical Conference.
April 1, 2014	Teleconference held with USFWS, FERC and FirstLight regarding the study dispute.
April 7, 2014	FirstLight submits comments and information regarding the study dispute.
April 8, 2014	FERC holds Dispute Resolution Panel Meeting and Technical Conference at the Northfield Mountain Visitors Center.
April 15, 2014	As requested by the USFWS FirstLight submits a) drawings and photographs of the Northfield tailrace/intake and b) dye testing information.
April 22, 2104	Teleconference held with USFWS, FERC and FirstLight regarding the study dispute.
May 2, 2014	USFWS submits response to FirstLight's April 7, 2014 filing (above).
May 2, 2014	USFWS files conceptual framework for assessing ichthyoplankton entrainment at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development.
May 2, 2014	FirstLight submits letter supporting USFWS's proposed ichthyoplankton entrainment study at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development.
May 2, 2014	FERC issues notice of suspending the Dispute Resolution Panel until further notice.
September 3, 2014	FERC issues notice that FirstLight must develop a more detailed ichthyoplankton study plan by October 15, 2014.
October 16, 2014	FirstLight filed a detailed ichthyoplankton study plan with FERC.

Table 1.4.3.5-1: Proposed Study Report Filing Dates

Study No.	Title	Proposed Report Completion Date
3.1.1	2013 Full River Reconnaissance	Already filed
3.1.2	Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing Erosion and Potential Bank Instability	6/30/2016
3.1.3	Sediment Monitoring Study	9/1/2016
3.2.1	Water Quality Monitoring Study	3/1/2016
3.2.2	Hydraulic Study of Turners Falls Impoundment, Bypass Reach and below Cabot	Already filed
3.3.1	Conduct Instream Flow Habitat Assessments in the Bypass Reach and below Cabot Station	9/1/2016
3.3.2	Evaluate Upstream and Downstream Passage of Adult American Shad	9/1/2016
3.3.3	Evaluate Downstream Passage of Juvenile American Shad	9/1/2016
3.3.4	Evaluate Upstream Passage of American Eel at the Turners Falls	3/1/2016
3.3.5	Evaluate Downstream Passage of American Eel (2015 & 2016 study)	3/1/2017
3.3.6	Impact of Project Operations on Shad Spawning, Spawning Habitat and Egg Deposition in the Area of the Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls Projects	3/1/2016
3.3.7	Fish Entrainment and Turbine Passage Mortality Study	10/1/2016
3.3.8	Computational Fluid Dynamics Modeling in the Vicinity of the Fishway Entrances and Powerhouse Forebays	12/1/2015
3.3.9	Two-Dimensional Modeling of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project Intake/Tailrace Channel and Connecticut River Upstream and Downstream of the Intake/Tailrace	12/1/2015
3.3.10	Assess Operational Impacts on Emergence of State-Listed Odonates in the Connecticut River	3/1/2016
3.3.11	Fish Assemblage Assessment	3/1/2016
3.3.12	Evaluate Frequency and Impact of Emergency Water Control Gate Discharge Events and Bypass Flume Events on Shortnose Sturgeon Spawning and Rearing Habitat in the Tailrace and Downstream from Cabot Station	3/1/2016
3.3.13	Impacts of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project on Littoral Zone Fish Habitat and Spawning Habitat	6/1/2016
3.3.14	Aquatic Habitat Mapping of Turners Falls Impoundment	Already filed
3.3.15	Assessment of Adult Sea Lamprey Spawning within the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project Area	6/1/2016
3.3.16	Habitat Assessment, Surveys, and Modeling of Suitable Habitat for State-listed Mussel Species in the CT River below Cabot Station	3/1/2016
3.3.17	Assess the Impacts of Project Operations of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Project on Tributary and Backwater Area Access and Habitat	Already filed
3.3.18	Impacts of the Turners Falls Canal Drawdown on Fish Migration and Aquatic Organisms	Already filed
3.3.19	Evaluate the Use of an Ultrasound Array to Facilitate Upstream Movement to Turners Falls Dam by Avoiding Cabot Station Tailrace	3/1/2017
3.3.20	Ichthyoplankton Entrainment Assessment at the Northfield Mountain Project	3/1/2016
3.4.1	Baseline Study of Terrestrial Wildlife and Botanical Resources	12/31/2015
3.4.2	Effects of Northfield Mountain Project-related Land Management Practices and Recreation Use on Terrestrial Habitats	Already filed
3.5.1	Baseline Inventory of Wetland, Riparian and Littoral Habitat in the Turners Falls Impoundment, and Assessment of Operational Impacts on Special-Status Species	12/31/2015
3.6.1	Recreation Use/User Contact Survey	12/31/2015
3.6.2	Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment	Already filed
3.6.3	Whitewater Boating Evaluation	Already filed

Study No.	Title	Proposed Report Completion Date
3.6.4	Assessment of Day Use and Overnight Facilities Associated with Non-Motorized Boats	Already filed
3.6.5	Land Use Inventory	12/31/2015
3.6.6	Assessment of Effects of Project Operation on Recreation and Land Use	6/30/2016
3.6.7	Recreation Study at Northfield Mountain, including Assessment of Sufficiency of Trails for Shared Use	Already filed
3.7.1	Phase 1A, 1B and II Archaeological Surveys	Already filed (Phase 1A only)
3.7.2	Survey and National Register Evaluation of Historic Architectural Resources	Already filed
3.7.3	Traditional Cultural Properties Study	Already filed
3.8.1	Evaluate the Impact of Current and Proposed Future Modes of Operation on Flow, Water Elevation and Hydropower Generation	3/1/2017

2 PROPOSED ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the existing Project (i.e., the No-Action Alternative) and FirstLight's proposed changes to the existing Project (i.e., proposed Project). Section 2.1 describes the No-Action Alternative, the baseline from which to compare all action alternatives. Section 2.2 describes FirstLight's proposed Project. Section 2.3 describes any other action alternatives proposed at this time. Section 2.4 describes alternatives considered but not analyzed in detail in this document.

2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the Project would continue to operate under the terms of the current license, including maintaining the current Project Boundary, facilities and operation and maintenance procedures.

2.1.1 Existing Project Facilities

The Turners Falls Development consists of: a) two individual concrete gravity dams, referred to as the Gill Dam and Montague Dam connected by a natural rock island, b) an approximate 20-mile long TFI serving as the lower reservoir for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, c) a gatehouse, d) a power canal, e) two hydroelectric projects located on the power canal including Station No. 1 and Cabot Station, f) three fish passage facilities and g) a downstream fish passage facility located at the downstream terminus of the power canal. The Turners Falls Development also includes recreation facilities and use areas.

The Northfield Pumped Storage Development consists of a) and Upper Reservoir dams and dikes, b) an intake channel, c) pressure shaft, d) tailrace tunnel, e) powerhouse and d) tailrace. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development also includes recreation facilities and use areas.

The location of major Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development facilities is shown in Figure 2.1.1-1 and 2.1.1-2, respectively.

Detailed descriptions of the above facilities are provided in Exhibit A of this license application.

2.1.2 Existing Project Boundary

The existing Project Boundary contains 7,246 acres of land and 2,238 acres of flowed land (Figure 2.1.2-1). These lands are located in three states- Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. The majority of the Project Boundary (6,150 acres) is located in Franklin County, MA in the towns of Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Montague and Northfield. The northern reaches of the Project Boundary extend into the towns of Hinsdale, in Cheshire County, NH (727 acres) and the town of Vernon, in Windham County, VT (369 acres).

2.1.3 Existing Project Safety

The Turners Falls Development has been operating for more than 36 years under its existing license and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development has been operating for more than 48 years under its existing license. During this time FERC staff has conducted operational inspections focusing on the continued safety of the structures, identification of unauthorized modifications, efficiency and safety of operations, compliance with the licenses and proper maintenance. In addition, both developments have been inspected and evaluated every five (5) years by an independent consultant and a consultant's safety report has been submitted for FERC's review.

2.1.4 Existing Project Operations

The Turners Falls Development consists of two facilities- Cabot Station and Station No. 1. Cabot Station is used at all river flows. During low flow periods, Cabot Station is operated as a peaking plant; during high flows in excess of 13,728 cfs (its approximate maximum hydraulic capacity), it operates as a base load plant. Station No. 1 is a base load plant and typically operates when inflows to the TFI are less than Station No. 1’s hydraulic capacity of approximately 2,210 cfs or when inflows exceed the hydraulic capacity of Cabot Station.

The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development is a pumped storage hydroelectric facility. Water is pumped from the TFI to the Upper Reservoir which has 12,318 acre-feet of useable storage available for pumped storage operations. Typically, pumping occurs during low-load periods, while generation occurs during high-load periods.

2.1.5 Existing Environmental Measures

<u>Water Level and Flow Management</u>

- Under the FERC license for the Turners Falls Development, FirstLight is required to release a continuous minimum flow of 1,433 cfs or inflow (equivalent to 0.2 x the drainage area), whichever is less below the Project. FirstLight typically maintains the minimum flow requirement through discharges at Cabot and/or Station No. 1.
- Under the FERC license, a continuous minimum flow of 200 cfs is maintained in the bypass reach starting on May 1, and increases to 400 cfs when fish passage starts by releasing flow through a bascule gate. The 400 cfs continuous minimum flow is provided through July 15, unless the upstream fish passage season has concluded early in which case the 400 cfs flow is reduced to 120 cfs to protect Shortnose Sturgeon. The 120 cfs continuous minimum flow is maintained in the bypass reach from the date the fishways are closed (or by July 16) until the river temperature drops below 7°C, which typically occurs around November 15th.
- Under the FERC license, the TFI elevation may fluctuate between 176.0 feet msl and 185.0 feet msl, as measured at the Turners Falls Dam.
- Under the FERC license, the Northfield Mountain Upper Reservoir elevation may fluctuate between 1,000.5 feet msl and 938 feet msl.

<u>Upstream and Downstream Fish Passage</u>

- The Turners Falls Development includes three fishways- Cabot fishway, Spillway fishway and Gatehouse fishway.
- The Turners Falls Development includes a downstream fish passage system located near the downstream terminus of the power canal adjacent to Cabot Station.

<u>Recreation</u>

- FirstLight maintains several public recreation facilities within the Project Boundary as described in detail in Section 3.3.6.

2.1.6 Measures in Current FERC Licenses

The following is a description of key license requirements for the Turners Falls Project (now development) and Northfield Project (now development).

<u>Turners Falls Project (now Development)</u>

Article 30 requires the Licensee to pay reasonable annual charges to the United States for the cost of administration of Part I of the FPA, based on the authorized installed capacity.

Article 31 requires the Licensee to implement, and modify when appropriate, an emergency action plan to provide early warning to upstream and downstream inhabitants and property owners in the event of an impending or actual sudden release of water caused by an accident or failure of the Turners Falls Project works.

Article 32 requires the Licensee to operate the Turners Falls Project in accordance with its agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the coordinated operation of the Turners Falls Project for flood control.

Article 33 requires the Licensee to provide public recreation at the Turners Falls Project in accordance with the Turners Falls Project's approved Recreation Plan.

Article 34 requires the Licensee to maintain a continuous minimum flow of 1,433 cfs (0.20 cubic feet per second per square mile of drainage basin) or a flow equal to the inflow of the reservoir, whichever is less, from the project into the Connecticut River. These flows may be modified temporarily: (1) during and to the extent required by operating emergencies beyond the control of the Licensee; and (2) in the interest of recreation and protection of the fisheries resources, upon mutual agreement between the Licensees for Projects Nos. 1889 and 2485 and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. During the period of each year from May 1 until there are no substantial numbers of juvenile or adult shad in the reach of the river where the project is located, but in any event no later than October 1, the following portion of that total minimum flow shall be released from the Turners Falls Dam: until the Montague spillway fishway begins operating, 200 cfs; after that fishway begins operating, 400 cfs..

Article 35 describes the Licensee's obligations with respect to unrecorded archeological or historical sites discovered during construction or development of project works or other facilities at the Turners Falls Project, and in the event any such sites are discovered, requires the Licensee to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer to develop a mitigation plan for the protection of significant archeological or historic resources.

Article 36 requires the Licensee to install and operate signs, lights, sirens, barriers or other necessary devices to warn the public of fluctuations in flow and protect recreation users of the Turners Falls Project.

Article 38 requires the Licensee to file annual reports with FERC detailing operation of the Turners Falls Project's fish passage facilities, problems in design or operation, and listing the number, by species, of all fish passed upstream.

Article 40 requires the Licensee to coordinate operation of the Turners Falls Project with operation of the Northfield Mountain Project.

Article 42 requires the Licensee to coordinate operation of the Turners Falls Project, electrically and hydraulically, with other power systems as the Commission may direct in the interest of power and other beneficial public uses of water resources.

Article 43 authorizes the Licensee to grant permission for certain types of use and occupancy of Turners Falls Project lands, and requires the Licensee to consult with federal and state agencies prior to conveying certain interests, pursuant to FERC's standard use and occupancy article.

<u>Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (now Development)</u>

Article 39 requires the Licensee to make modifications to the Northfield Mountain Project works, operate the Northfield Mountain Project, and take such steps as ordered by the Commission, in the interest of boating safety, upon recommendation by the Commission, the USACE, the U.S. Coast Guard, or an interested agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Article 40 requires the Licensee, following consultation with the USFWS and fishery agencies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to study or pay for the cost of studies relating to fish protection at the

Northfield Mountain Project, and undertake further study if the Commission finds that changed conditions or changed use of the Connecticut River fishery so warrant.

Article 41 requires the Licensee to develop recreational resources at the Northfield Mountain Project.

Article 43 requires the Licensee to enter into an agreement with the USACE for coordinated operation of the Turners Falls and Northfield Projects during flood conditions on the Connecticut River.

Article 45 requires the Licensee to coordinate operation of the Northfield Mountain Project with operation of the Turners Falls Project.

Article 48 requires the Licensee to pay reasonable annual charges to the United States for the cost of administration of Part I of the FPA, based on the authorized installed capacity.

Article 50 requires the Licensee to implement a cooperative land and water management plan for the Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area.

Article 51 requires the Licensee to report to the Commission and the MHC any fossils or archeological artifacts discovered during construction, operation, or maintenance of recreation developments at the Northfield Mountain Project, and authorizes the Commission to require archeological or paleontological surveys or salvage operations deemed necessary to prevent the destruction or loss of such findings.

Article 52 authorizes the Licensee to grant permission for certain types of use and occupancy of Northfield Mountain Project lands, and requires the Licensee to consult with federal and state agencies prior to conveying certain interests, pursuant to FERC's standard use and occupancy article.

2.2 FirstLight's Proposal

At this time, FirstLight's relicensing proposal is limited to two changes—modifications to the Project boundary and using more Upper Reservoir storage capacity at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development year round. Since many of FirstLight's studies are not yet final it would be premature for FirstLight to develop a complete licensing proposal for operating the Project in the new license term at this time. Once FirstLight's studies and TransCanada's studies are complete and FirstLight has had an opportunity to discuss the study results with resource agencies and other stakeholders, FirstLight will be in a better position to develop a comprehensive proposal for relicensing the Project.

At the time of this filing, the FERC-approved aquatic studies and water quality study have not been completed. In addition, two additional studies (Study No. 3.3.5 *Evaluate Downstream Passage of American Eel* and Study No. 3.3.19 *Evaluate the Use of an Ultrasonic Array to Facilitate Upstream Movement to Turners Falls Dam by Avoiding Cabot Station Tailrace*) are to be filed with FERC by March 1, 2017, nearly one year after the FLA is filed. The delay in conducting the aquatic studies and water quality study was requested by the resource agencies as a result of the decommissioning of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant and expected water quality improvements.

In addition, on January 16, 2015 TransCanada filed a letter with FERC requesting an extension of the license term for its Wilder (FERC No. 1892), Bellows Falls (FERC No. 1855) and Vernon (FERC No. 1904) Hydroelectric Projects. Specifically, TransCanada sought a one year license term extension that would move the license expiration date from April 30, 2018 to April 30, 2019. On July 22, 2015, FERC granted TransCanada a one year extension requiring it file its FLA by April 30, 2017. Given the above, one of the unknowns at this juncture is how future project operations at the TransCanada facilities could impact the flow regime passed below the Vernon Hydroelectric Project and into FirstLight's TFI.

2.2.1 Proposed Project Facilities

2.2.1.1 Generation Facilities

At this time, FirstLight is not proposing any changes to existing developmental (i.e., generation) facilities. FirstLight is, however, proposing to increase the useable storage of the Upper Reservoir from 1004.5 feet to 920 feet year-round, for an 84.5 foot drawdown.

2.2.1.2 Non Generation Facilities

At this time, given that several FERC-approved studies have not been completed or started, FirstLight is not proposing any PM&E measures for implementation in the new license.

Proposed Project Boundary

As described in Exhibit G, FirstLight is proposing two changes to Project Boundary.

- Removal of a 20.1 acre parcel of land currently occupied by the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Laboratory located at One Migratory Way, P.O Box 796, in Turners Falls, MA 01376. The Conte Lab lands are located just north of Cabot Station.
- Removal of an 8.1 acre parcel of land referred to as Fuller Farm located near 169 Millers Falls Road in Northfield, MA.

2.2.2 Proposed Project Safety

FirstLight anticipates that, as part of the relicensing process, FERC staff will evaluate the continued safety of the proposed Project facilities under the new license. FirstLight anticipates FERC will continue to inspect the Project during the new license term to assure continued adherence to FERC-approved plans and specifications, any special license articles pertaining to construction, operation and maintenance, and accepted engineering practices and procedures.

2.2.3 Proposed Project Operations

FirstLight is proposing to modify the operations of the Upper Reservoir to utilize more of its storage capacity to allow for additional operational flexibility. FirstLight proposes to reduce the minimum elevation from 938 feet msl to 920 feet msl, and increase the maximum elevation from 1,000.5 feet msl to 1,004.5 feet msl, year-round. This would increase the Upper Reservoir's useable storage capacity from 12,318 acre-feet to 15,327 acre-feet, an increase of 3,009 acre-feet, and allow an increase in generation at full load for 1.8 hours. The additional storage capacity increases the Development's maximum daily generation from 8,475 MWh to 10,465 MWh, or an increase of 1,990 MWh per day.

2.2.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

At this time, FirstLight is not proposing any environmental measures.

2.3 Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Further Analysis

FirstLight considered but eliminated from further analysis the following alternatives:

- Retire the Project
- Issue a Non-Power License
- Federal Agency Takeover of the Project
- Construction of a New Lower Reservoir to Create a Closed Loop System for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development

2.3.1 Retire the Project

Project retirement would involve surrender or termination of the existing license with appropriate conditions. No relicensing participant has suggested that removal of the Project dams would be appropriate in this case; therefore, FirstLight has not analyzed it as a reasonably foreseeable alternative to relicensing the Project with appropriate resource management measures.

In SD2, FERC stated:

> *Decommissioning some or all of Connecticut River projects would require denying the relicense applications and surrender or termination of the existing licenses with appropriate conditions. There would be significant costs involved with decommissioning the projects and/or removing project facilities. The projects provide a viable, safe, and clean renewable source of power to the region. Based on the 17 factors (to be considered when determining whether a more thorough analysis of decommissioning is warranted), outlined in The Interagency Task Force Report on NEPA Procedures in FERC Hydroelectric Licensing,*[7] *we do not consider decommissioning to be a reasonable alternative for the Connecticut River projects, at this time.*

2.3.2 Issue a Non-Power License

A non-power license is a temporary license that FERC issues when it determines that a project should no longer be used for power purposes. FERC's statement from SD2 regarding a non-power license analysis follows:

> *A non-power license is a temporary license the Commission would terminate whenever it determines that another governmental agency is authorized and willing to assume regulatory authority and supervision over the lands and facilities covered by the non-power license. At this time, no governmental agency has suggested a willingness or ability to take over any of these five projects. No party has sought a non-power license, and we have no basis for concluding that the TransCanada and FirstLight projects should no longer be used to produce power. Thus, we do not consider a non-power license a reasonable alternative to relicensing the projects.*

Because the Project power is needed and FirstLight believes that a new license can be issued that will satisfy the FPA's public interest/comprehensive development standard, FirstLight believes there is no basis for the Commission to conclude that the Project should no longer be used for power generation. Thus, issuance of a non-power license is not a reasonable alternative to issuance of a new license with appropriate PM&E measures.

2.3.3 Federal Agency Takeover of the Project

Federal takeover of the Project is not a reasonably foreseeable alternative. As FERC stated in SD2:

> *We do not consider federal takeover to be a reasonable alternative. Federal takeover of the project would require congressional approval. While that fact alone would not preclude further consideration of this alternative, there is currently no evidence showing that federal takeover should be recommended to Congress. No party has suggested that federal takeover would be appropriate, and no federal agency has expressed interest in operating any of these five projects.*

Therefore, FirstLight has not analyzed federal takeover of the Project as a reasonably foreseeable alternative to relicensing.

2.3.4 Construction of a New Lower Reservoir to Create a Closed Loop System for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development

In comments received on SD1 some stakeholders recommended that development and implementation of a closed loop system for the operation of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development should be evaluated as part of the NEPA implementation process. In response, in SD2 FERC stated:

[7] http://www.ferc.gov/industries/hydropower/indus-act/itf/nepa_final.pdf

> *Construction of a new lower reservoir would likely have significant impacts on the environment and a high cost. Therefore, we will not commit to conducting a detailed analysis of such an alternative until we better understand the environmental effects of the existing project.*

FirstLight does not believe that construction of a new lower reservoir is a reasonable alternative to relicensing the Project and therefore has not conducted further analysis of this alternative.

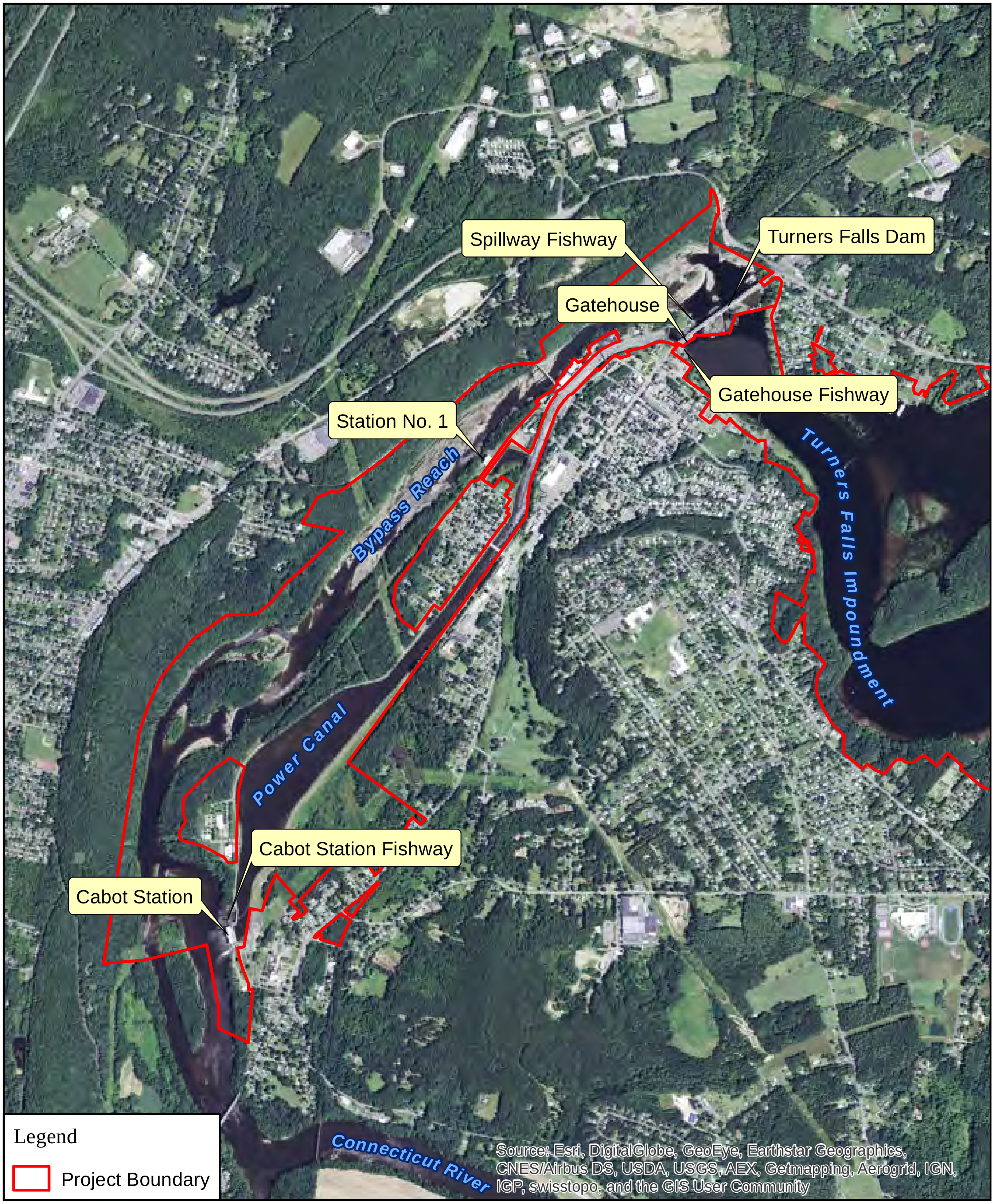

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Figure 2.1.1-1
Turners Falls Development Features

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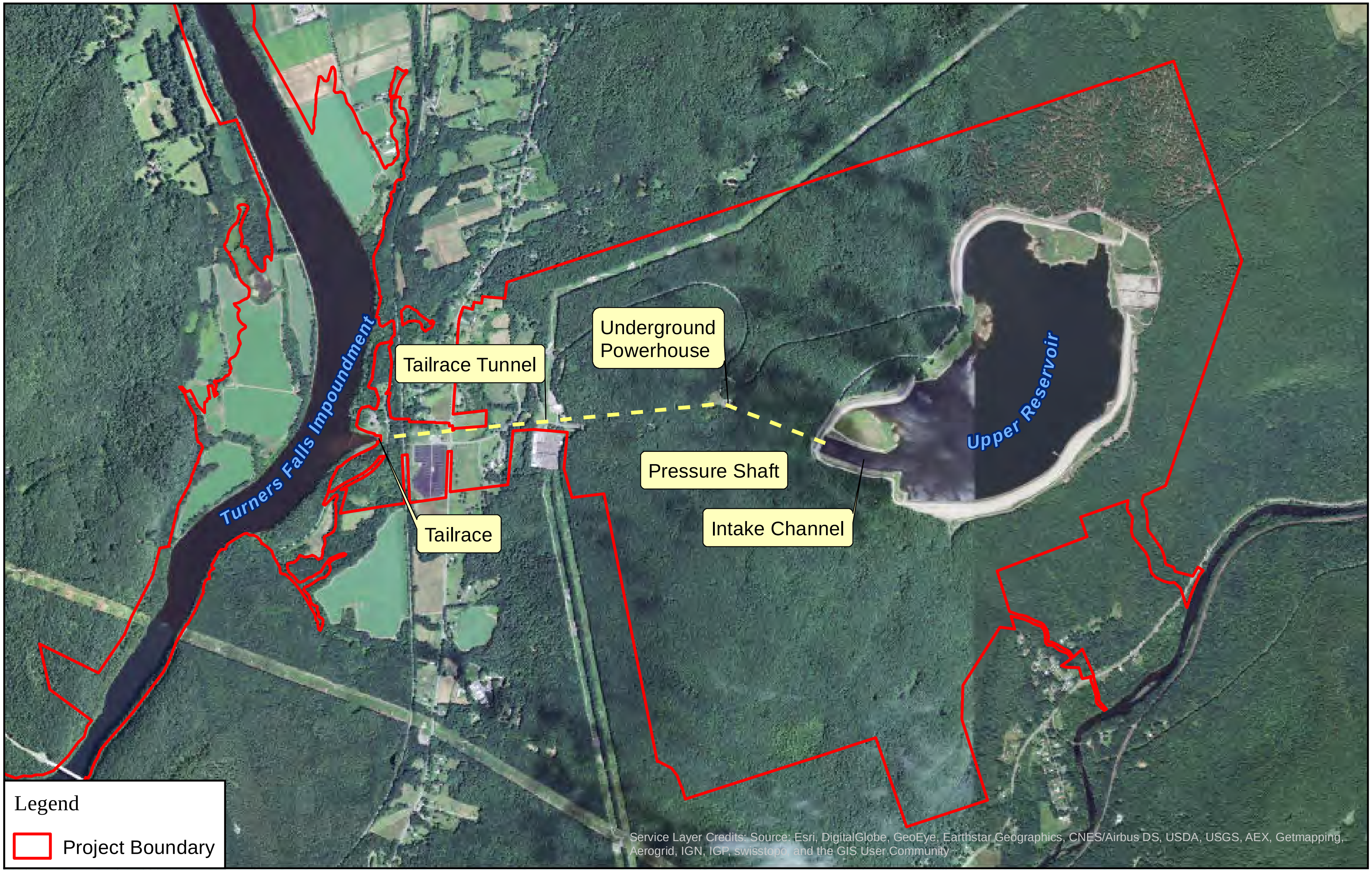

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0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 2.1.1-2
Northfield Mountain
Pumped Storage Development

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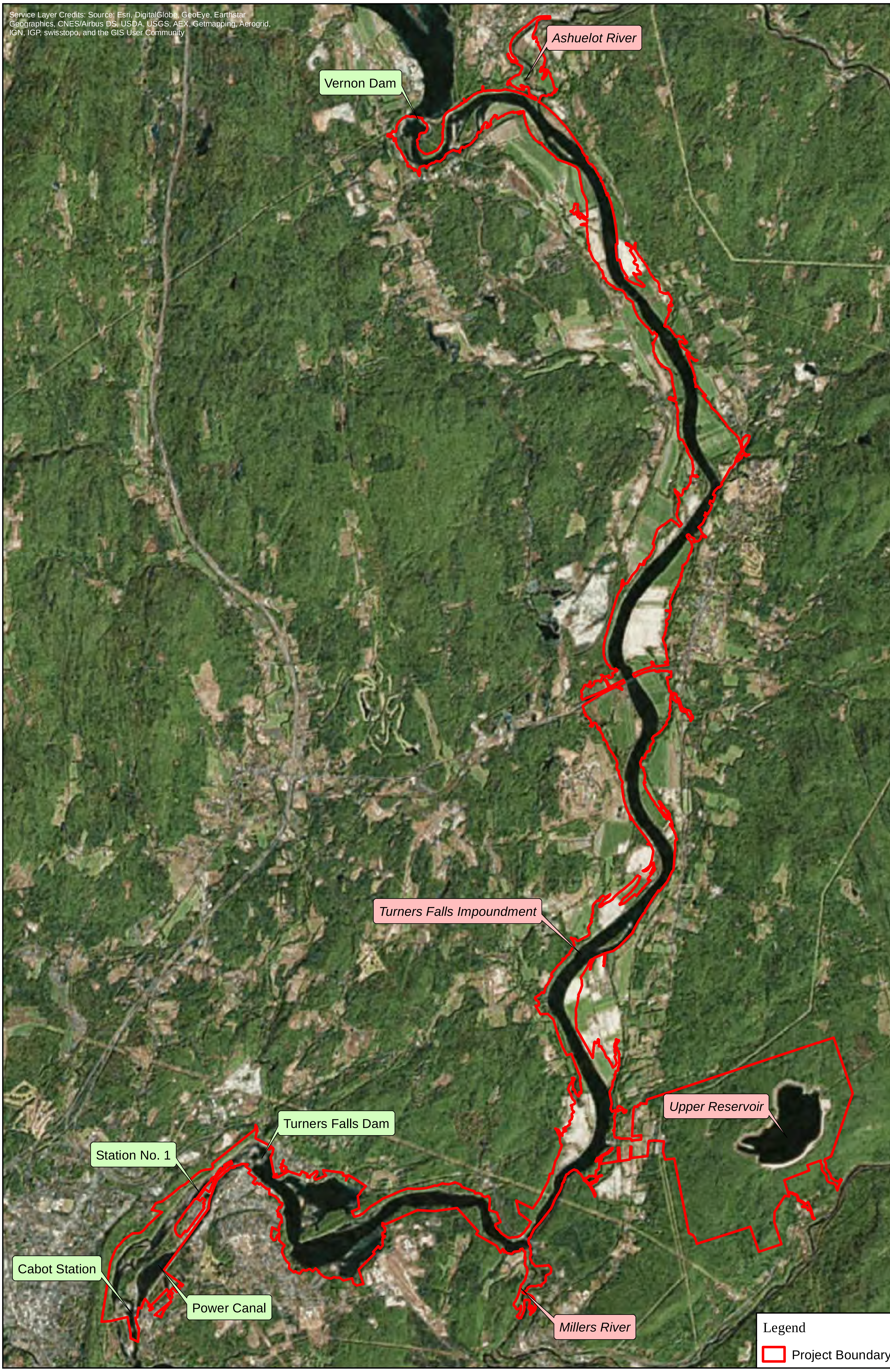

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0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Figure 2.1.2-1
Project Boundary Map

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3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1 General Description of River Basin

The Connecticut River and its tributaries drain an area of about 11,250 mi^2, constituting the largest river drainage system in New England. From its origin in the Connecticut Lakes Region near the Canadian border, the 410-mile-long Connecticut River flows southward to form the boundary between New Hampshire and Vermont, then through Massachusetts and Connecticut to Long Island Sound (Carr & Kennedy, 2008).

According to the USGS's Watershed Boundary Dataset, the Connecticut River subregion, which is part of the New England region, is divided into two basins at Vernon Dam in Vermont—the Upper Connecticut basin and the Lower Connecticut basin. (For the purposes of this document, the Connecticut River subregion may also be referred to as a basin or watershed.) The Project boundary falls within the Middle Connecticut subbasin of the Lower Connecticut basin, and almost entirely within the Fall River-Connecticut River watershed within that subbasin (USGS, 2010). Figure 3.1-1 provides an overview of the entire Connecticut River subregion and its major tributaries and mainstem dams, while Figure 3.1-2 shows a close-up of the Middle Connecticut subbasin and tributaries and dams in the Project area.

In Massachusetts, the Lower Connecticut River basin covers an area of approximately 2,728 mi^2, occupying all of Franklin and Hampshire Counties, most of Hampden County, the eastern third of Berkshire County, and the western half of Worcester County. In this region, tributary streams entering the Connecticut River from the west originate in the Berkshire Mountains and have steeper gradients than tributary streams originating in the Central Highlands to the east (Simcox, 1992). The Middle Connecticut River subbasin in Massachusetts is bordered by the Deerfield River subbasin to the northwest, the Millers River subbasin to the northeast, the Westfield River subbasin to the southwest, and the Chicopee River subbasin to the southeast (Carr & Kennedy, 2008).

3.1.1 Topography

The Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development are located in the New England Upland section of the New England physiographic province of Massachusetts. The Connecticut River Valley is a dominant feature within this section. The Connecticut River Valley is generally narrow in the vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, with some areas of floodplain characterized by river and stream terrace silt, sand, and gravel. Other areas are characterized by steep rocky banks, especially the French King Gorge area, immediately downstream of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development's tailrace (FirstLight, 2007).

The topography of the Connecticut River Valley is mostly level to rolling, with some higher hills. One such hill is Northfield Mountain, where the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development is located. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development's Upper Reservoir is man-made and was formed using impervious core rock fill structures, a concrete gravity dam, natural features, and excavation of a conveyance channel into bedrock.

3.1.2 Climate

The climate in the Project area is a humid continental climate, with warm summers and cold, snowy winters. This climate type is found over large areas of land masses in the temperate regions of the mid-latitudes where there is a zone of conflict between polar and tropical air masses. The humid continental climate is marked by variable weather patterns and a relatively large seasonal temperature variance. Shown in Table 3.1.2-1 is the long term monthly average air temperature and precipitation amounts as recorded in Springfield, MA approximately 40 miles south of Turners Falls, MA.

Average annual precipitation totals approximately 43.9 inches in Springfield, MA.

3.1.3 Land and Water Use

3.1.3.1 Major Land Uses

Land use in the Connecticut River watershed is approximately 77% forested, 9% agricultural, 7% wetlands, and 7% developed. Land use is generally rural agrarian and undeveloped at the headwaters in northern Vermont and New Hampshire, transitioning to densely populated urban areas in the south-central river valley in Connecticut. Down-river from the City of Hartford, CT, the basin is again largely undeveloped, making the Connecticut River the only major river in the northeastern United States without a significant port, harbor, or urban area at its mouth (Zimmerman, 2006).

The portion of the Connecticut River basin above the USGS stream gaging station in Thompsonville, CT (near the Massachusetts border) encompasses approximately 9,660 mi^2 in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts. This region has a population of approximately one million people distributed amongst densely populated urban areas in the southernmost section in Massachusetts to sparsely populated rural and agricultural regions in the northern areas in New Hampshire and Vermont. The agricultural land use in New Hampshire and Vermont is predominantly related to dairy farm operations, while that in Massachusetts primarily consists of orchards, row crops, and some dairy operations. The land use in this portion of the basin is about 80% forested, 9% agricultural, 6% wetlands, and 5% developed (Deacon *et al*., 2006).

Figure 3.1.3.1-1 shows land use and land cover in the vicinity of the Project.

3.1.3.2 Major Water Uses

Water uses in the Connecticut River watershed include water supply, dilution of treated or untreated municipal or industrial discharges, contact and non-contact cooling water, water for agricultural irrigation and snow making, and water for power generation (CRJC, 2009). Other than for hydropower, the primary purpose of water withdrawals from the TFI is for agricultural irrigation.

3.1.3.3 Basin Dams and other Energy Producers

The USACE's National Inventory of Dams (NID) contains 990 dams in the Connecticut River watershed. More than half of these dams (553) are primarily used to support recreation; in many cases "recreation" is designated as the primary purpose, but in fact, many of the impoundments are the result of older mill dams that are no longer used for a specific purpose. Dams used primarily for water supply (131) are the second-most common type of dam, followed by those used for hydroelectric power generation (123) and flood control (75). Water supply dams store water in the Connecticut River watershed—particularly the Quabbin Reservoir in the Chicopee subbasin which serves as the primary source of drinking water for the City of Boston and several municipalities in the Greater Boston area. Hydroelectric dams are found at many locations along the Connecticut River and its major tributaries. Flood control dams are mostly found on smaller rivers throughout the watershed (USGS, 2011).

Of the dams in the Connecticut River watershed, approximately 64 are considered large, defined as those with the capacity to hold 10% of the mean annual streamflow volume during any particular day (or, in the absence of streamflow information, have a large water storage capacity in relation to their drainage area). Classification of large dams was determined by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) through analysis of streamflow data provided by the USGS (USGS, 2011).

There are 12 hydropower dams along the mainstem Connecticut River, including the Turners Falls Dam. The upstream end of the Project Boundary is the base of Vernon Dam, approximately 20 miles upstream of the Turners Falls Dam. The next hydropower dam downstream of the Turners Falls Dam is Holyoke Dam, approximately 35 miles downstream. Table 3.1.3.3-1 lists hydropower projects up to Moore Dam and their characteristics. Figure 3.1-1 depicts all dams along the mainstem Connecticut River, while Figure 3.1-2 shows selected dams in the Project area.

3.1.3.4 Tributary Streams

Major tributaries to the TFI include the Ashuelot River in New Hampshire, which drains 420 mi^2 from the east and enters the Connecticut River just below Vernon Dam, and the Millers River, which drains 392 mi^2 from the east and enters downstream of the Northfield Mountain tailrace. Additionally, the Deerfield River, which drains 665 mi^2 from the west, enters the Connecticut River just downstream of the Cabot Station tailrace.

Smaller named streams entering the TFI, from upstream to downstream, include Newton Brook, Pauchaug Brook, Bottom Brook, Mill Brook, Mallory Brook, Millers Brook, Bennett Brook, Merriam Brook, Otter Run, Ashuela Brook, Dry Brook, Pine Meadow Brook, and Fourmile Brook (Wandle, 1984).

Figure 3.1-1 depicts major tributaries in the entire Connecticut River watershed, while Figure 3.1-2 shows tributaries in the vicinity of the Project.

Table 3.1.2-1: Average Climate Conditions in Springfield, MA

Statistic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean Temperature (°F)	27	30	38	50	60	69	74	73	65	54	44	31
Average Precipitation (in)	3.2	3.0	3.5	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6	4.1	3.8

Source: http://www.explore-massachusetts.com/massachusetts-climate.html

Table 3.1.3.3-1: Hydropower Projects on the Connecticut River

FERC Project No.	Project Name	River Mile *(above Long Island Sound)*	Licensee	License Expiration
2004	Holyoke	87	City of Holyoke Gas & Electric Co.	08/31/2039
1889	Turners Falls	122	FirstLight Hydro Generating Co.	04/30/2018
2485[1]	Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage	127	FirstLight Hydro Generating Co.	04/30/2018
1904	Vernon	142	TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc.	04/30/2019
1855	Bellows Falls	174	TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc.	04/30/2019
1892	Wilder	217	TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc.	04/30/2019
8011	Dodge Falls	270	Dodge Falls Hydro Co.	Exempt
2077	Fifteen Mile Falls (McIndoes, Comerford, and Moore Dams)	274 281 288	TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc.	03/31/2042
2392	Gilman	302	Ampersand Gilman Hydro, L.P.	03/31/2024
7528	Canaan	373	Public Service Co. of NH	07/31/2039

[1]The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development does not “dam” the Connecticut River; rather it pumps from, and discharges to, the Connecticut River.

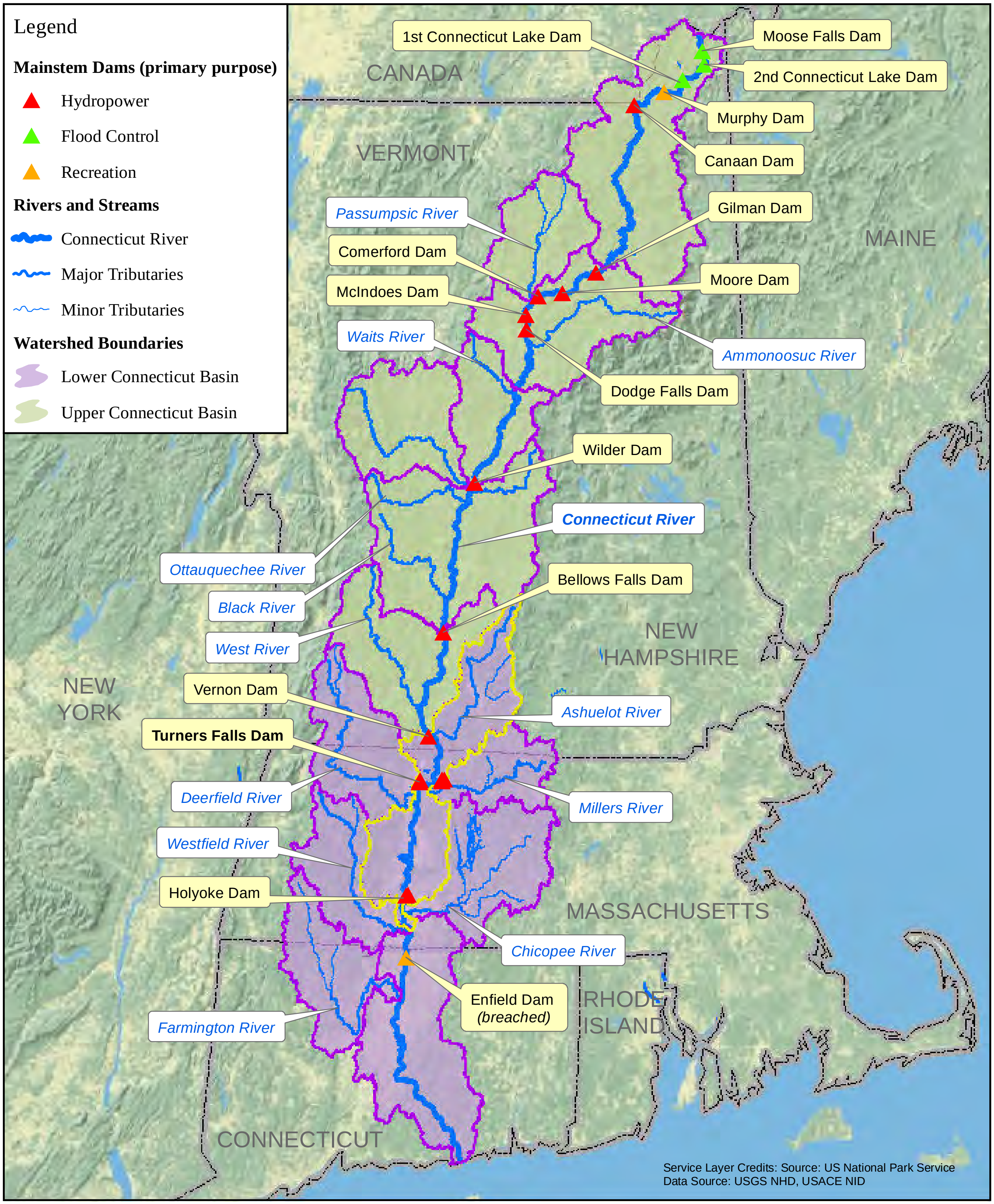

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Figure 3.1-1
Connecticut River Watershed, Major Tributaries, and Mainstem Dams

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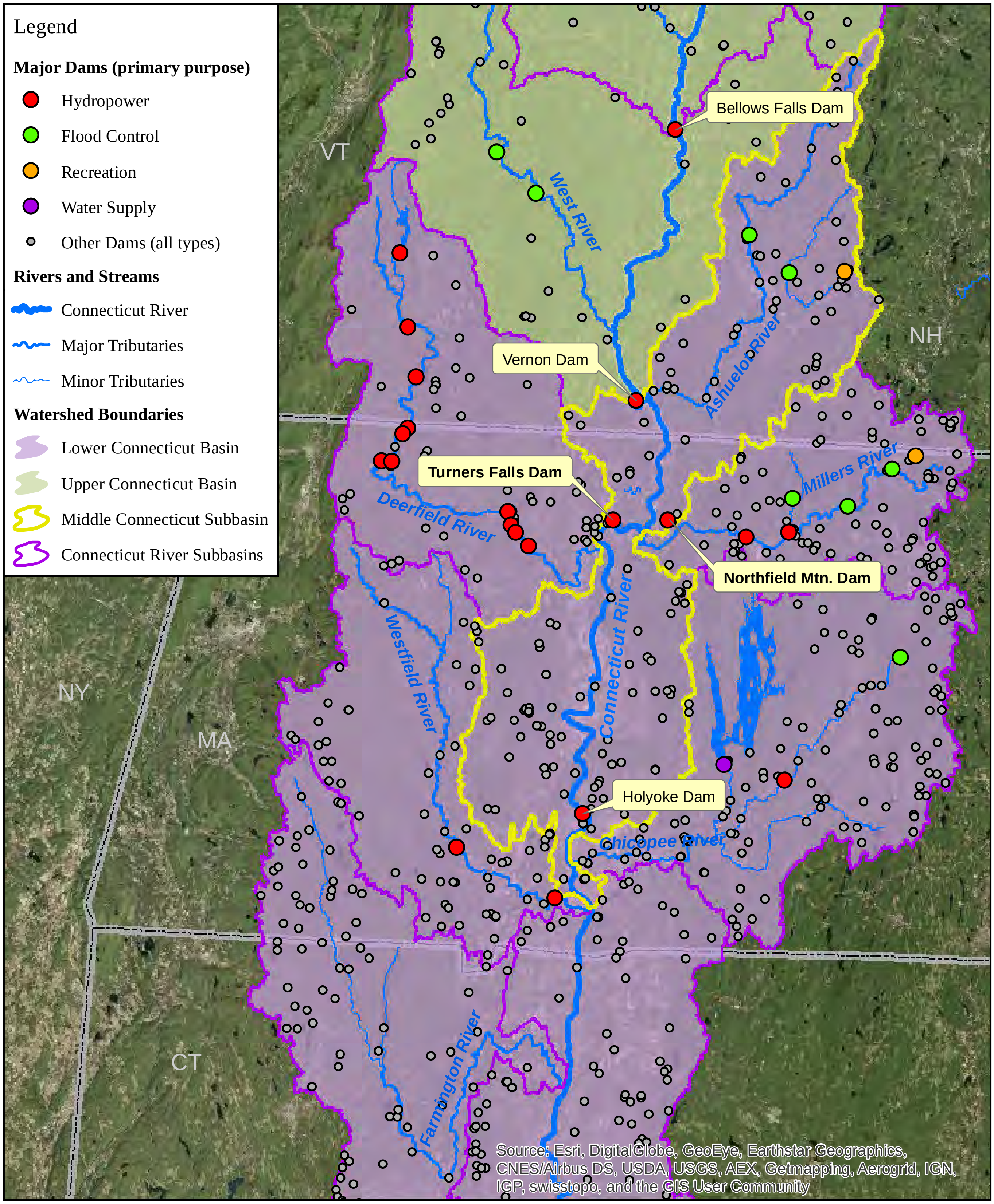

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Figure 3.1-2
Connecticut River Subbasins, Tributaries, and Dams in the Project Area

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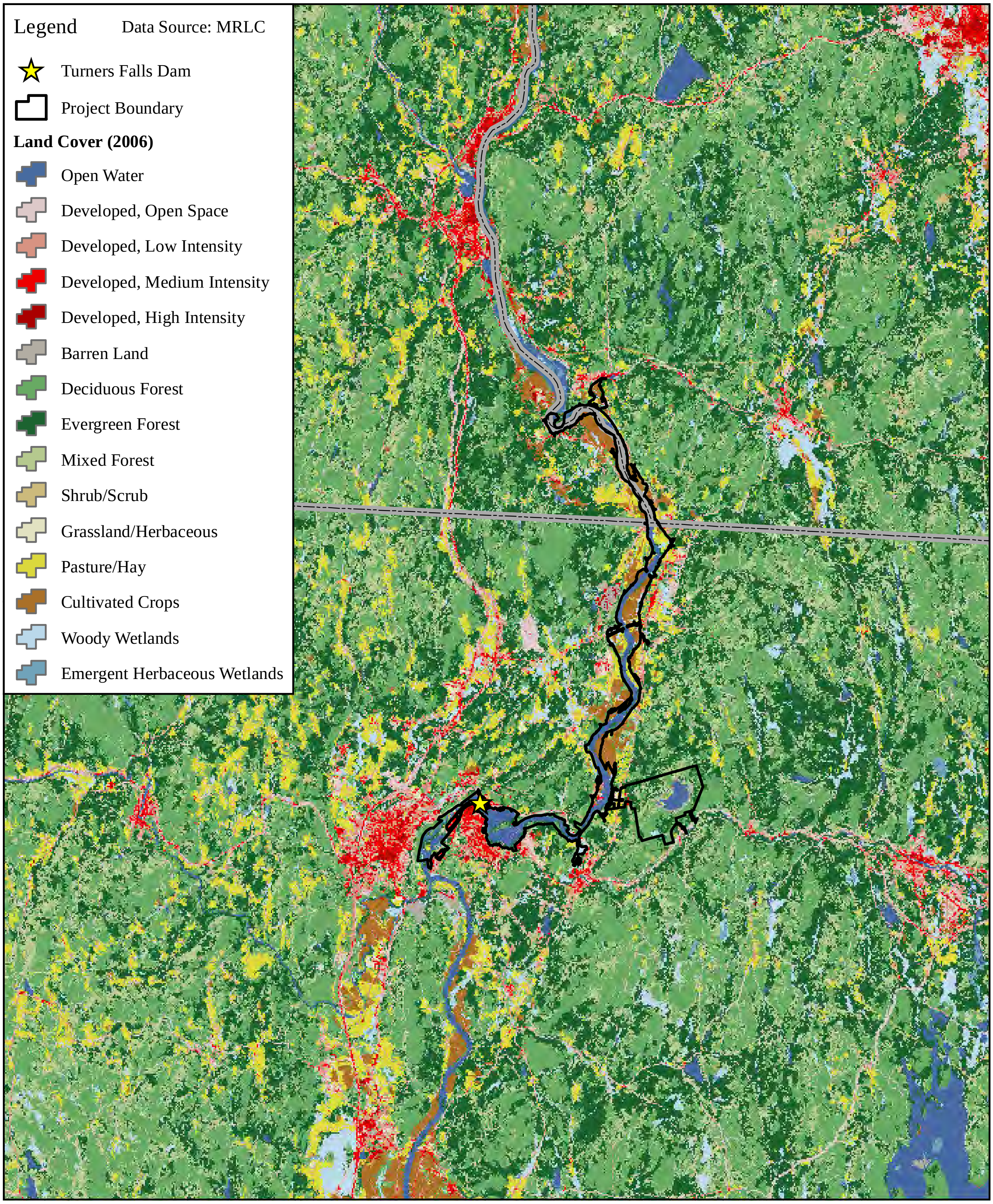

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Figure 3.1.3.1-1
Land Cover in the Project Vicinity

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3.2 Cumulative Effects

3.2.1 Cumulatively Affected Resources

According to § 1508.7 of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing NEPA, an action may cause cumulative impacts on the environment if its impacts overlap in space and time with the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time, including hydropower and other land and water development activities.

FERC noted the following in SD2 relative to cumulative effects, which includes the effects of the three (3) TransCanada Projects and FirstLight's Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development:

> *Based on information in the Pre-Application Documents and staff analysis of the written comments submitted from agencies and other stakeholders on the SD1 document and comments from the January 2013 public scoping meetings, we identified the following resources that may be cumulatively affected by the proposed operation and maintenance of the five Connecticut River Projects: water quality and quantity*[8] *(including power generation), fishery resources (including anadromous and catadromous fish and fish passage), floodplain communities, freshwater mussels, sediment movement, recreational uses and rare, threatened and endangered species.*

Provided below is the geographic and temporal scope of the cumulative effects analysis for these resources, and past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions considered in the analysis.

3.2.2 Geographic Scope of Analysis for Cumulatively Affected Resources

The geographic scope of the cumulative effects analysis defines the physical limits or boundaries of the proposed action's effect on the resources. Because the proposed action would affect the resources differently, the geographic scope for each resource may vary. FERC's SD2 described the geographic scope for cumulative effects as follows:

> Due to the extensive seasonal storage capacity at Moore reservoir, we have identified the geographical extent of cumulative effects on <u>water quantity and water quality</u> *to include the Connecticut River from the base of Moore dam to the mouth of the Connecticut River at Long Island Sound. We chose this geographic area to recognize the cumulative operational influences of the upstream water storage, and the operations of the five Connecticut River projects on water quantity throughout this area and subsequently on water quality that could occur downstream to mouth of the Connecticut River at Long Island Sound.*
>
> Because hydroelectric dams influence both upstream and downstream fish migration within river systems, we have identified the geographical extent of potential cumulative effects on <u>anadromous, catadromous, and diadromous fish species</u> *to include the Connecticut River from Long Island Sound upstream to each species' historical habitat range.*
>
> We have identified the geographical extent of cumulative effects on <u>resident fish species, freshwater mussels, and sediment movement</u> *to include the upper extent of the Wilder reservoir downstream to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland,*[9] *Massachusetts. We chose this geographic area because the operation of the five projects could be a contributing factor to sediment movement*

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[8]*Water quantity is defined as flow magnitude, flow frequency, flow duration, flow timing, and rate of change.*

[9] The Route 116 Bridge is located at the approximate upstream extent of the Holyoke Project (FERC No. 2004) impoundment.

within the river and cumulative effects on resident fisheries and freshwater mussel habitat in this area.

We have identified the geographic scope of cumulative effects on *terrestrial and floodplain communities* *to include the 100-year floodplain (as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency) adjacent to the project-affected areas from the upstream extent of the Wilder reservoir downstream to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland, Massachusetts. We chose this geographic area because the operation of the projects, in combination with other land uses in the Connecticut River Basin, may cumulatively affect floodplain communities adjacent to project reservoirs and downstream riverine reaches in this area.*

The presence of multiple dams on the Connecticut River may cumulatively affect multi-day paddle trips. *Based on our independent review and stakeholder comments, we find the geographic scope of the cumulative effects on recreation for multi-day paddling trips on the Connecticut River may extend as far upstream as Murphy Dam (RM 383) in Pittsburg, New Hampshire, where the natural riverine reaches become navigable (CRWC, 2007; American Whitewater, 2013)*[10] *and downstream to the Holyoke dam (FERC No. 2004), the most downstream dam, in Holyoke, Massachusetts.*

FirstLight has included this geographic area in the cumulative effects analysis for the resources identified by FERC.

3.2.3 Temporal Scope of Analysis for Cumulatively Affected Resources

The temporal scope of the cumulative effects analysis addresses past, present, and future actions and their effects on each affected resource. Based on the expected term of a new license, the temporal scope of analysis addresses reasonably foreseeable actions for 30-50 years into the future.

3.2.4 Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

The cumulative effects of past and present actions on the resources listed below are addressed in the Affected Environmental Section of this Exhibit E.

- Sediment Movement (Section 3.3.1 Geology and Soils)
- Water Quantity and Quality (Section 3.3.2, Water Resources),
- Anadromous, Catadromous, and Diadromous fish species (Section 3.3.3 Aquatic Resources)
- Resident Fish Species, Freshwater Mussels, (Section 3.3.3 Aquatic Resources)
- Terrestrial and Floodplain Communities (Section 3.3.4 Terrestrial Resources)
- Recreation for Multi-day Paddling Trips (Section 3.3.6, Recreation Resources)

[10] The Connecticut River Watershed Council (2007). The Connecticut River boating guide: Source to sea (3rd ed.). The Globe Peqout Press: Guilford, Connecticut. American Whitewater (2013). Retrieved on 4/11/2013 from http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/10545

3.3 Proposed Action and Action Alternative

3.3.1 Geology and Soils

3.3.1.1 Affected Environment

3.3.1.1.1 Geology

Bedrock Geology

The Connecticut River Valley was formed by erosion of sedimentary rocks before the glacial period. These sedimentary rocks, largely sandstone, shale, and conglomerate, interspersed with volcanic rocks, were formed about 190 to 200 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic period. The bordering uplands are underlain by older, less erodible metamorphic and igneous rocks (Simcox, 1992).

The bedrock geology in the vicinity of the Project is illustrated in Figure 3.3.1.1.1-1 and described further below.

Turners Falls Development

The bedrock geology surrounding the Turners Falls Development is based on a USGS characterization of near-surface bedrock in the New England region (Robinson & Kapo, 2003). Although the dominant bedrock geology surrounding the Turners Falls Development is sedimentary (such as arkose, siltstone, sandstone, shale, and conglomerate), tilted basalt layers have formed distinctive ridges in many parts of the river valley. The Jurassic-age Holyoke basalt results in a prominent north-south trending ridge from southern Connecticut into central Massachusetts, which then curves to trend east-west in the Holyoke Range.

Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development

At the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, the pressure shaft, powerhouse, and tailrace were excavated through the bedrock of Northfield Mountain. Several geological investigations were conducted as part of the initial licensing and construction of the Project (CL&P *et al*., 1966). These investigations show that Northfield Mountain is the northwest flank of a broad dome structure having a northeast-southwest axis. The rocks comprising this dome are hard, crystalline metasediments of mid-Paleozoic age. In geologic studies, these have been grouped into two formations, the Dry Hill granite gneiss and the Poplar Mountain gneiss. The Dry Hill granite gneiss has a maximum thickness of about 800 feet and is about 460 feet thick at the powerhouse site. This formation forms the crest of Northfield Mountain. It is overlain and underlain by the Poplar Mountain gneiss, which crops out near the discharge portal of the tailrace tunnel. The Dry Hill granite gneiss consists of massive beds or layers of evenly foliated granite gneiss, ranging in thickness up to 150 feet, separated by relatively thinner members of biotite-rich gneiss. The Poplar Mountain gneiss consists of medium to coarse, feldspathic, biotite-rich granite gneiss interbedded with biotite schists and quartzitic members. While these are hard, durable, crystalline rocks, the Poplar Mountain gneiss is more micaceous and thinly foliated than the Dry Hill granite gneiss. The cover over the bedrock in the Upper Reservoir area is very thin. Bedrock is exposed in many areas at the ground surface and in other areas covered by a thin mantle of glacial outwash.

Faulting within the area of Northfield Mountain appears to be minimal. The major fault of the area is the Border Fault between the Triassic sandstones of the Connecticut Valley and the meta-sediments. Within the vicinity of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, the fault lies west of the Connecticut River and well away from structures of the facility.

Surficial Geology

Surficial geology of the Connecticut River Valley region in the vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development is illustrated in Figure 3.3.1.1.1-2.[11] Surficial geologic units in the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development Upper Reservoir area predominantly consist of thin glacial till and shallow bedrock. In the vicinity of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace, surficial geologic units consist of coarse and fine glacial stratified deposits (sorted and stratified sediments composed of gravel, sand, silt, and clay deposited in layers by glacial meltwater) and floodplain alluvium closer to the river.

Most of the surficial deposits in the general region of the TFI are deposits of the last two continental ice sheets that covered all of New England in the latter part of Pleistocene Ice Age. These deposits can be categorized into three groups: glacial tills, glacial stratified deposits, and post-glacial deposits (S&A, 2014):

> *Glacial till* – Glacial till is the most widespread glacial deposit, and was laid down directly by glacier ice. It consists of non-sorted, generally non-stratified mixtures of particles ranging in grain size from clay to large boulders in a matrix of predominantly fine sand and silt. Till blankets the bedrock surface in variable thicknesses, ranging from a few inches to more than 200 feet. The Upper Till was deposited during the last glaciations (Wisconsin Ice Age), and the Lower Till was deposited during the older Illinoian Ice Age. In the Connecticut Valley area, the till was derived mainly from the Triassic sedimentary rocks. The Lower Till contains relatively high percentages of silt- and clay-size particles, and the Upper Till are better sorted and contain less fine-grained materials (S&A, 2014).
>
> *Glacial stratified deposits* – During retreat of the last ice sheet, materials in the glacier were deposited in glacial streams, lakes and marine environments that occupied the valleys and lowlands. Because these materials were deposited in water, they tend to be stratified and well-sorted gravel, sand, silt and clay. Glacial stratified deposits are the predominant surficial materials in the Connecticut River Valley. These deposits generally overlie till; however in some places till is not present and the stratified deposits lie directly on bedrock. The largest glacial lake in the region was Lake Hitchcock which occupied the Connecticut Valley area. Lake Hitchcock was dammed behind a mass of earlier deltaic sediments in the Cromwell-Rock Hill area of central Connecticut. The lake lengthened northward into northern Vermont and New Hampshire as the ice sheet retreated. The principal bottom sediments of Lake Hitchcock are varved clay, silt, and fine sand at least 300 feet in maximum thickness, which are overlain by a continuous blanket of sand 2 to 25 feet thick (S&A, 2014).
>
> *Post-glacial deposits* – The two principal post-glacial deposits are floodplain alluvium and aeolian deposits. Floodplain alluvium consists of sand, gravel, and silt, stratified and well sorted to poorly sorted. The grain size distribution of alluvium generally varies over short distances, both vertically and laterally. Along smaller streams, alluvium is commonly less than 5 feet thick. The most extensive deposits of alluvium in the region are along the Connecticut River, where the materials are predominantly sand, fine gravel, and silt, with thickness up to about 25 feet. Alluvium typically overlies thicker glacial stratified deposits. The aeolian deposits in the region consist of windblown silt and sand that form a discontinuous but widespread blanket, about 5 feet in maximum thickness over bedrock and glacial deposits (S&A, 2014).

The French King Gorge area along the TFI consists of bedrock outcrops, thin glacial till, and areas of coarse stratified glacial deposits. Further downstream in the area of the Turners Falls Dam, bypass reach and power canal, surficial geologic units include coarse stratified glacial deposits, stream terrace deposits, floodplain alluvium and bedrock outcrops.

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[11] Surficial geology information is not available for New Hampshire.

Terrace and Floodplain Surfaces

A description of the stream terrace deposits along the river was provided in a geomorphic characterization of the TFI (Field Geology Services, 2007). This characterization is relied on to describe the geologic history of the terrace and floodplain formations adjacent to the Connecticut River in the TFI area.

While the width and orientation of the valley through which the Connecticut River flows is the result of ancient geological processes, the valley bottom is composed of a series of terraces stepping up from the river with the highest and, therefore, oldest geomorphic surface formed since the last Ice Age (i.e., < 15,000 years). These terrace surfaces are seen throughout the TFI area. The width of the valley is narrowest through the French King Gorge where the river encounters bedrock nearly continuously. However, only 10% of the channel through the TFI encounters bedrock, with most of the channel flowing against glacial, lacustrine, or alluvial sediments.

When glacial ice retreated from the Connecticut River Valley at the end of the last Ice Age great quantities of sediment were washed into the valley from the tributaries and from the glacial ice melting to the north, forming large deltas. One such delta in Rocky Hill, CT naturally damned the width of the valley and created a long narrow lake, known as Lake Hitchcock, that extended as far north as West Burke, VT. The lake's water surface in the TFI area was likely more than 150 feet higher than the current level of the Connecticut River (Field Geology Services, 2007). Tributaries built deltas at the lake's margins that are today the highest terraces in the valley. These areas provide an excellent source of sand and gravel, as evidenced by the gravel pits excavated below their surfaces. The delta front sloped down to the lake bottom, which itself was over 75 feet above the current river level; the terrace on which the town of Northfield rests is a remnant of the old lake bottom surface. Eventually the natural dam holding back Lake Hitchcock was broken and the Connecticut River was able to erode through the old lake sediments.

The river's downcutting was stopped when hard bedrock was encountered as was the case at the deep areas within Barton Cove, where a large waterfall previously existed and carved large plunge pools downstream. Upstream, the river was graded to the top of this bedrock barrier and began eroding laterally into the old lake bottom sediments, creating a wide floodplain. This higher floodplain level was abandoned when the river resumed downcutting. Once reaching a new graded level, the river eroded laterally to create its current floodplain in a process that continues until this day.

3.3.1.1.2 Soils

The two dominant soil types associated with abandoned and active floodplains in the TFI area are the Hadley very fine sandy loam and the Suncook loamy sand (Field Geology Services, 2007). The stratigraphy of sediments underneath these floodplain surfaces is characterized by poorly consolidated alternating fine sand and silt layers.

The Agawam fine sandy loam is the dominant soil type associated with the older and higher terraces, but several other soil types also occur. The stratigraphy underlying each terrace depends largely on the depositional environment in which the terrace surface formed (e.g., deltaic, lacustrine). In most instances the uppermost sediments exposed in these high banks are well stratified sands with the underlying sediments at river level varying between well sorted sand, cobbly to gravelly sand, or varved lacustrine clays. Given the close proximity in which the varied depositional environments were found, the type of sediment exposed at the base of the high banks along the river can vary over short distances. Bedrock ledge is also intermittently seen at the base of the banks and buried in the sediment above.

The recently updated soil survey maps for Franklin County, MA were obtained to describe the soil resources in the vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. Soil survey data were also obtained for Windham County, Vermont and Cheshire County, New Hampshire. Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1 (eight pages) depicts the soils types within 2,000 feet of the shoreline in the vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, or within the Project boundaries. Note that the legend for these figures is located at the end of Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1. The top ten soil series, in terms of areal coverage, in the vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development are listed in Table 3.3.1.1.2-1.

3.3.1.1.3 Shoreline and Streambank Characterization

The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development Upper Reservoir shoreline is composed of constructed dikes created with fill material from excavation areas during the construction of the Project. Additional bank types include steep areas cut into bedrock, particularly at the intake canal, and gently sloping unvegetated areas that are alternately exposed and inundated in response to changing water levels.

Starting in 1998, Full River Reconnaissance (FRR) surveys were conducted every 3-5 years to document TFI streambank characteristics, such as steepness, material type, degree of vegetative cover, and severity of erosion. The most recent FRR was conducted in 2013 (relicensing Study No. 3.1.1) (S&A, 2014). The 2013 FRR reported that riverbanks in the TFI generally consist of an upper bank that is often above water except during high flow conditions, and a lower bank that is frequently submerged. These banks consist of a range of materials from silt or sand to solid rock.

The results of the 2013 FRR indicated that the majority of the upper riverbanks in the TFI were found to have moderate or steep slopes, heights greater than 12 ft., be comprised of silt/sand, and have heavy vegetation. The majority of the lower riverbanks were found to have flat/beach to moderate slopes, be comprised of silt/sand, and have none to very sparse vegetation. Erosion conditions in the TFI were found to be generally stable with None/Little current erosion occurring through much of this reach.

As noted in the 2013 FRR report (S&A, 2014), 84.8% of the total length of the TFI riverbanks were found to have None/Little erosion[12], 14.1% Some erosion, 0.5% Some to Extensive erosion, and 0.6% Extensive erosion. Furthermore, 5.5% of the total length of TFI riverbanks were found to have Potential Future Erosion, 0.6% Active Erosion, 9.1% Eroded, 83.5% Stable, and 1.3% in the Process of Stabilization. Table 3.3.1.1.3-1 presents summary statistics of the TFI streambank features and characteristics as noted during the 2013 FRR, while Table 3.3.1.1.3-2 provides definitions for each classification. Figure 3.3.1.1.3-1 depicts the extent of current erosion found along the streambanks of the TFI.

3.3.1.1.4 Suspended Sediment

TFI suspended sediment values have been observed to have a strong correlation to flow. That is, the highest suspended sediment concentration (SSC) values are often observed during the highest periods of flow while the lowest SSC values are often observed during the lowest period of flows. During a three year observation period (2013-2015), three mainstem flow thresholds were observed in regard to SSC values: <12,000 cfs, 12,000-35,000 cfs, and >35,000 cfs. Median SSC values for mainstem flows below 12,000 cfs observed during this period (as measured in the vicinity of the Rt. 10 Bridge) were 2.9 mg/L while flows between 12,000-35,000 cfs and greater than 35,000 cfs had observed median SSC values of 12.45 mg/L and 144.61 mg/L, respectively (GSE, 2015). Figure 3.3.1.1.4-1 demonstrates this relationship.

Furthermore, the flow and SSC levels of the Connecticut River in the Project boundary are very much correlated with the season. The seasonal hydrology pattern in this area is typically defined by: 1) a spring freshet typically occurring in late March and into May when the highest annual flows and SSC values are normally observed (barring a significant basin wide rain event or Hurricane in the summer or fall); 2) moderate flows and SSC values throughout the early summer as the spring freshet subsides; 3) low flows and SSC values throughout the summer and early fall; and 4) low to moderate flows and SSC values during

[12] Riverbanks consist of an irregular surface and include a range of natural materials, above ground vegetation, and below ground roots of different densities and sizes. Due to these characteristics, there are small areas of disturbance which often occur at interfaces between materials, particularly in the vicinity of the water surface. These small disturbed areas can be considered as erosion, or sometimes can result from deposition or even eroded deposition. No natural riverbank exists which does not have at least some relatively small degree of disturbance or erosion associated with the natural combination of sediment types/sizes and vegetation. As such, the extent of erosion for generally stable riverbanks that included these relatively small disturbed areas was characterized as None/Little during the 2013 FRR.

the fall. Significant basin wide or local rain events occasionally cause spikes in flow and SSC values during the summer and fall before conditions return to a lower, more steady state. SSC values observed during typical high, moderate, and low flow periods are shown in Figures 3.3.1.1.4-2 – 3.3.1.1.4-4. Table 3.3.1.1.4-1 demonstrates the seasonal range of flows and SSC values observed during the three year observation period (2013-2015).

3.3.1.2 Environmental Effects

Potential geology and soils Project related effects could include shoreline erosion within the TFI and the entrainment of sediment into the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development works during Project operations.

Numerous studies have been conducted since 1979 to characterize streambank conditions of the TFI to understand the causes of erosion and to identify the most appropriate approaches for bank stabilization. In addition to studies conducted in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the Erosion Control Plan (ECP) was developed in 1998 (S&A, 1999) to address stabilization and preventative maintenance of erosion sites in the TFI, regardless of cause.

As part of the ECP a reconnaissance level survey of the length of the TFI streambanks was conducted to identify and rank erosion sites without regard to the cause of erosion and whether it appeared to be related to the Project. From this survey a list of the 20 most severely eroded sites was developed. Following completion of this list, the Licensee began stabilizing these sites using various techniques including bio-engineering. The 1998 list of sites has served as the basis for the construction of 18,150 linear feet of stabilization efforts from 1999 through 2014. As of the 2013 FRR, 15 of the 20 sites identified in 1998 had been stabilized. Of the five (5) sites not stabilized, two are located in areas where extreme hydraulic conditions exist that are proximate to non-Project related manmade structures (just below Vernon Dam and just upstream of the Route 10 Bridge), one site is located on an island (island locations have typically not been as high priority to repair as streambank locations), and two other sites were not selected for stabilization based on feedback from stakeholders and landowners.

Table 3.3.1.2-1 denotes the current status of the twenty most severely eroded sites identified during the 1998 FRR while Figure 3.3.1.2-1 denote the locations where stabilization efforts associated with the ECP have occurred.

In addition to the 18,150 linear feet of TFI riverbanks that have been stabilized since 1998 through implementation of the ECP, previous stabilization work associated with construction of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development totaled 25,900 feet of rip-rap or rip-rap with vegetation with an additional 2,600 feet of grading and planting. Furthermore, an additional 2,000 ft of experimental stabilization was constructed by the USACE in the 1970s. Overall stabilization work (not including grading and planting) associated with construction of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and other work such as that constructed by the USACE along with implementation of the ECP totals approximately 48,980 linear feet of riverbanks (9.28 miles).

Over the past 15 years, TFI riverbank conditions with respect to erosion have improved. The 1998 FRR identified 3.4% of TFI riverbanks as being Severely eroded while the 2013 FRR found that only 0.6% of riverbanks were classified as having Extensive erosion.[13] The majority of the 20 most severely eroding sites identified in 1998 have successfully been treated, are now stable and supporting heavy vegetation, and have not experienced any significant erosion. Moreover, erosion sites in 1998 were quite large in magnitude and stark in appearance with very little vegetation and significant potential for ongoing erosion and sediment production. By contrast, in 2013, eroding sites were found to be generally smaller in magnitude with a greater degree of vegetation. In addition, based on the findings of the 2013 FRR it was observed that from

[13] Due to classification differences between the 1998 and 2013 FRR's "Severely Eroded" and "Extensive Erosion" were the most severe erosion classifications for the 1998 and 2013 FRR, respectively.

2008 to 2013 there has been an increase in riverbank stability, and therefore a corresponding decrease in eroding banks, of approximately 1.5% (S&A, 2014).

To put the current health of the TFI streambanks with respect to erosion processes into context and to better understand the current condition of the TFI, the results of the 2013 FRR were compared with the conclusions of the Connecticut River bank erosion comparison study conducted by Simons and Associates (S&A) in 2012 (S&A, 2012). The 2012 S&A report examined and compared riverbank erosion in the TFI to other reaches of the Connecticut River including impoundments upstream and downstream of the TFI and free flowing stretches of the river. Key conclusions from this report, which were reinforced by the results of the 2013 FRR, found that:

- The segment of river with the greatest extent of eroding riverbanks is the un-impounded northern reach (Pittsburg, NH down to Gilman Dam). At the time of the available study (Field Geological Services, 2004), 48.4% of the riverbanks were experiencing moderate or more significant erosion. Riverbanks that had been rip-rapped covered 17.1% of the length of the river.[14]
- Despite the fact that similar percentages of riverbank have been stabilized in the northern, free-flowing reach and in the TFI; the percentage of erosion in the TFI is only about one-third the extent of erosion that is occurring in the northern, un-impounded reach of the Connecticut River (16.7% compared to 48.4%).
- Several erosion sites were identified and photographed in the Bellows Falls, Vernon, Turners Falls, and Holyoke Impoundments in 1997. These erosion sites were photographed again in 2008. All of the erosion sites in 1997 in the Bellows Falls and Holyoke Impoundments, and all but one of the 1997 erosion sites in the Vernon Impoundment, remain in essentially the same state of erosion when photographed in 2008. Many of these sites are significant in both size and severity. In contrast, most of the erosion sites in the TFI in 1998 have been stabilized and are no longer eroding as of 2008 (when previously identified erosion sites were re-photographed in 3 impoundments and when the most recent FRR was conducted in the TFI), with several additional erosion sites scheduled to be stabilized as part of the "Erosion Control Plan for the Turners Falls Pool of the Connecticut River" (S&A, 1999) by 2012.
- In addition to the direct stabilization of many of the erosion sites in the TFI that were identified in the 1998 Erosion Control Plan (ECP), there is evidence of some natural stabilization processes including increased upper bank vegetation and areas of dense low bank aquatic vegetation that are helping provide a degree of additional stability in some areas.
- Based on the state of erosion in the northern un-impounded reach as well as the state of continued erosion in the Bellows Falls, Vernon and Holyoke impoundments, the riverbanks in the TFI are in the best condition (more stable and less eroding) than in any other part of the Connecticut River.

The causes of erosion in the TFI are currently being evaluated in Study No. 3.1.2 *Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing Erosion and Potential Bank Instability* (Study No. 3.1.2). Study No. 3.1.2 will evaluate and identify the causes of erosion, and the forces associated with them, in the TFI and determine to what extent they are related to Project operations. Based on past experience conducting FRRs and other geomorphic evaluations of the Connecticut River, it is anticipated that potential causes of erosion could include:

- Hydraulic shear stress due to flowing water;
- Water level fluctuations due to hydropower operations;
- Boat waves;
- Land management practices and anthropogenic influences to the riparian zone;

[14] The study reach along the Connecticut River from Pittsburg, NH to Gilman Dam is 85 miles.

- Animals;
- Wind waves;
- Seepage and piping;
- Freeze-thaw; and
- Ice or debris

The potential primary causes of erosion that are being examined in greater detail include:

- Hydraulic shear stress due to flowing water;
- Water level fluctuations due to hydropower operations;
- Boat waves;
- Land management practices and anthropogenic influences to the riparian zone; and
- Ice

As of the date of this filing, Study No. 3.1.2 is still ongoing.

In regard to the entrainment of suspended sediment into the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development works and the Connecticut River, FirstLight is conducting Study No. 3.1.3 *Northfield Mountain Project Sediment Management Plan* (Study No. 3.1.3). As of the date of this filing, Study No. 3.1.3 is still ongoing. Preliminary results from Study No. 3.1.3 indicate that during high (>35,000 cfs) and moderate (12,000-35,000 cfs) flow conditions, SSC values observed during generation were found to be lower than those observed during pumping; that is, SSC values observed at the tailrace were lower than those observed in the mainstem. This indicates: 1) that net deposition is occurring in the Upper Reservoir over time, and 2) there are no correlations between typical Project operations and increased mainstem SSC values. These observations are further supported by the results of the annual Upper Reservoir bathymetry surveys which demonstrated a net accumulation of sediment over time.

In addition to suspended sediment monitoring, various modeling efforts are underway as part of Study No. 3.1.3 to better understand the potential entrainment of sediment into the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development works and the potential discharge of the entrained sediment to the Connecticut River during drawdown or dewatering activities. The results of the modeling efforts, combined with the other elements of Study No. 3.1.3, will be used to inform management measures to minimize potential environmental effects.

3.3.1.3 Cumulative Impacts

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations define “cumulative effects” as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR §1508.7).

For this analysis, the action is the relicensing and continued operation of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, as well as the upstream projects owned by TransCanada, which is also conducting relicensing studies on erosion. The cumulatively affected resource is the Connecticut River Basin. The cumulative impact of the Project on the affected resource is still being evaluated as part of Relicensing Study No. 3.1.2 *Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing Erosion and Potential Bank Instability* and Study No. 3.1.3 *Northfield Mountain Project Sediment Management Plan*. Study No. 3.1.2 will evaluate and identify the causes of erosion, and the forces associated with them, in the TFI and determine to what extent they are related to Project operations. The results of Study No. 3.1.3 will be used to help inform sediment management measures that will avoid or minimize the entrainment of sediment in the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development works and the Connecticut River. Final reports for Study No. 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 will be filed in the second quarter of 2016 and September 1, 2016, respectively.

3.3.1.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

No environmental measures are proposed at this time. Proposed environmental measures will be reviewed upon completion of Study No. 3.1.2 and 3.1.3.

3.3.1.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development operations, under FirstLight's proposed action, would continue to alter water levels on an intra-daily time step in the TFI.

Relicensing Study No. 3.1.2 *Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing Erosion and Potential Bank Instability* is still ongoing with the final report due the second quarter of 2016. The results of this study will identify the causes of erosion in the TFI and the impact of fluctuating water levels, if any, on TFI streambank erosion.

Relicensing Study No. 3.1.3 *Northfield Mountain Project Sediment Management Plan* is also still ongoing with the final report due September 1, 2016. The results of Study No. 3.1.3 will be used to inform management measures to minimize the entrainment of sediment into the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development works and discharge to the Connecticut River during drawdown or dewatering activities.

Table 3.3.1.1.2-1: Description of Common Soil Types in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development

Series	Percent Areal Coverage	Description
Windsor	21%	The Windsor series consists of very deep, excessively drained soils formed in sandy outwash or eolian deposits. They are nearly level through very steep soils on glaciofluvial landforms.
Agawam	10%	The Agawam series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in sandy, water deposited materials. They are level to steep soils on outwash plains and high stream terraces.
Unadilla	9%	The Unadilla series consists of deep and very deep, well drained soils formed in silty, lacustrine sediments or old alluvial deposits. These soils are on valley terraces and lacustrine plains.
Hadley	9%	The Hadley series consists of very deep well drained soils formed in silty alluvium. They are nearly level soils on flood plains.
Chatfield	7%	The Chatfield series consists of well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils formed in till derived from parent materials that are very low in iron sulfides. They are moderately deep to bedrock. They are nearly level through very steep soils on glaciated plains, hills, and ridges.
Yatesville-Holyoke complex	7%	The Yatesville series consists of moderately deep, well drained soils formed in a loamy till. Nearly level to moderately steep soils on hills and ridges. The Holyoke series consists of shallow, well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils formed in a thin mantle of till derived mainly from basalt and red sandstone, conglomerate, and shale. Nearly level to very steep soils on bedrock controlled ridges and hills.
Udorthents	6%	Disturbed soils; cut and fill areas, urban land.
Poocham	3%	The Poocham series consists of very deep well drained soils formed in wind or water deposited silts and very fine sands. They are on terrace escarpments and along deeply dissected drainageways.
Merrimac	2%	The Merrimac series consists of very deep, somewhat excessively drained soils formed in outwash. They are nearly level through very steep soils on outwash terraces and plains and other glaciofluvial landforms.
Tunbridge	2%	The Tunbridge series consists of moderately deep, well drained soils on glaciated uplands. They are formed in loamy till.

Table 3.3.1.1.3-1: Summary Statistics of Riverbank Features and Characteristics – Turners Falls Impoundment

Riverbank Features	Characteristics					
Upper Riverbank Slope	Overhanging 1.8%	Vertical 1.6%	Steep 28.0%	Moderate 59.8%	Flat 8.8%	
Upper Riverbank Height	Low 15.5%	Medium 5.7%	High 78.8%			
Upper Riverbank Sediment	Clay -	Silt/Sand 95.6%	Gravel -	Cobbles -	Boulders 0.9%	Bedrock 3.5%
Upper Riverbank Vegetation	None to Very Sparse 1.9%	Sparse 1.3%	Moderate 17.1%	Heavy 79.7%		
Lower Riverbank Slope	Vertical 0.8%	Steep 2.3%	Moderate 27.5%	Flat/Beach 69.4%		
Lower Riverbank Sediment	Clay <0.1%[15]	Silt/Sand 59.6%	Gravel 7.9%	Cobbles 8.7%	Boulders 11.9%	Bedrock 11.9%
Lower Riverbank Vegetation	None to Very Sparse 88.3%	Sparse 3.5%	Moderate 3.2%	Heavy 5.0%		
Type of Erosion	Falls-Undercut 43.4%	Falls-Gullies 0.03%	Topples 1.1%	Slide or Flow 6.2%	Planar Slip 1.1%	Rotational Slump 1.5%
Potential Indicators of Erosion	Tension Cracks <0.10[16]%	Exposed Roots 38.1%	Creep/Leaning Trees 62.7%	Overhanging Bank 12.7%	Notch 5.0%	Other 1.1%
Stage of Erosion	Potential Future Erosion 5.5%	Active Erosion 0.6%	Eroded 9.1%	Stable 83.5%	In Process of Stabilization 1.3%[17]	

[15] Clay was found in few segments of the river but where some clay was found the sediment was dominated by another type of sediment either vertically or horizontally within a segment. When this occurred the segment was classified using the dominant sediment type. For example, some clay was observed in segment 342 (just downstream of Vernon Dam on the left bank) but the segment was classified using the dominant sediment type.
[16] Tension cracks can only be observed from land-based observations. Some tension cracks were observed during the land-based survey and are reported at those sites as indicated in the notes for the land-based work. Tension cracks were not observed to be significant in the more general top of bank observations when walking along the length of the Impoundment.
[17] While originally not one of the RSP erosion condition classifications, one riverbank segment was classified as being "In the Process of Stabilization" due to the fact that riverbank stabilization work was being constructed at this

Riverbank Features	Characteristics				
Extent of Current Erosion	None/Little 84.8%	Some 14.1%	Some to Extensive 0.5%	Extensive 0.6%	

particular segment (421, Bathory/Gallagher 2013) during the 2013 FRR. A gravel beach at the top of the lower riverbank had been placed along with large woody debris. Vegetation was then being planted to provide additional stabilization on the gravel beach as well as extending other vegetation onto portions of the upper riverbank.

Table 3.3.1.1.3-2: Riverbank Classification Definitions

RIVERBANK CHARACTERISTICS *(Upper and Lower)*[18]	
Riverbank Slope	**Overhanging** – any slope greater than 90º
	Vertical – slopes that are approximately 90º
	Steep – exhibiting a slope ratio greater than 2 to 1
	Moderate – ranging between a slope ratio of 4 to 1 and 2 to 1
	Flat – exhibiting a slope ratio less than 4 to 1[19]
Riverbank Height	**Low –** height less than 8 ft above normal river level[20]
	Medium – height between 8 and 12 ft above normal river level
	High – height greater than 12 ft above normal river level
Riverbank Sediment	**Clay –** any sediment with a diameter between .001 mm and 2 mm
	Silt / Sand – any sediment with a diameter between .062 mm and 2 mm
	Gravel – any sediment with a diameter between 2 mm and 64 mm
	Cobbles – any sediment with a diameter between 64 mm and 256 mm
	Boulders – any sediment with a diameter between 256 mm and 2048 mm
	Bedrock – unbroken, solid rock
Riverbank Vegetation	**None to Very Sparse –** less than 10% of the total riverbank segment is composed of vegetative cover
	Sparse – 10-25% of the total riverbank segment is composed of vegetative cover
	Moderate – 25-50% of the total riverbank segment is composed of vegetative cover
	Heavy – 50 % or greater of the total riverbank segment is composed of vegetative cover
Sensitive Receptors	Important wildlife habitat located at or near the riverbank.
EROSION CLASSIFICATIONS	
Type(s) of Erosion[21]	**Falls –** Material mass detached from a steep slope and descends through the air to the base of the slope. Includes erosion resulting from transport of individual particles by water.
	Topples – Large blocks of the slope undergo a forward rotation about a pivot point due to the force of gravity. Large trees undermined at the base enhance formation.
	Slides – Sediments move downslope under the force of gravity along one or several discrete surfaces. Can include planar slips or rotational slumps.
	Flows – Sediment/water mixtures that are continuously deforming without distinct slip surfaces.
Indicators of Potential Erosion	**Tension Cracks –** a crack formed at the top edge of a bank potentially leading to topples or slides (FGS, 2007)
	Exposed Roots – trees located on riverbanks with root structures exposed, overhanging.
	Creep – defined as an extremely slow flow process (inches per year or less) indicated by the presence of tree trunks curved downslope near their base (FGS, 2007)
	Overhanging Bank – any slope greater than 90º
	Notching – similar to an undercut, defined as an area which leaves a vertical stepped face presumably after small undercut areas have failed.
	Other – Indicators of potential erosion that do not fit into one of the four categories listed above will be noted by the field crew.[22]

[18] All quantitative classification criteria (e.g. slope, height, vegetation, extent, etc.) were based on approximate estimates made during field observations of riverbanks. The FRR is a reconnaissance level survey that does not include quantitative analysis.
[19] Beaches are defined as a lower riverbank segment with a flat slope
[20] For the purpose of this report, Normal Water Level was defined as water levels within typical pool fluctuation levels, but below Ordinary High Water (186').
[21] FGS, 2007
[22] Segments with features classified as "Other" exhibited various erosion processes that did not fit in one of the existing classification categories.

Stage(s) of Erosion	**Potential Future Erosion –** riverbank segment exhibits multiple or extensive indicators of potential erosion
	Active Erosion – riverbank segment exhibits one or more types of erosion as well as evidence of recent erosion activity
	Eroded – riverbank segment exhibits indicators that erosion has occurred (e.g. lack of vegetation, etc.), however, recent erosion activity is not observed. A segment classified as Eroded would typically be between Active Erosion and Stable on the temporal scale of erosion.
	Stable – riverbank segment does not exhibit types or indicators of erosion
Extent of Current Erosion	**None/Little**[23] **–** generally stable bank where the total surface area of the bank segment has approximately less than 10% active erosion present.
	Some – riverbank segment where the total surface area of the bank segment has approximately 10-40% active erosion present
	Some to Extensive – riverbank segment where the total surface area of the bank segment has approximately 40-70% active erosion present
	Extensive – riverbank segment where the total surface area of the bank segment has approximately more than 70% active erosion present

[23] Riverbanks consist of an irregular surface and include a range of natural materials (silt/sand, gravel, cobbles, boulders, rock, and clay), above ground vegetation (from grasses to trees), and below ground roots of different densities and sizes. Due to these characteristics, there are small areas of disturbance which often occur at interfaces between materials, particularly in the vicinity of the water surface. These small disturbed areas can be considered as erosion, or sometimes can result from deposition or even eroded deposition. No natural riverbank exists which does not have at least some relatively small degree of disturbance or erosion associated with the natural combination of sediment types/sizes and vegetation. As such, the extent of erosion for generally stable riverbanks that include these relatively small disturbed areas is characterized as little/none.

Table 3.3.1.1.4-1: Seasonal Range of Flows and SSC (2013-2015)[24]

Season	Months	Flow Range (cfs)	Median Flow (cfs)	SSC Range (mg/L)	Median SSC (mg/L)
Spring 2013	April - June	2,251-55,570	14,751	0.17-163.46	5.28
Summer 2013	July & August	1,318-61,733	8,750	0.29-149.62	5.20
Fall 2013	September-November	1,423-18,769	5,931	0.37-4.40	2.12
Spring 2014	April - June	1,731-68,338	20,080	0.05-449.76	11.47
Summer 2014	July & August	1,535-26,481	6,762	0.49-86.51	3.67
Fall 2014	September-November	1,360-25,450	5,160	0.14-157.3979	6.36
Spring 2015	April - June	1,668-66,725	15,340	2.00-43.02	10.68
Summer 2015	July	1,661-42,859	8,062	0.19-19.62	7.28

[24] SSC values were measured in the vicinity of the Rt. 10 Bridge

Table 3.3.1.2-1: Twenty Sites with Highest Erosion Rank from the Erosion Control Plan (1998) and Current Status

Site #	Site Name	Length in feet 1998	Status as of 2013 FRR
1	Vernon Dam	827	Base of Vernon dam. Left Bank - Not selected for stabilization due to extreme hydraulic conditions associated with Vernon spillway
2	Rod &Gun Club	20	Restored - 240 ft stabilized in 2004 – Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club
3	Bennett Meadow	100	Restored - 50 ft stabilized in 2005 – Bennett Meadows
4	Urgiel Upstream	1150	Restored - 1200 ft stabilized in 2001 – Urgiel Upstream
5	RT. 10	730	Upstream of RT 10 Bridge Left Bank - Not selected for stabilization due to unique hydraulic conditions in the vicinity of the Route 10 Bridge
6	Skalski	1640	Restored - 1600 ft stabilized in 2004 – Skalski
7	Flagg Farm	2180	Restored - 2500 ft stabilized 1999-2000 – Flagg
8	West bank	630	Not selected for stabilization – opposite great meadow
9	Old VT bridge west bank	260	Restored - 915 ft stabilized in 2007 – Kendall
10	River Road	500	Restored - 980 ft stabilized in 2003 – River Road
11	Urgiel Downstream	690	Restored - 980 ft stabilized in 2005 – Urgiel Downstream
12	Durkee Point	20	Restored - 500 ft stabilized in 2003 – Durkee Point
13	Across from River Road	20	Restored - Stabilized in 2009 – 1725 ft, Split River
14	Country Road (south)	2300	Restored - 850 ft stabilized in 2006 – Country Road (includes site #20)
15	NH island	210	Point of island. Not recommended for restoration, except for possible Preventative Maintenance work
16	Kaufold/Split River farm	4000	Restored – Stabilized in 2010-2012 – 1360 ft, Upper Split River 1; 1000 ft, Upper Split River 2; 1250 ft, Bathory-Gallagher; Wallace-Watson, 1000 ft. (Note: The combination of these sites was formerly known as the Kaufold site)
17	Rod & Gun Club at Narrows East Bank	560	Restored - 1000 ft stabilized by preventative maintenance in 2008 – Montague
18	Narrows	700	Restored - 1000 ft stabilized by preventative maintenance in 2008 – Campground Point
19	VT	450	Not selected for stabilization – below Davenport Island
20	Country Road (North)	480	Restored - 850 ft stabilized in 2006 – Country Road (included as part of site # 14)

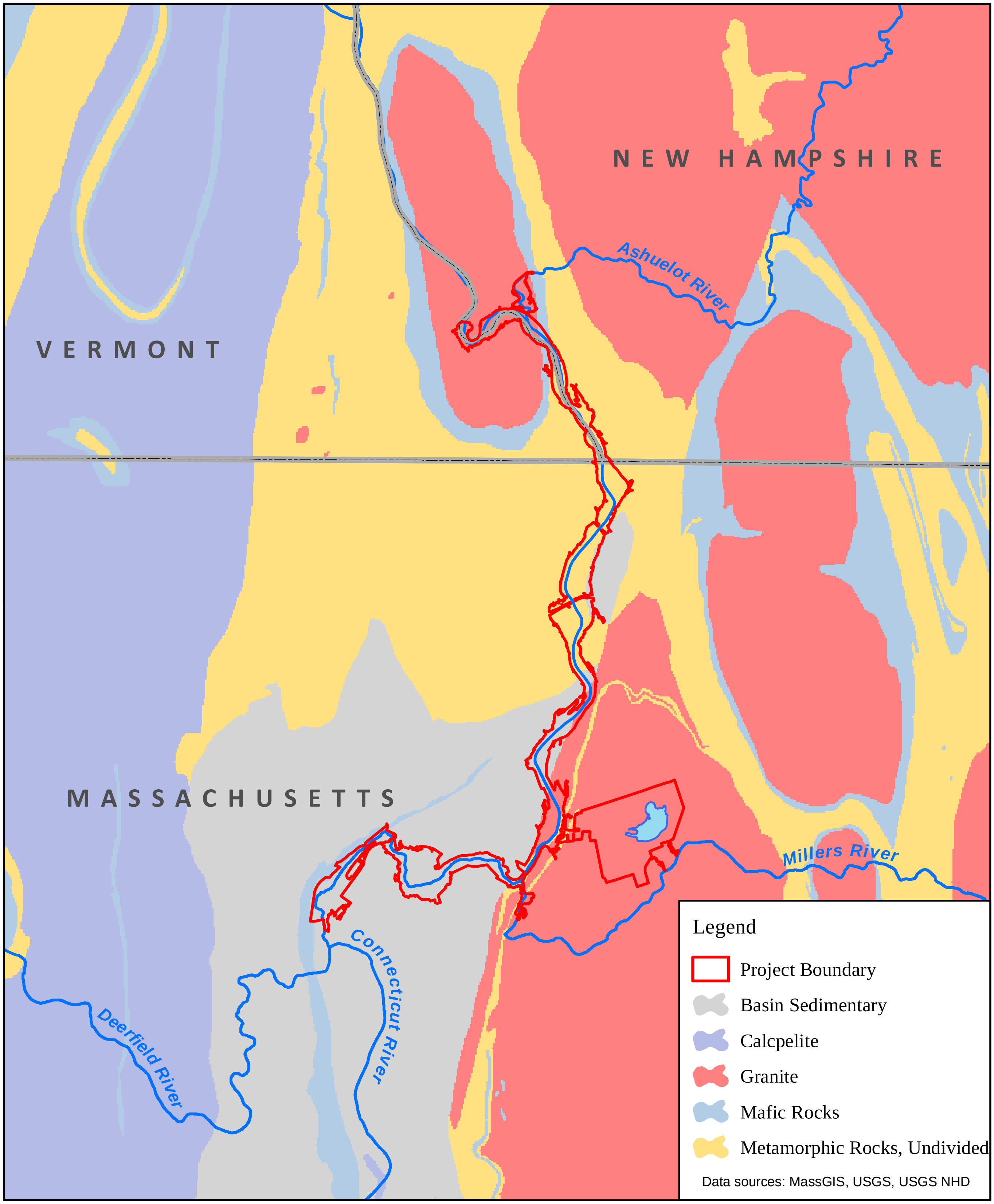

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Figure 3.3.1.1.1-1 Bedrock Geology in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development

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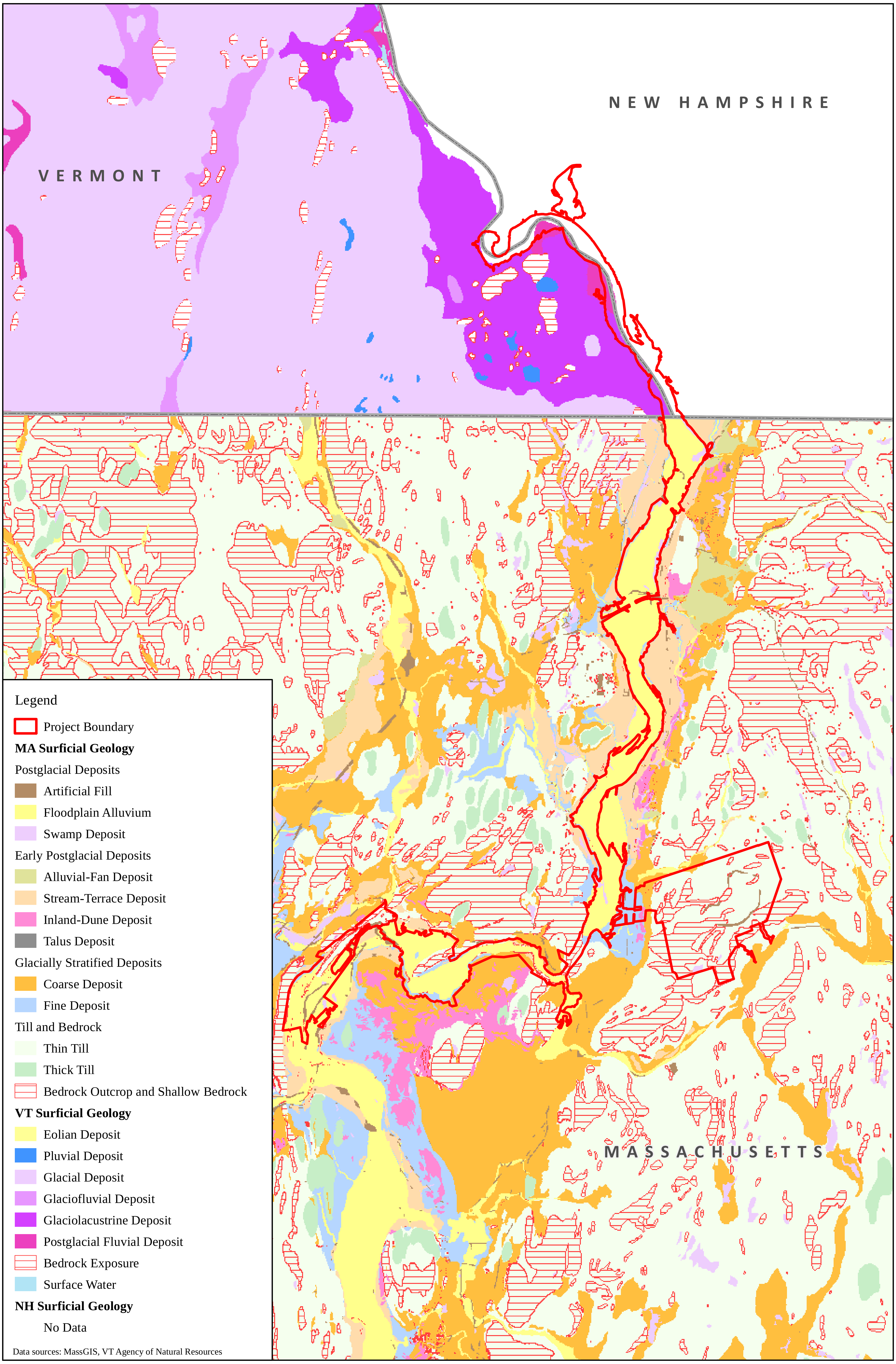

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Figure 3.3.1.1.1-2 Surficial Geology in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development

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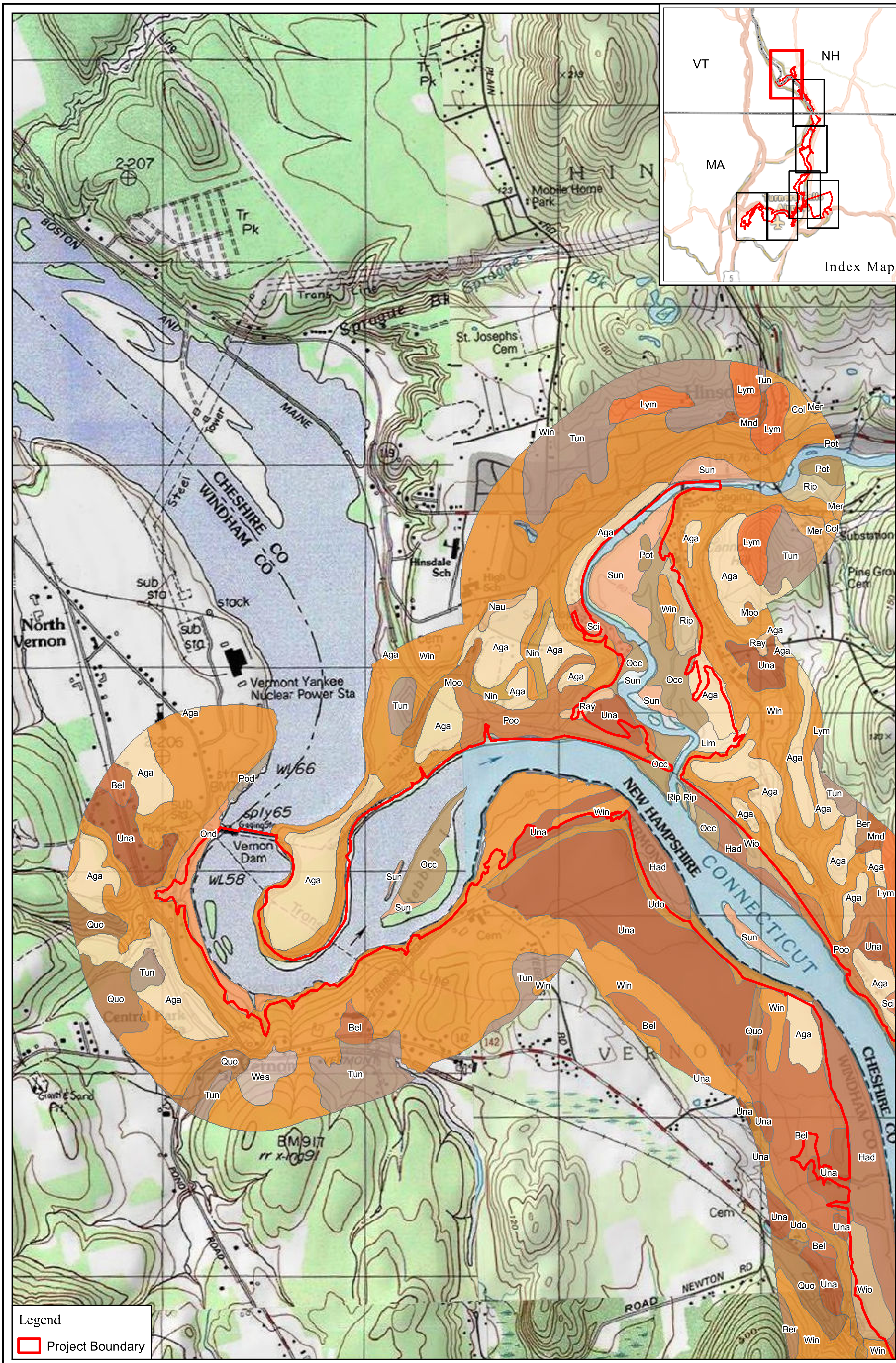

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0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 1

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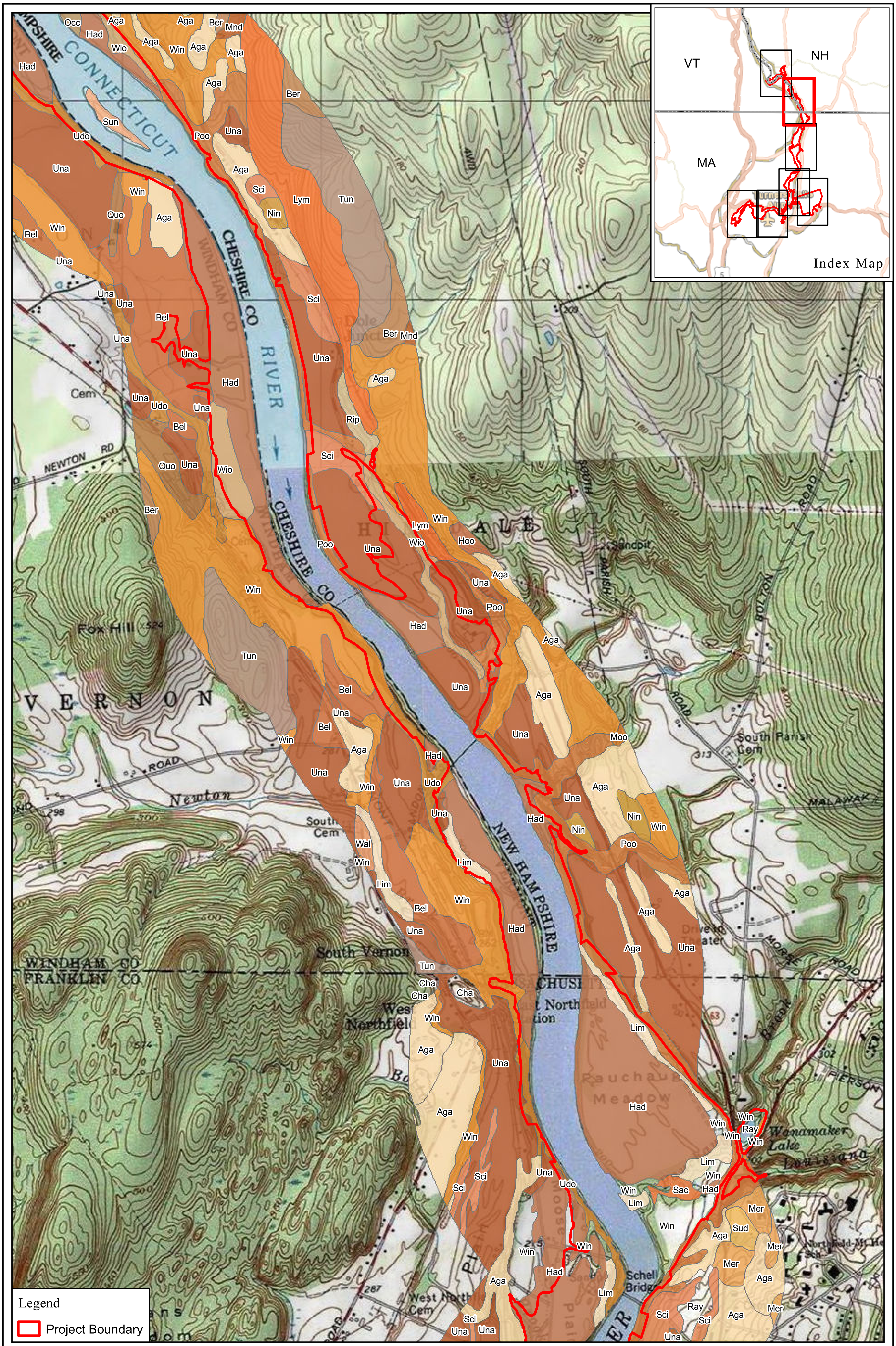

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Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 2

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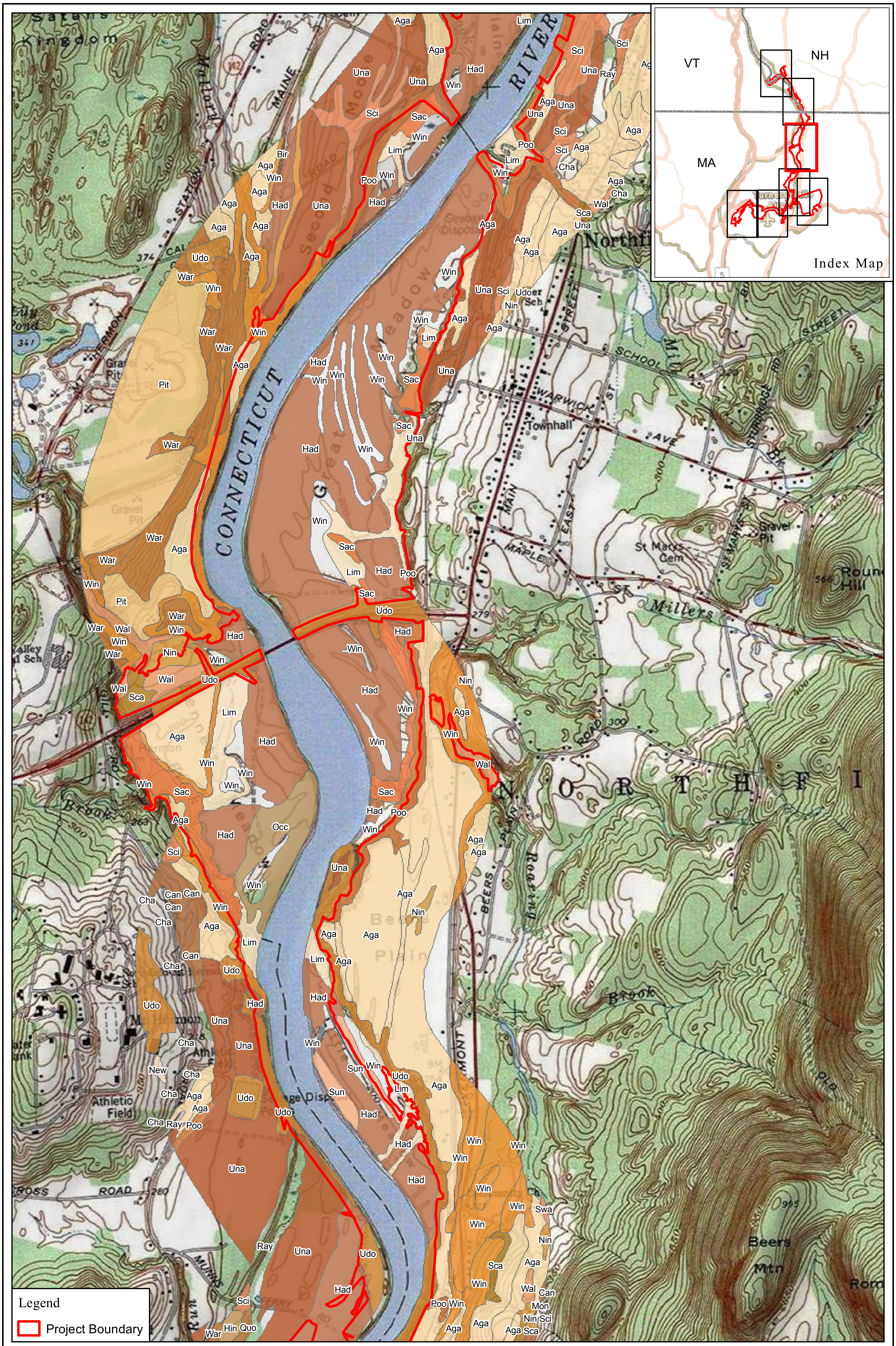

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Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 3

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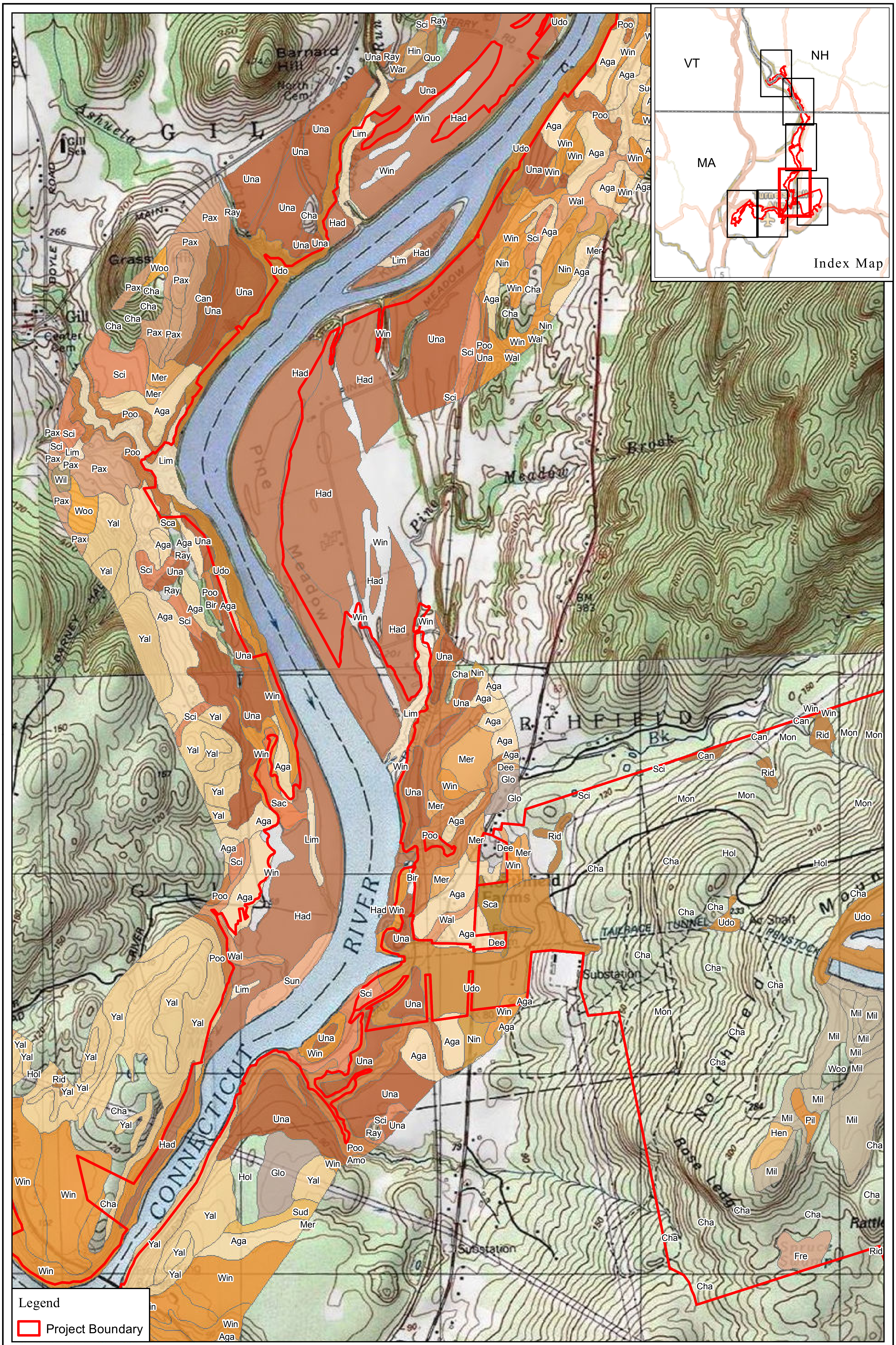

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Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 4

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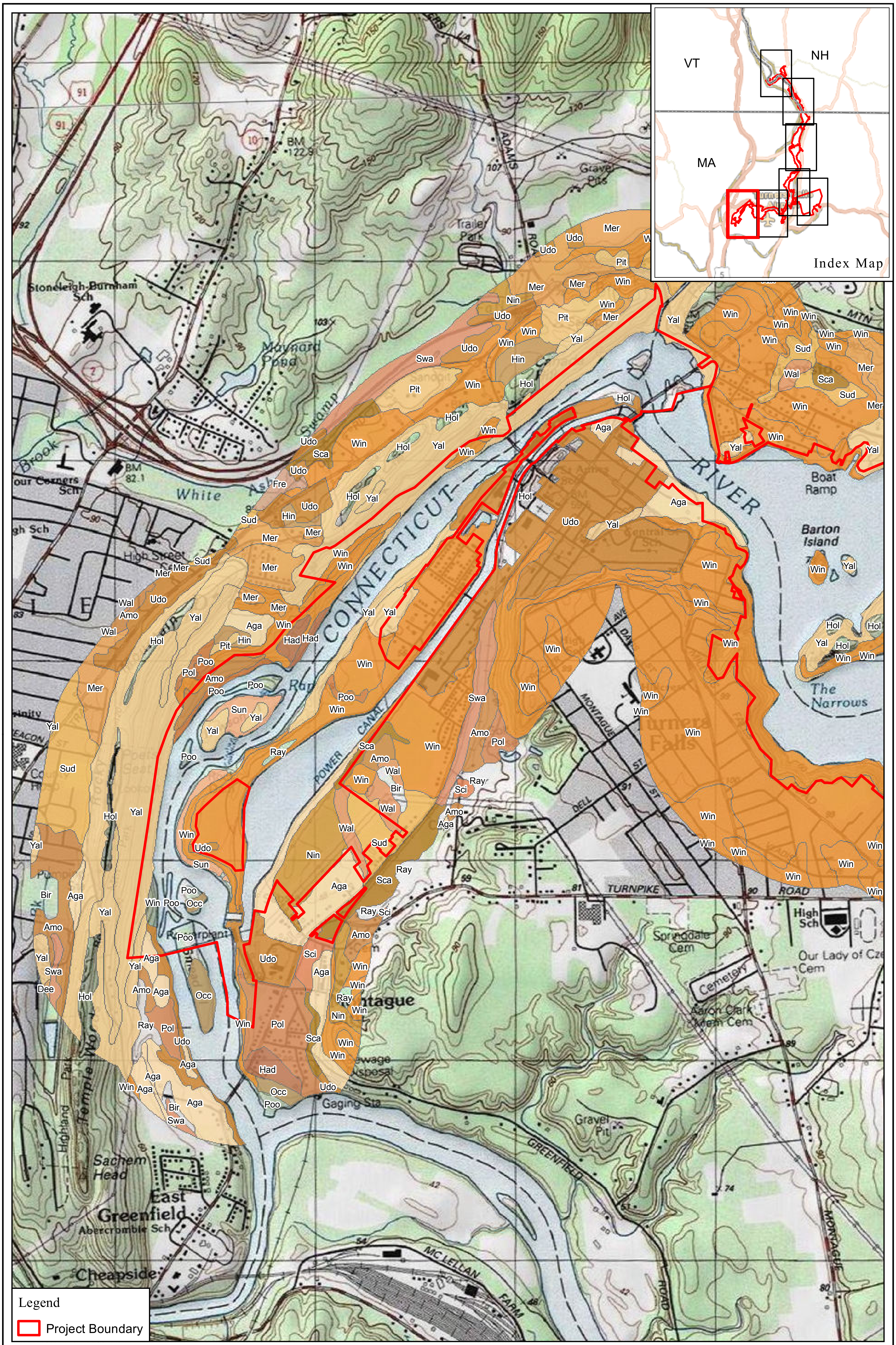

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Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 5

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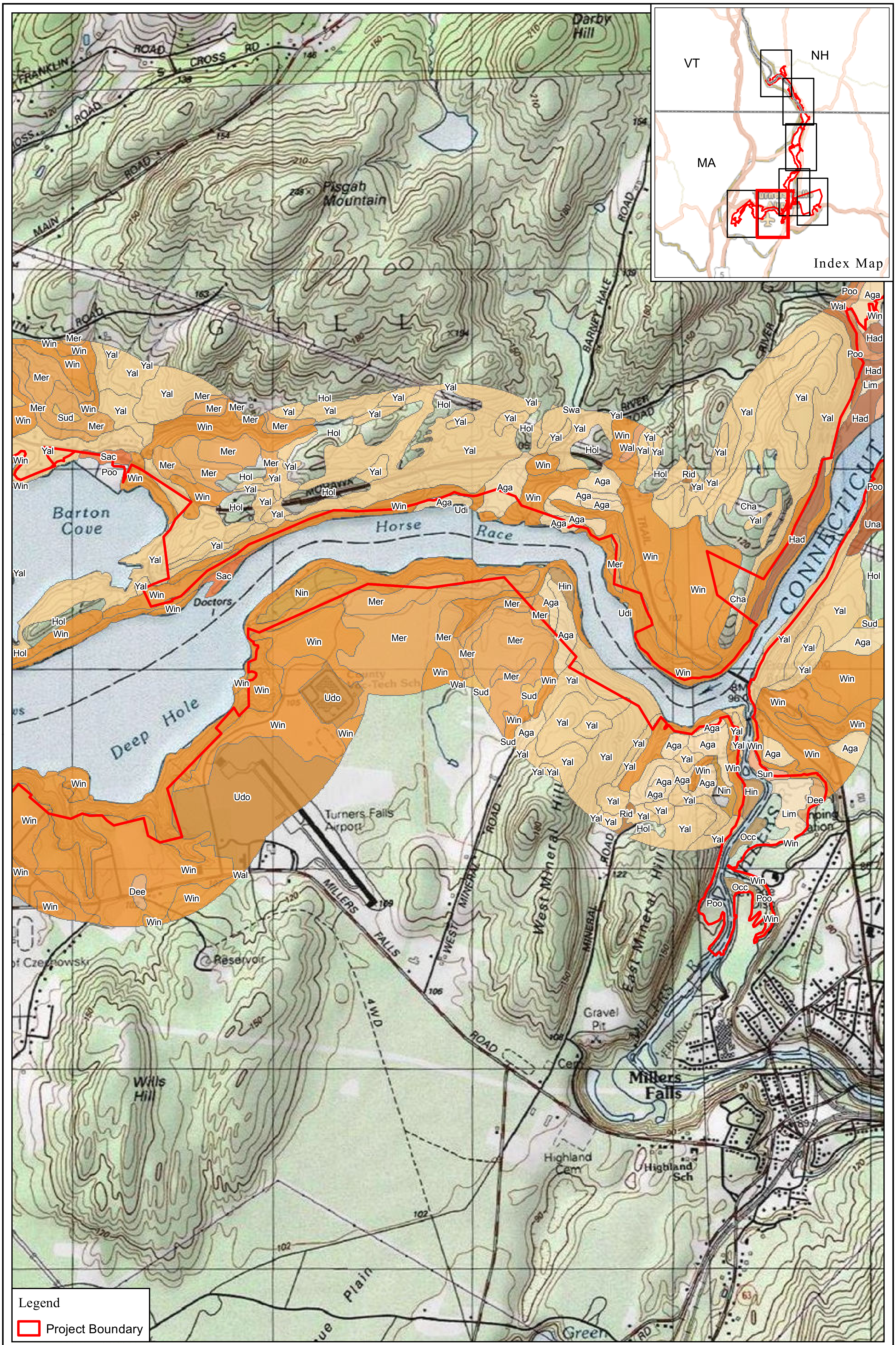

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Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 6

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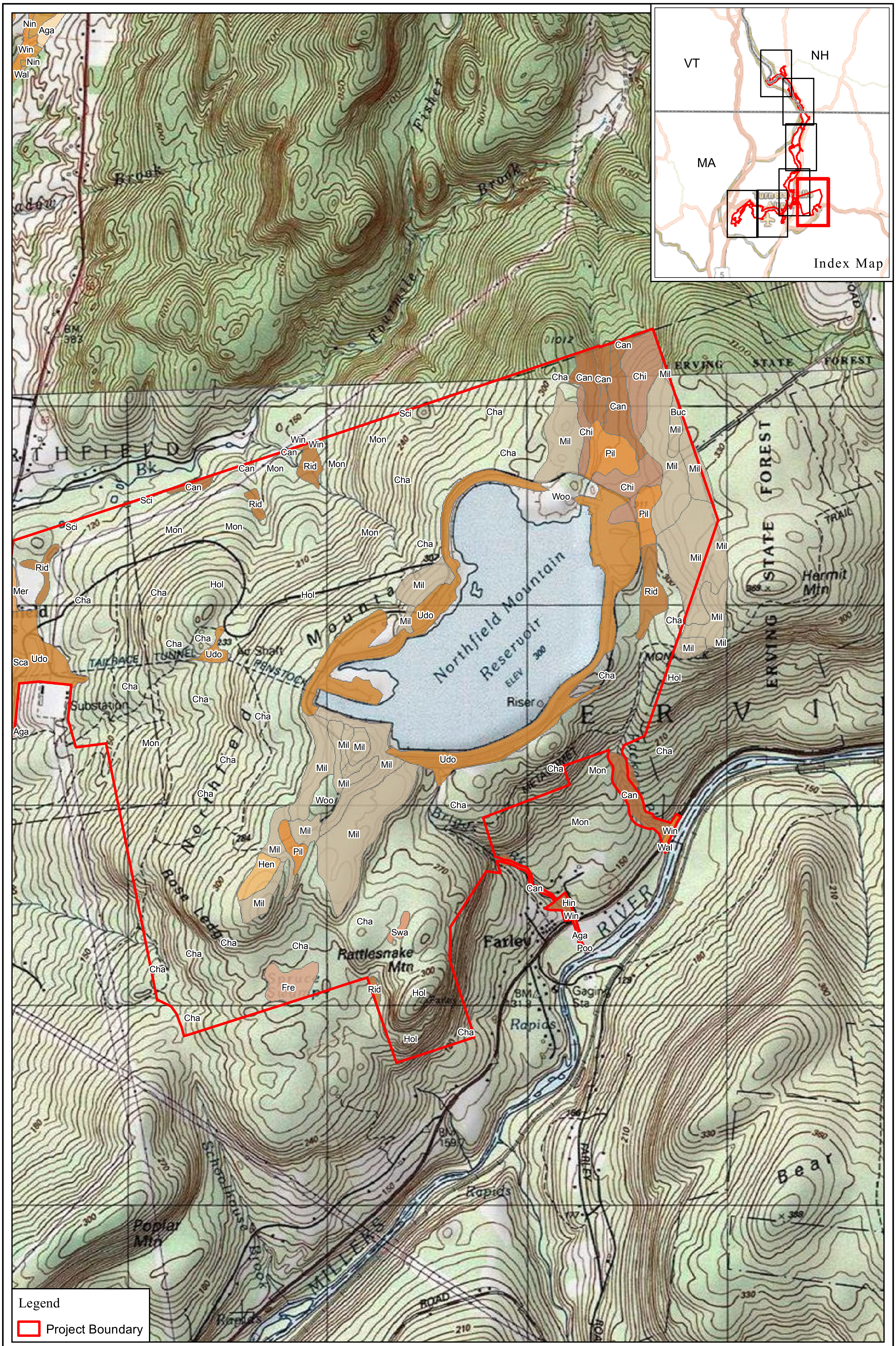

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Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Soils in the Vicinity of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
Map 7

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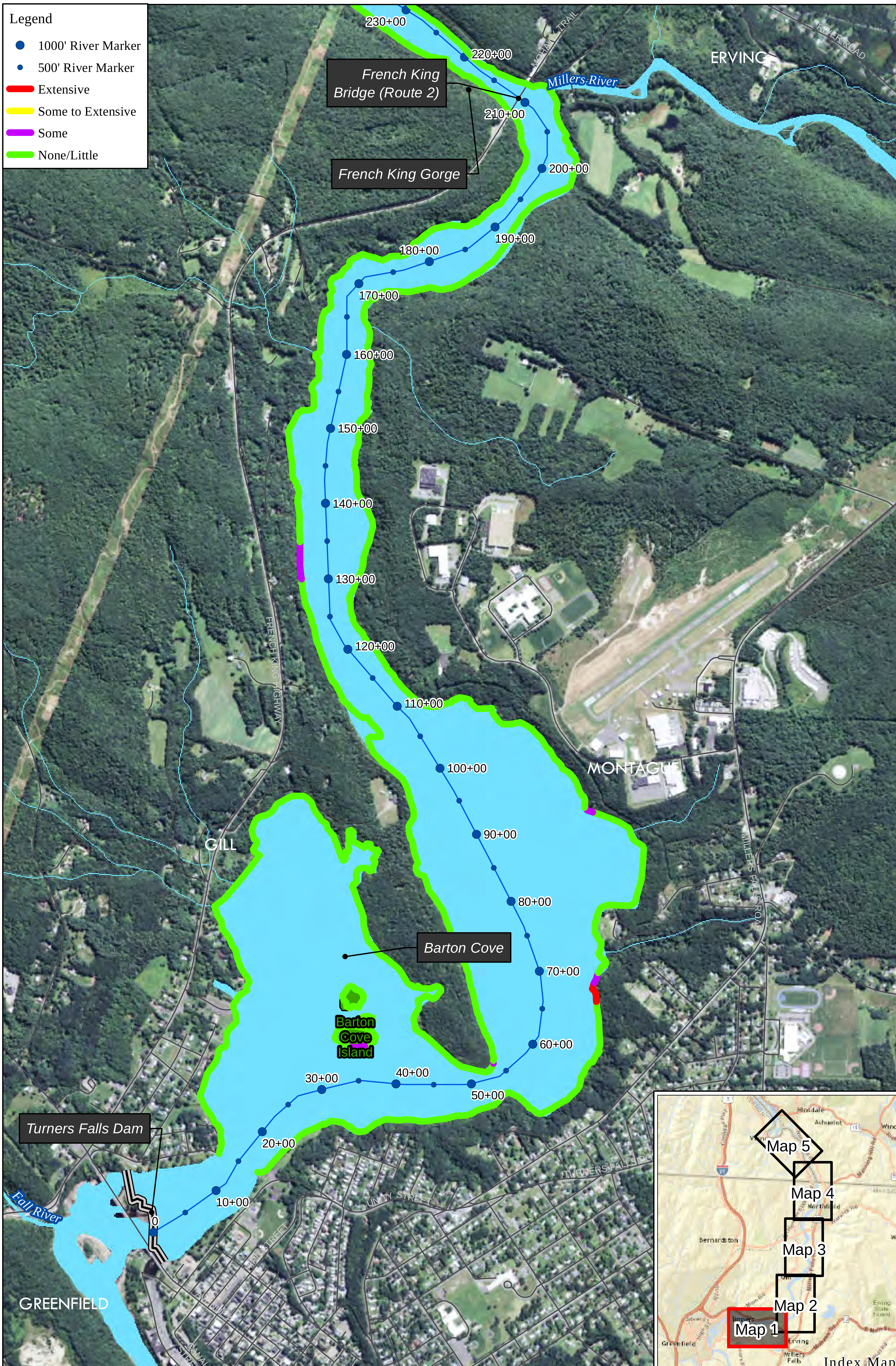
Figure 3.3.1.1.2-1:
Legend for Soils in the Vicinity of the
Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects
(Page 8 of 8)

- Aga -- Agawam
- Amo -- Amostown
- Bel -- Belgrade
- Ber -- Berkshire
- Bir -- Birdsall
- Buc -- Bucksport
- Can -- Canton
- Chi -- Chichester
- Chr -- Charlton
- Cht -- Chatfield
- Col -- Colton
- Dee -- Deerfield
- Fre -- Freetown
- Glo -- Gloucester
- Had -- Hadley
- Hen -- Henniker
- Hin -- Hinckley
- Hls -- Hollis
- Hly -- Holyoke
- Hoo -- Hoosic
- Lim -- Limerick
- Lym -- Lyman
- Mer -- Merrimac
- Mil -- Millsite
- Mnd -- Monadnock
- Mnt -- Montauk
- Moo -- Moosilauke
- Nau -- Naumburg
- New -- Newfields
- Nin -- Ninigret
- Occ -- Occum
- Ond -- Ondawa
- Pax -- Paxton
- Pil -- Pillsbury
- Pit -- Pits, gravel
- Pod -- Podunk
- Pol -- Pollux
- Poo -- Poocham
- Pot -- Pootatuck
- Quo -- Quonset
- Ray -- Raynam
- Rid -- Ridgebury
- Rip -- Rippowam
- Riv -- Riverwash
- Sac -- Saco
- Sca -- Scarboro
- Sci -- Scio
- Sct -- Scituate
- Sud -- Sudbury
- Sun -- Suncook
- Swa -- Swansea
- Tun -- Tunbridge
- Udo -- Udorthents
- Una -- Unadilla
- Wal -- Walpole
- War -- Warwick
- Wds -- Woodstock
- Wes -- Westbury
- Wil -- Wilbraham
- Win -- Winsdor
- Wio -- Winooski
- Woo -- Woodbridge
- Yal -- Yalesville-Holyoke complex



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0 650 1,300 2,600
Feet

Figure 3.3.1.1.3-1:
Turners Falls Impoundment
Extent of Current Erosion (2013)
Map 1

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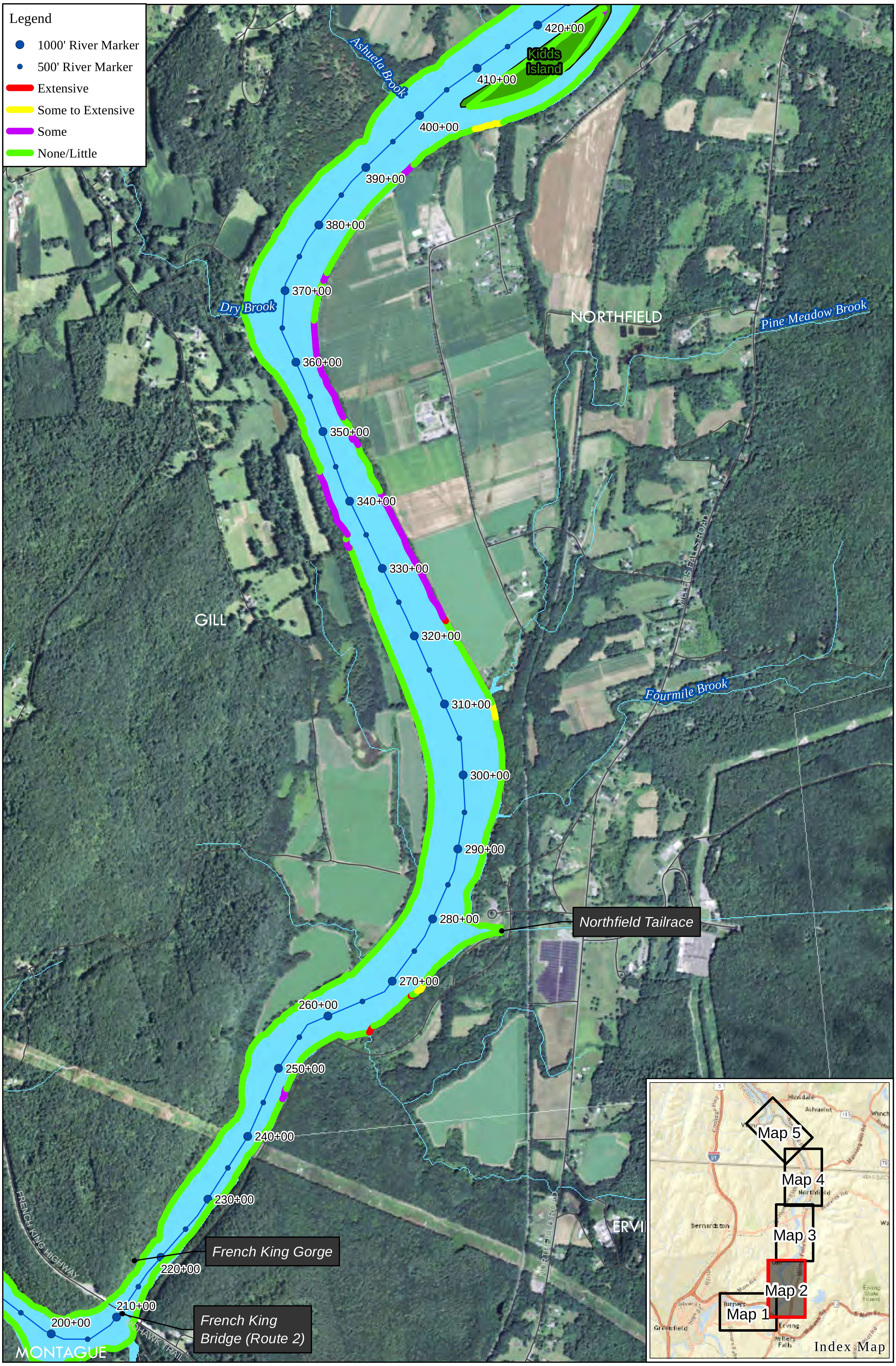

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0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet

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Figure 3.3.1.1.3-1:
Turners Falls Impoundment
Extent of Current Erosion (2013)
Map 2

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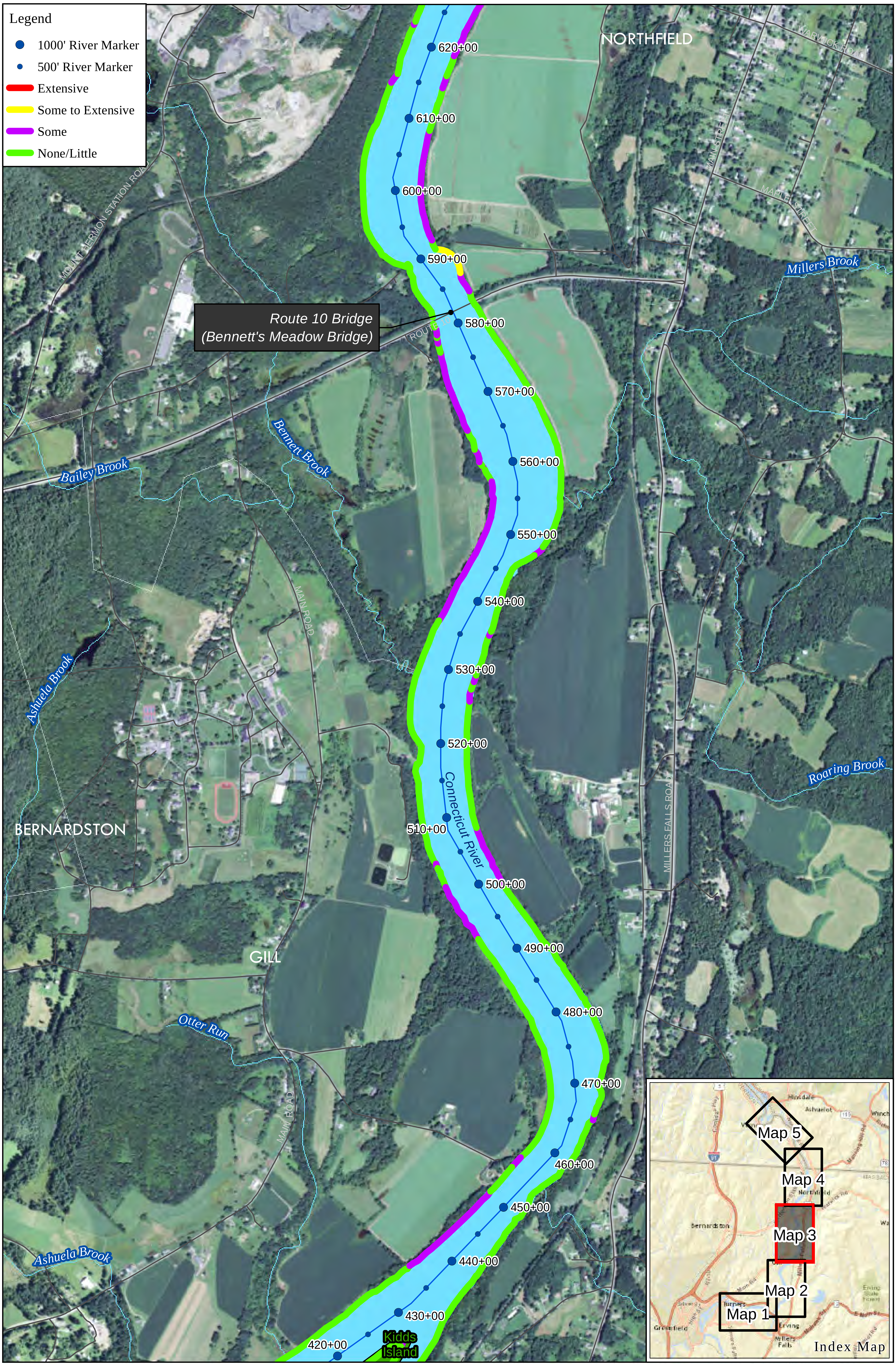

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Figure 3.3.1.1.3-1:
Turners Falls Impoundment
Extent of Current Erosion (2013)
Map 3

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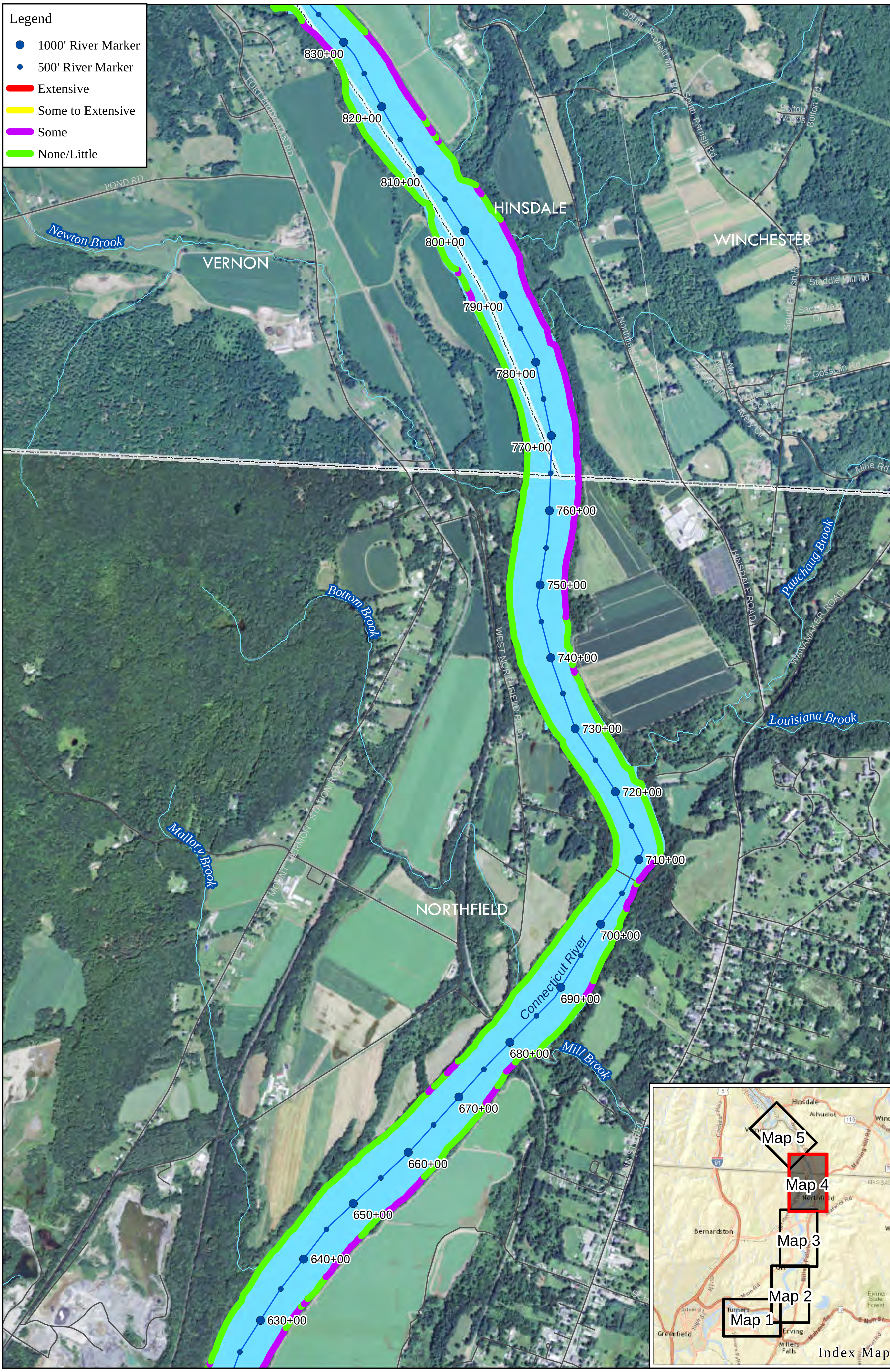

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Figure 3.3.1.1.3-1:
Turners Falls Impoundment
Extent of Current Erosion (2013)
Map 4

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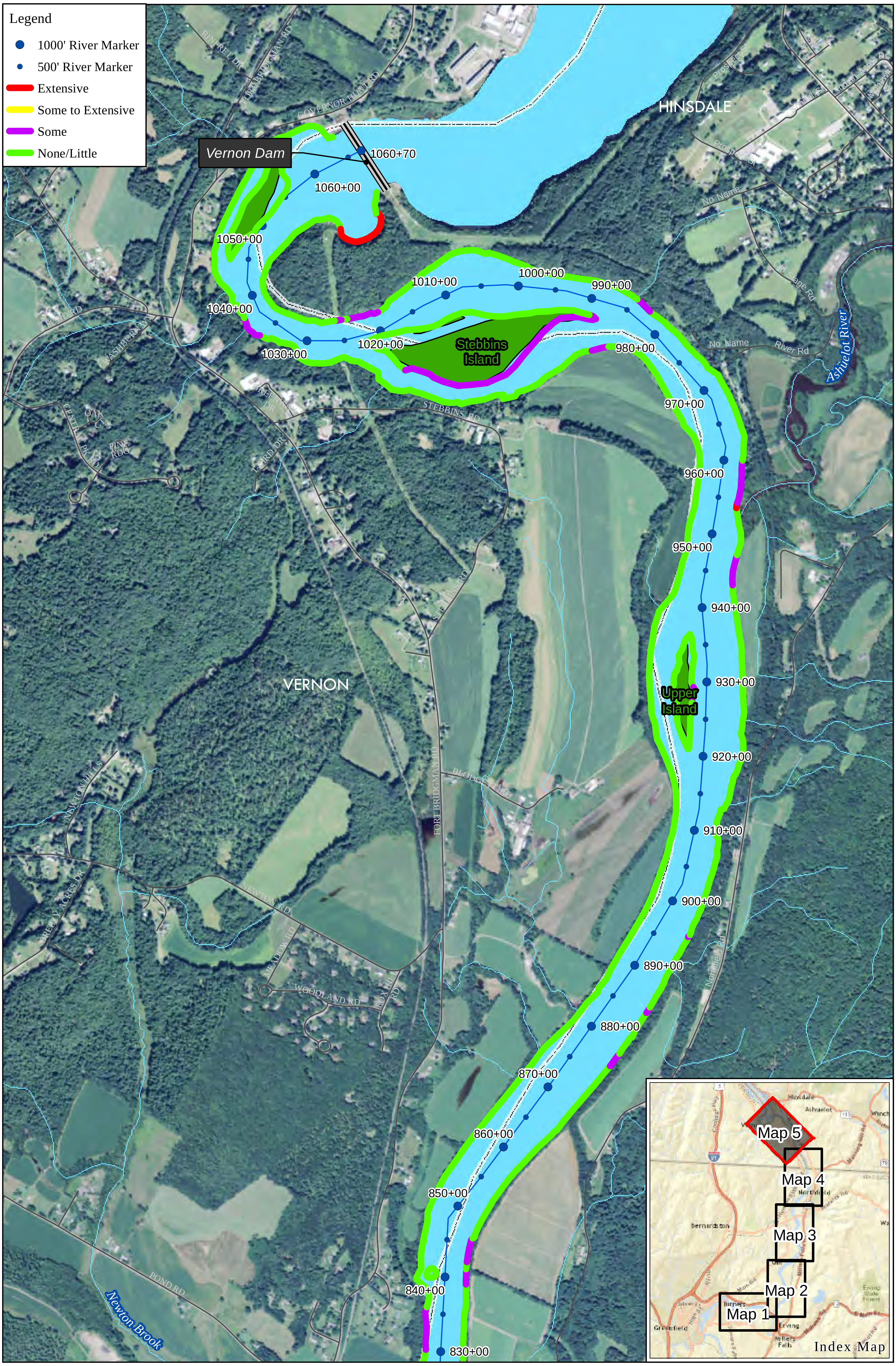

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Figure 3.3.1.1.3-1:
Turners Falls Impoundment
Extent of Current Erosion (2013)
Map 5

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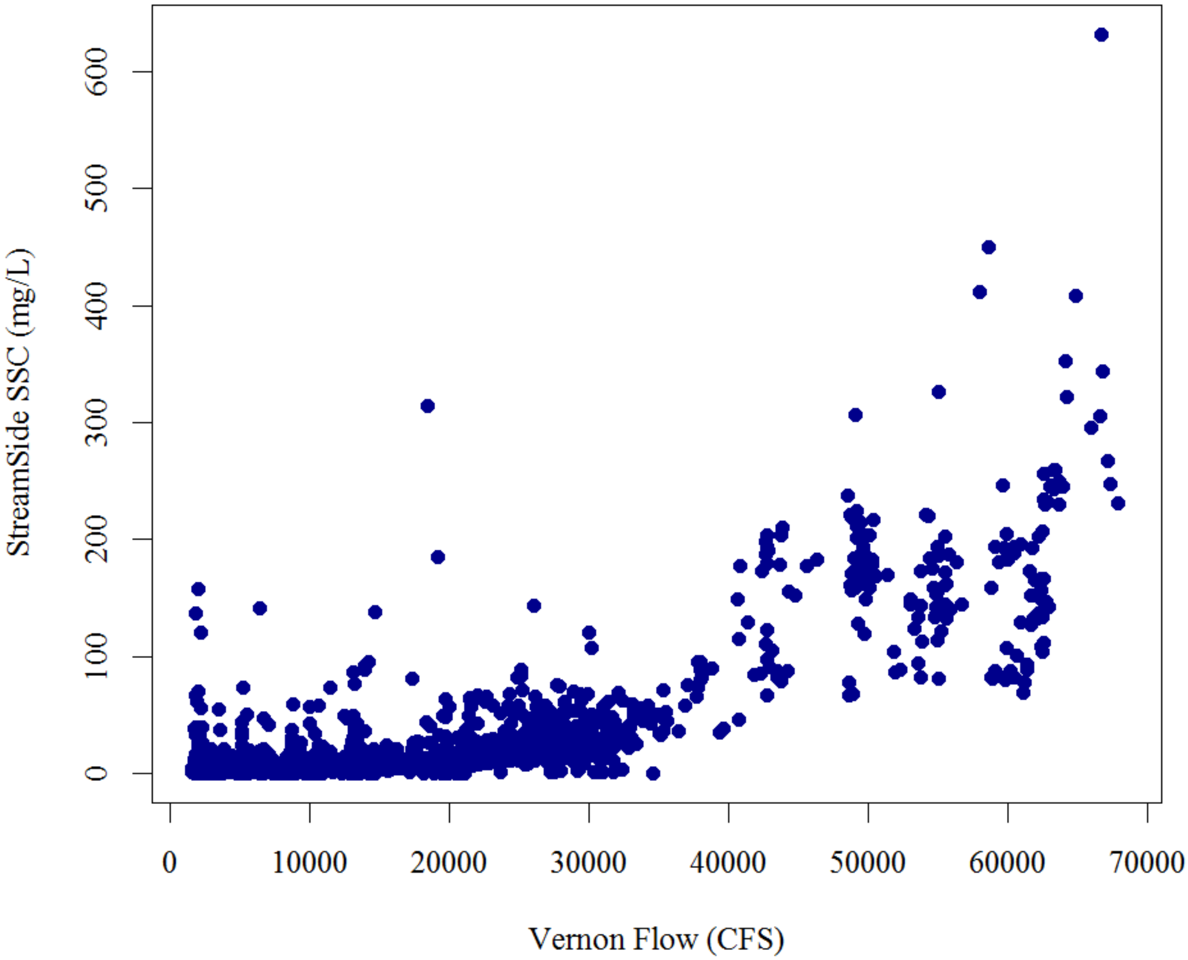


Figure 3.3.1.1.4-1: Connecticut River SSC vs. Vernon Discharge (2013-2015)[25]

[25] As measured in the vicinity of the Rt. 10 Bridge

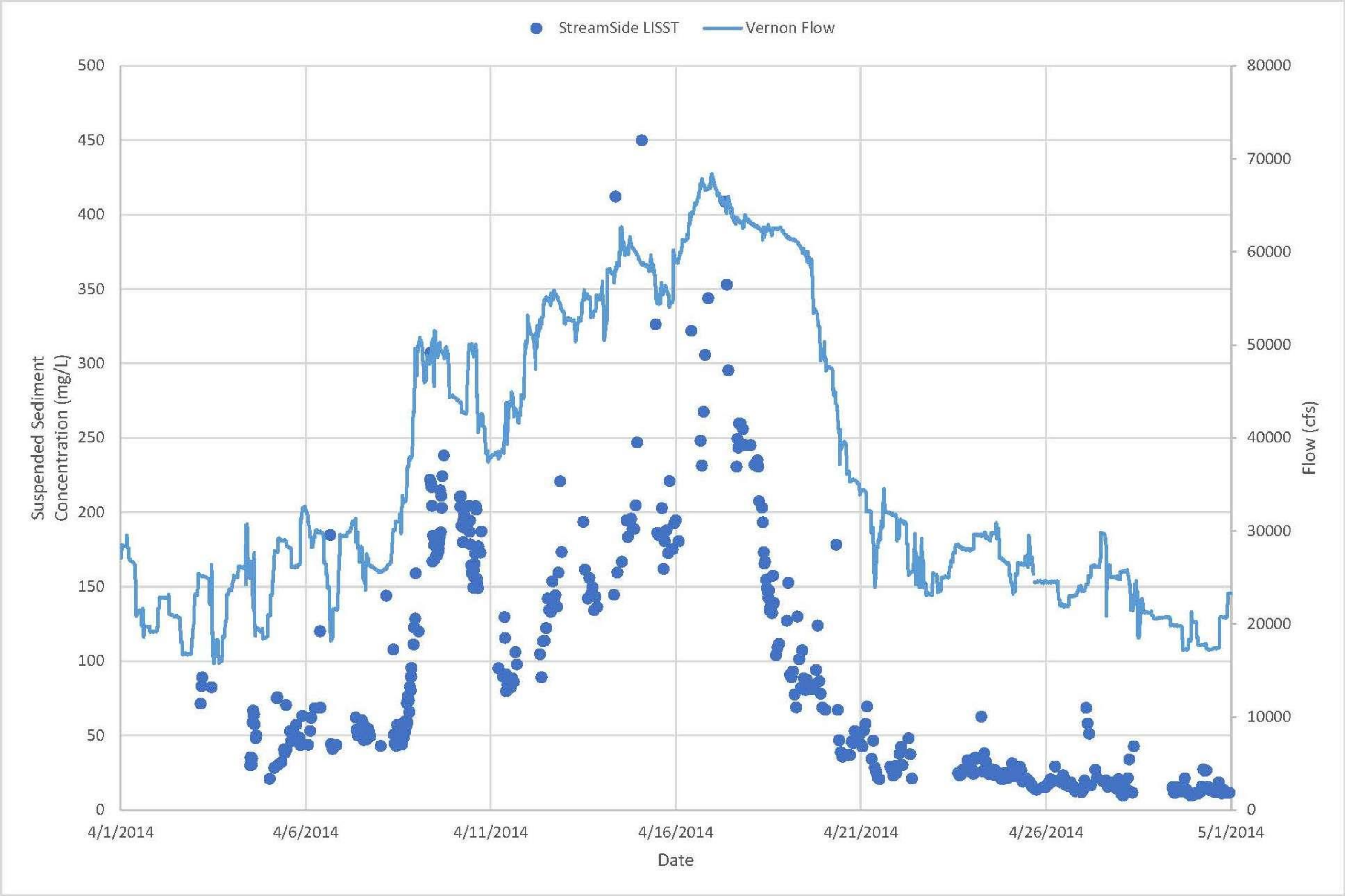


Figure 3.3.1.1.4-2: 2014 Spring Freshet – SSC vs. Flow[26]

[26] SSC values were measured in the vicinity of the Rt. 10 Bridge

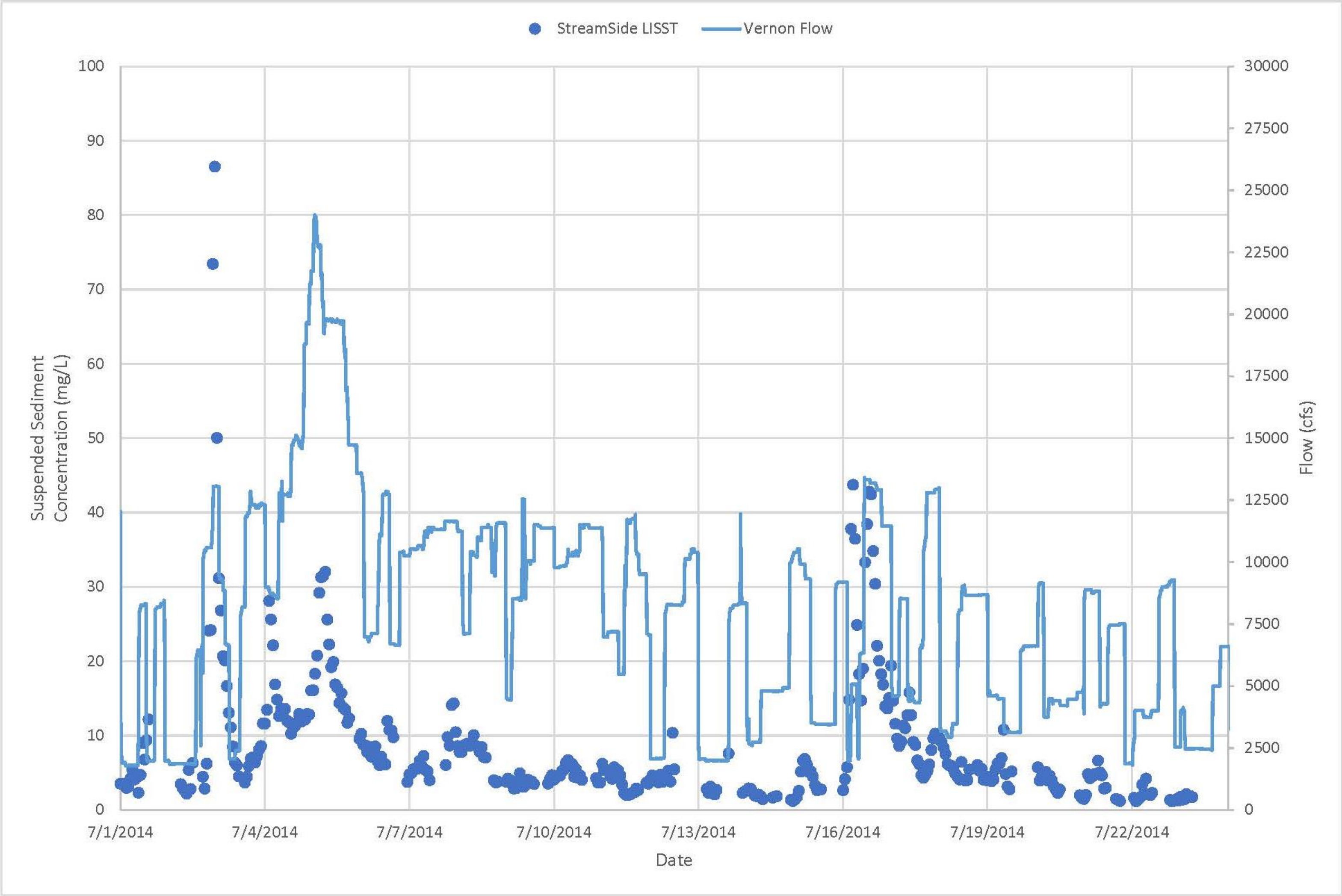


Figure 3.3.1.1.4-3: Typical Summer Period – SSC vs. Flow[27]

[27] SSC values were measured in the vicinity of the Rt. 10 Bridge

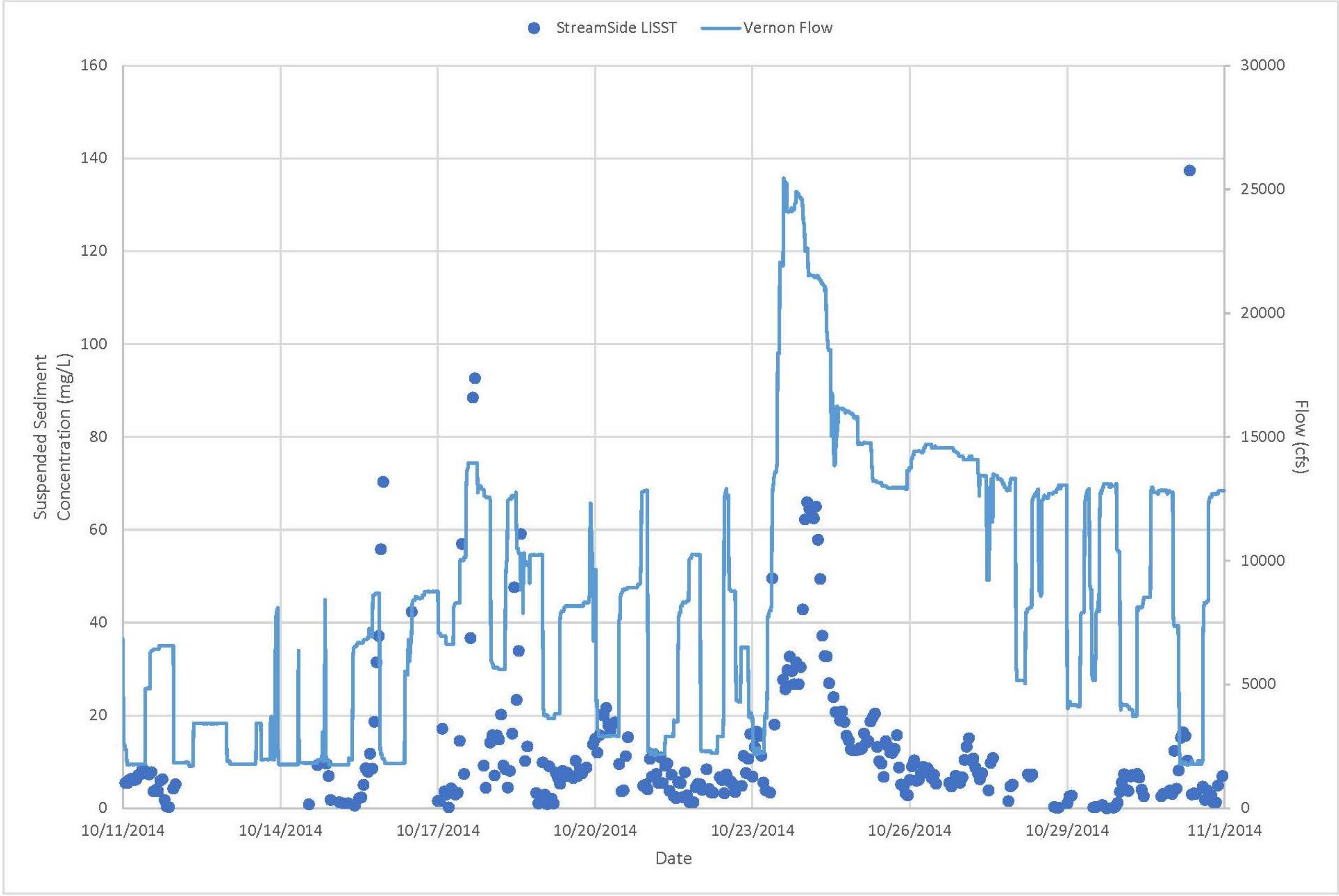
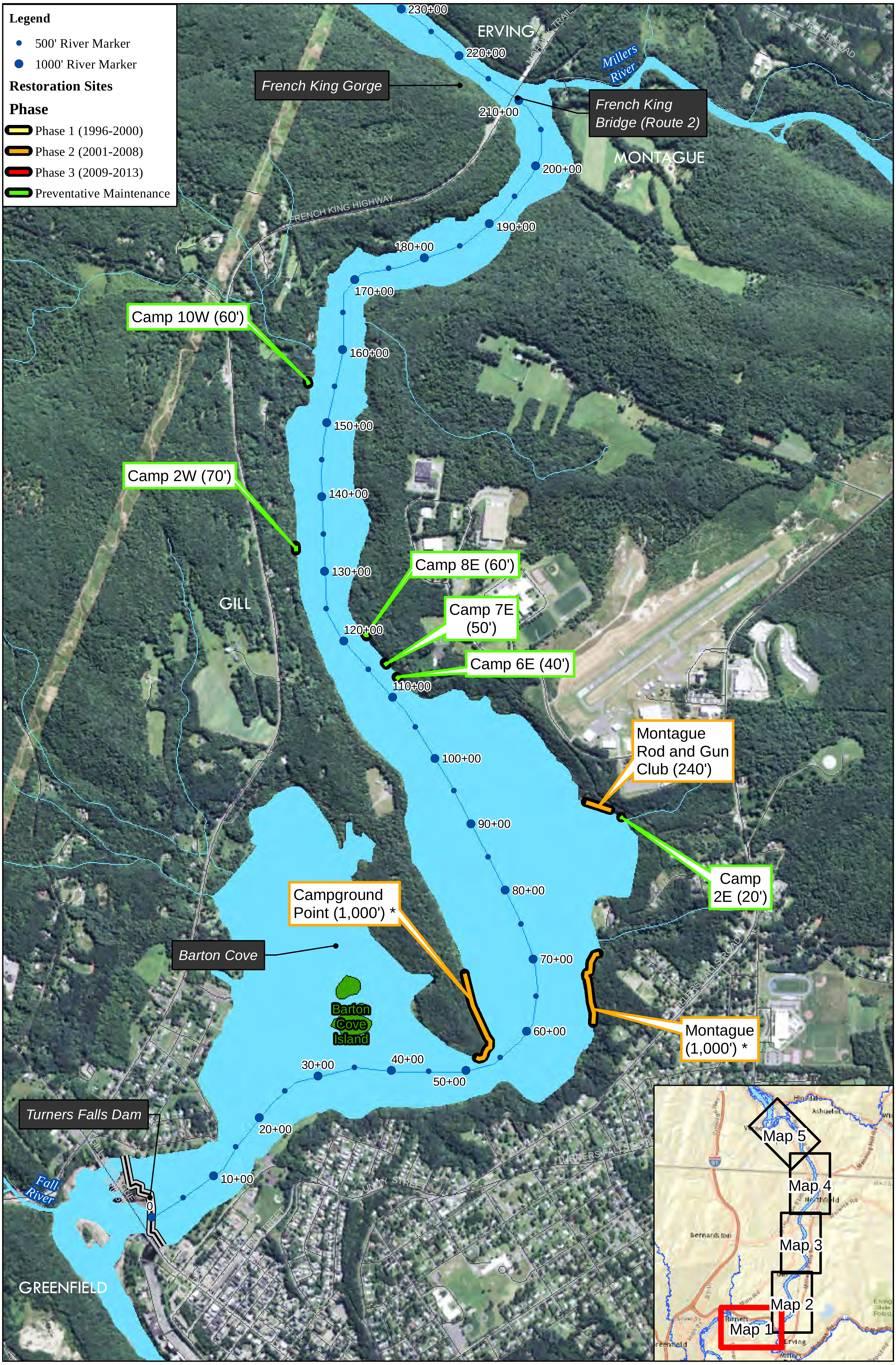


Figure 3.3.1.1.4-4: Typical Fall Period – SSC vs. Flow[28]

[28] SSC values were measured in the vicinity of the Rt. 10 Bridge



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0 625 1,250 2,500 Feet

Figure 3.3.1.2-1:
Turners Falls Impoundment Bank Restoration Sites Associated with the Erosion Control Plan
Map 1

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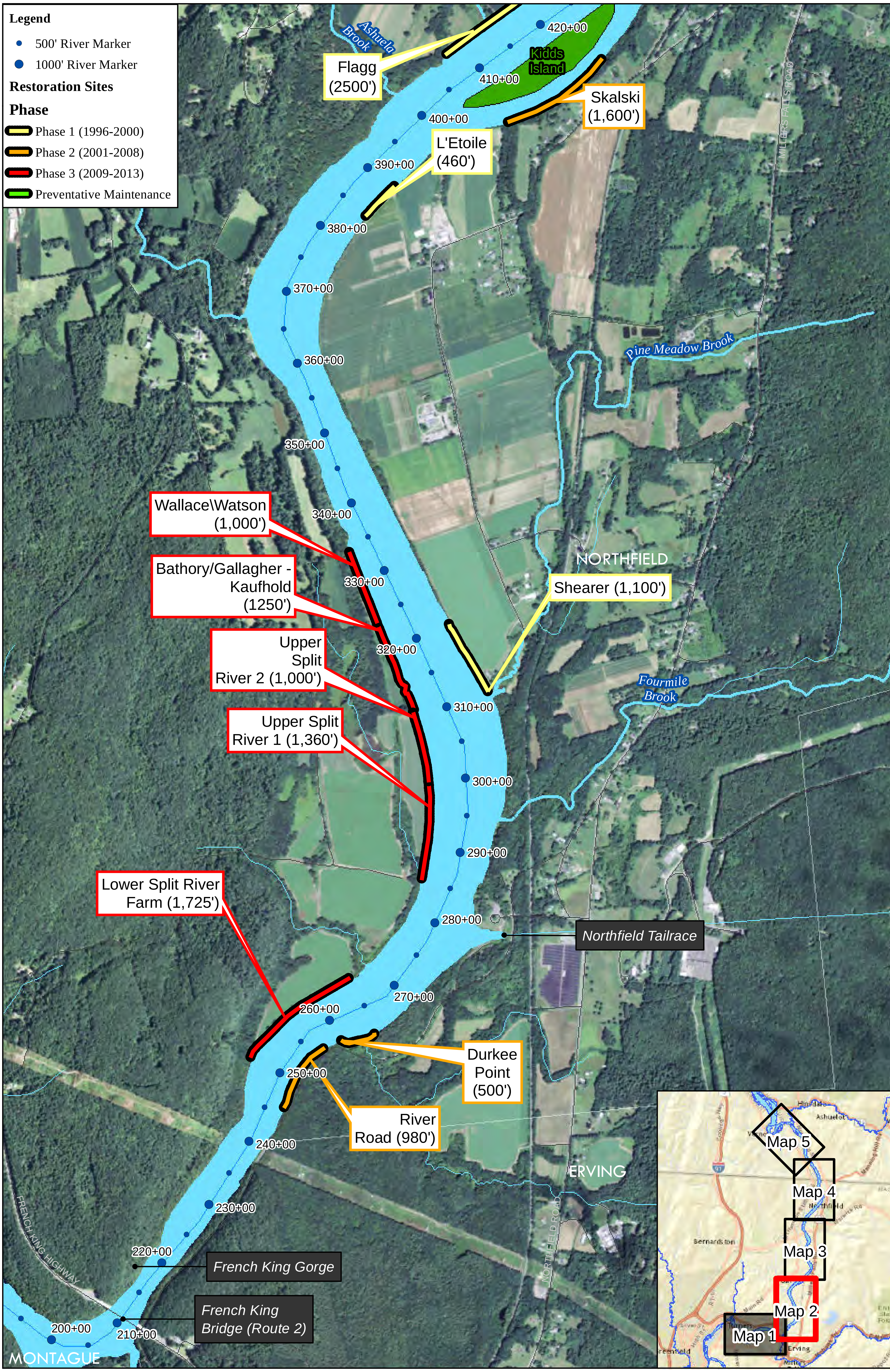

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Figure 3.3.1.2-2:
Turners Falls Impoundment Bank Restoration Sites Associated with the Erosion Control Plan
Map 2

0 625 1,250 2,500 Feet

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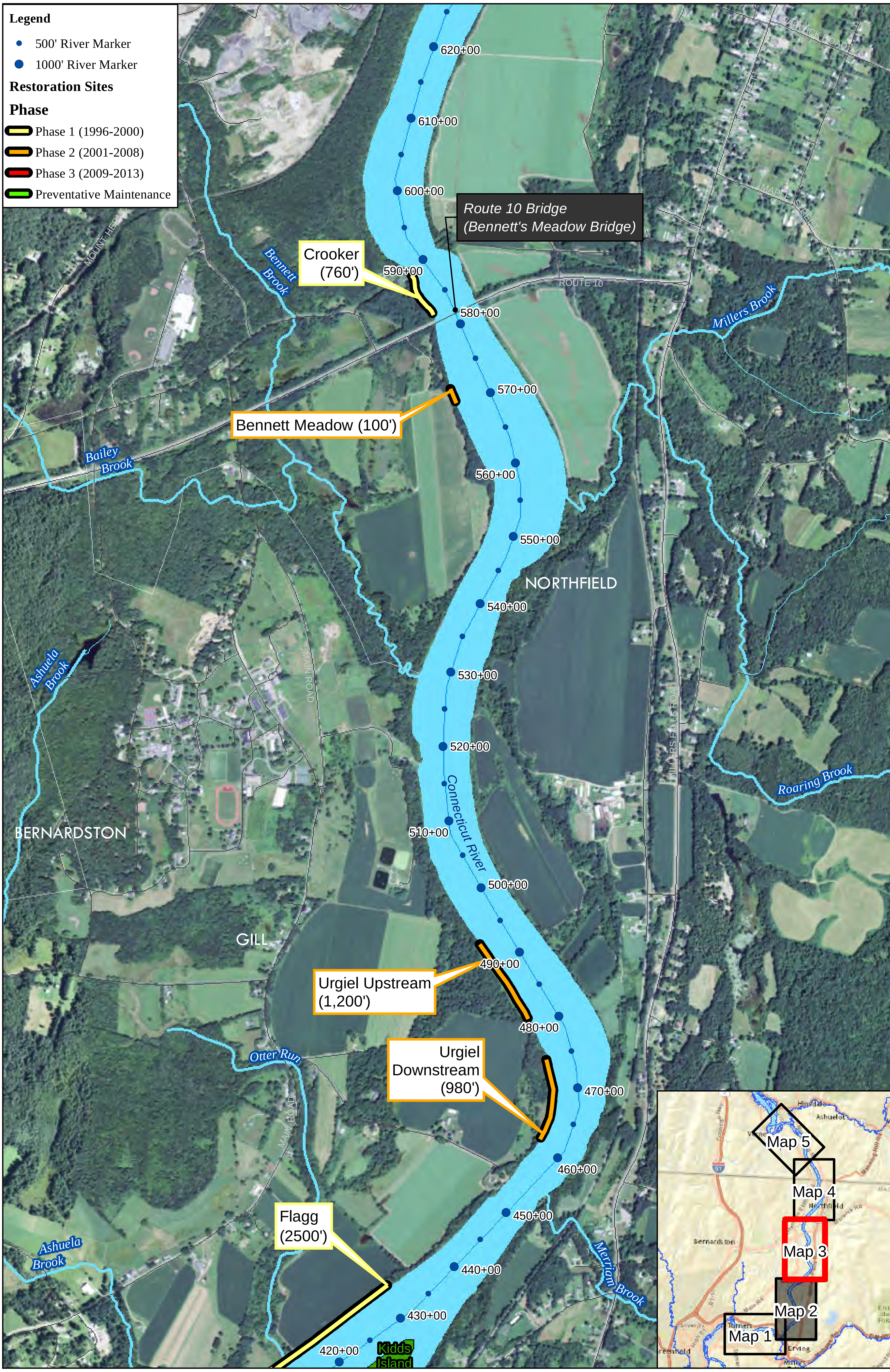

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Figure 3.3.1.2-3:
Turners Falls Impoundment Bank Restoration Sites Associated with the Erosion Control Plan
Map 3

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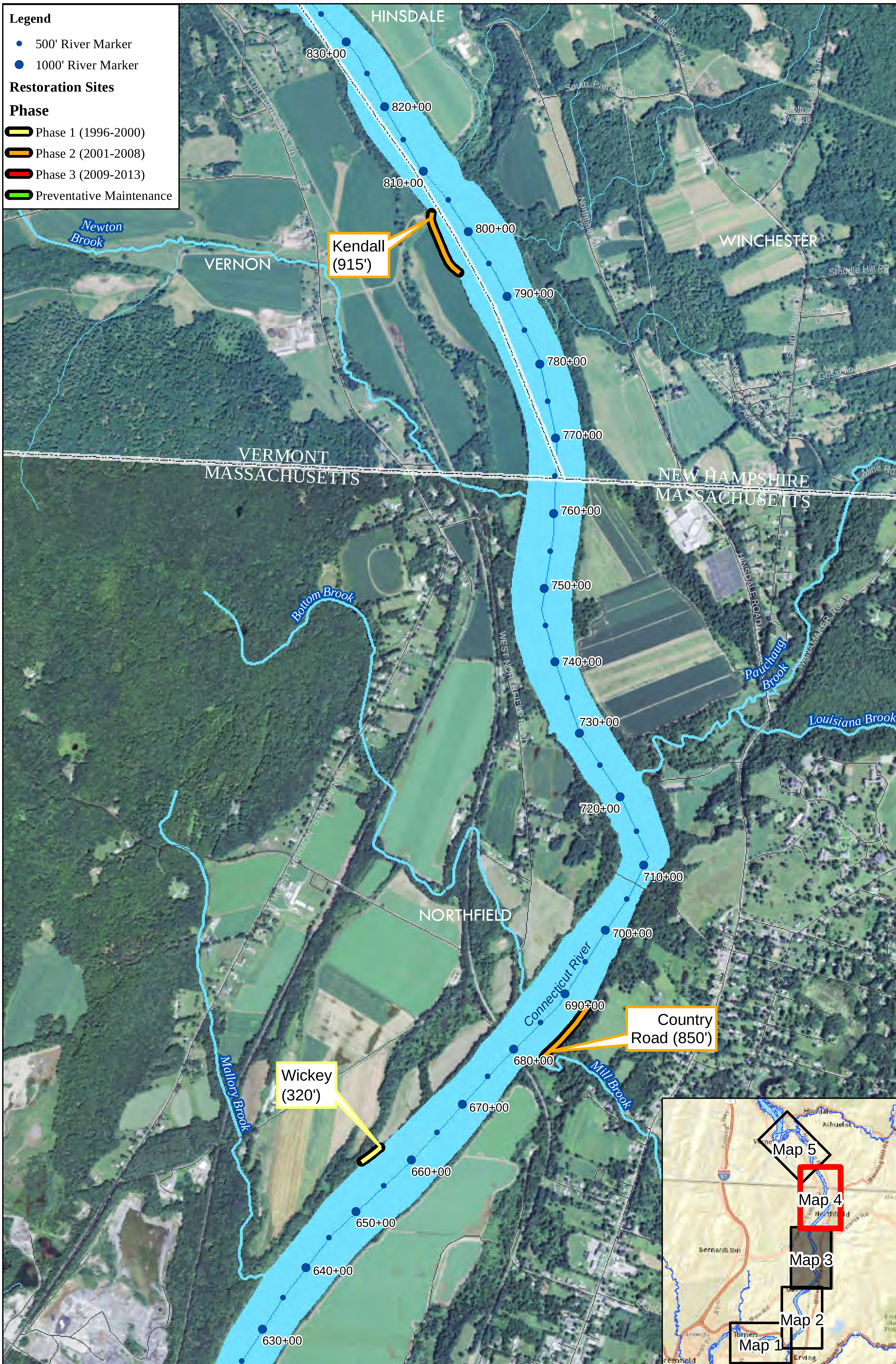

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Figure 3.3.1.2-4:
Turners Falls Impoundment Bank Restoration Sites Associated with the Erosion Control Plan
Map 4

0 625 1,250 2,500 Feet

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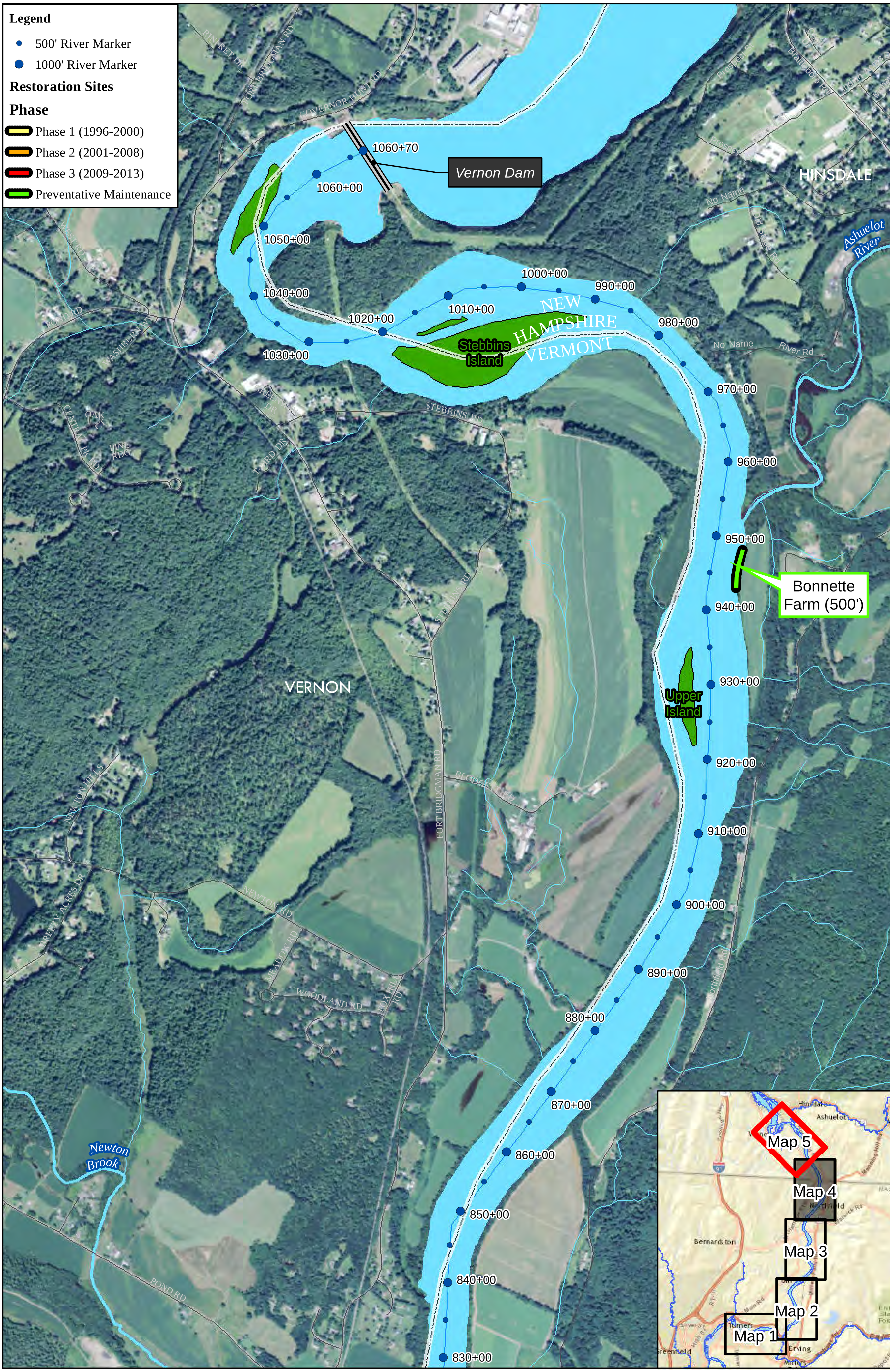

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 625 1,250 2,500 Feet

Figure 3.3.1.2-5:
Turners Falls Impoundment Bank Restoration Sites Associated with the Erosion Control Plan
Map 5

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3.3.2 Water Resources

3.3.2.1 Affected Environment

3.3.2.1.1 Water Quantity

The Connecticut River drains an area of 11,250 mi^2. Within Massachusetts, the Connecticut River traverses approximately 67 river miles and drains approximately 2,726 mi^2. The total watershed area upstream of the Turners Falls Dam is 7,163 mi^2.

Upstream Dams

Inflows to the TFI are largely controlled by operations at several upstream dams on the Connecticut River. More specifically, five upstream dams on the Connecticut River operate as seasonal storage reservoirs, where water elevations are typically lowered in the fall and winter, and refilled with the spring freshet. The seasonal operation and re-regulation of discharges from these dams provides benefits to downstream hydropower facilities by curtailing high flows in the spring and increasing low flows in the summer for the benefit of hydropower production. These dams and storage volumes, in upstream to downstream order, include the following:

First Connecticut Lake,	3.33 billion ft^3
Second Connecticut Lake,	506 million ft^3
Lake Francis,	4.326 billion ft^3
Moore Reservoir, and	4.97 billion ft^3
Comerford Reservoir.	1.279 billion ft^3

Pursuant to a 1993 Headwater Benefit Agreement among predecessor companies and TransCanada, FirstLight pays an annual headwater benefit fee to TransCanada for the seasonal operation of its storage reservoirs (primarily driven by Moore Reservoir), which provides an incremental increase in generation at Cabot and Station No. 1. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development does not receive any benefit as its operation is independent of river flows.

In addition to the seasonal storage reservoirs, the next three projects (operated by TransCanada) above Turners Falls Dam - namely Vernon, Bellows Falls, and Wilder - operate as peaking hydropower facilities, whereby flows can fluctuate on an hourly basis. Like Turners Falls Dam, the minimum flow at Vernon Dam is equivalent to 0.2 cfs per square mile of drainage area or 1,250 cfs, which is provided from generation. The Vernon Hydroelectric Project has a station hydraulic capacity of 17,130 cfs[29] and when operating at full capacity, it exceeds the full hydraulic capacity of the Turners Falls Development of 15,938 cfs, not accounting for incremental inflow from the 897 mi^2 between the two dams. The magnitude and timing of discharges from the Vernon Hydroelectric Project are critical to the operation of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Developments.

Vernon Hydroelectric Project FERC license Article 304[30] requires TransCanada to coordinate project operations with FirstLight. A letter Agreement amending the original 1993 Headwater Benefit Agreement was filed with FERC on June 20, 2003. The Agreement requires TransCanada to provide FirstLight by 8:00 am each day, with its estimate of total discharge (cfs-hours) expected the next day at the Vernon Project. When TransCanada receives the hourly dispatch schedule for the next day from the ISO-NE, it faxes or emails the schedule for Vernon discharges to FirstLight by 2:00 pm. There is no current requirement, however, for TransCanada to provide an hourly dispatch schedule the day ahead. If any subsequent dispatch

[29] FERC Order Amending License and Revising Annual Charges, Project No. 1904-042, July 28, 2006.

[30] Article 304 was added to the license in 1992 (59 FERC ¶62,267) and generally requires the Licensee of Project No. 1904 (Vernon Hydroelectric Project) to develop and file with the Commission a coordination agreement with the licensee of certain downstream facilities in the event that the regional central dispatch system or NEPEX was ever discontinued. The dispatching of these hydropower projects under that system was discontinued several years ago in connection with the restructuring of the New England power markets.

schedules are received during the operating day showing changes in the projected hourly release schedules, the revised schedule for Vernon is faxed or emailed to FirstLight. Not having reliable and timely estimates of Vernon's hourly release schedule the day ahead prevents FirstLight from the most efficient management of the TFI for power production.

Hydrology and Streamflow

USGS streamflow monitoring gages located on the Connecticut River and its tributaries to the Connecticut River in the Project area are described below and shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.1-1.

Connecticut River at North Walpole, NH (No. 01154500, 5,493 mi^2).

This gage is located upstream of the Vernon Dam, in Vernon, VT. Between the North Walpole gage and the Turners Falls Dam are the Vernon Hydroelectric Project and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development[31]. The gage has a period of record from March 1942 to present. USGS notes that the flow measured at this gage is regulated by power plants and by reservoirs in the watershed, including First Connecticut and Second Connecticut Lakes, Lake Francis, and Moore and Comerford Reservoirs.

Using the gage's period of record, annual and monthly flow duration curves were developed as shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.1-2 through Figure 3.3.2.1.1-6. The annual and monthly mean and median flows, and flow per square mile of drainage area, are shown in Table 3.3.2.1.1-1.

Connecticut River at Vernon, VT (No. 01156500, 6,266 mi^2)

Over 87% of the drainage area at the Turners Falls Dam is from inflow received by the Vernon Hydroelectric Project. The remaining 13% of drainage area is from tributaries to the TFI, primarily the Ashuelot and Millers Rivers. A USGS gage was located directly below Vernon Dam, and was active from approximately Oct 1944 to Sep 1973, but was discontinued by the USGS when the Turners Falls Dam was raised causing the backwater, at times, to extend to the base of Vernon Dam, thus impacting the gage's rating curve. Using the gage's historic average daily flow data (Oct 1944-Sep 1973), an annual and monthly flow duration curves were developed as shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.1-7 through Figure 3.3.2.1.1-11. With the Vernon Hydroelectric Project having a hydraulic capacity of 17,130 cfs, on an annual basis, TransCanada can control discharges into the TFI approximately 84% of the time; 16% of the time Vernon's hydraulic capacity is exceeded. The annual and monthly mean and median flows, and flow per square mile of drainage area, are shown in Table 3.3.2.1.1-2.

- Ashuelot River at Hinsdale, NH (No. 01161000, 420 mi^2)

The Ashuelot River enters the TFI approximately 3.5 miles upstream of the Massachusetts border from the east. Ashuelot River flows are regulated by the USCOE Surry Mountain Lake 33 miles upstream (since 1942), the USCOE's Otter Brook Lake, 29 miles upstream on Otter Brook (since 1958), and by small hydro plants upstream. The Ashuelot River gage became active in 1907.

- Millers River at Erving, MA (No. 01166500, 372 mi^2)

This gage is located 5.5 miles upstream of the mouth of the Millers River. The Millers River enters the TFI approximately 4.0 miles upstream of the Turners Falls Dam, immediately downstream of the French King Bridge. Millers River flows are regulated by power plants and by Lake Monomonac and other reservoirs; high flow is regulated by the USCOE's Birch Hill Reservoir, 22 miles upstream (since 1941) and Tully Lake (since 1948). The Millers River gage became active in 1915.

- Deerfield River near West Deerfield, MA (No. 01170000, 557 mi^2)

[31] Prior to December 2014, the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Facility withdrew cooling water from the Vernon Impoundment.

This gage is located 9.2 miles upstream of the mouth of the Deerfield River, which enters the Connecticut River mainstem approximately 3,500 feet below the Cabot Station tailrace. Deerfield River flows are regulated by Somerset Reservoir (since 1913), by Harriman Reservoir (since 1924), and by several power plants upstream. The period of record for this gage includes discharge records from March to November 1904, January 1905, March to December 1905, and October 1940 to current year.

- Connecticut River at Montague City, MA (No. 01170500, 7,860 mi^2)

This gage is located downstream of Cabot Station and approximately 1,000 feet downstream from the mouth of the Deerfield River (total drainage area of 663 mi^2). The gage has a period of record from April 1940 to present. USGS remarks for the gage indicate that flow is regulated by power plants and by upstream reservoirs in the watershed.

Using the gage's period of record, annual and monthly flow duration curves were developed as shown in Figures 3.3.2.1.1-12 through Figure 3.3.2.1.1-16. The annual and monthly mean and median flows, and flow per square mile of drainage area, are shown in Table 3.3.2.1.1-3.

Estimated Connecticut River Flow at Turners Falls Dam (7,163 mi^2)

The Connecticut River flow at the Turners Falls Dam was estimated using the Montague and Deerfield River USGS gages for overlapping periods of record. The additional drainage area at the Montague gage compared to the Turners Falls Dam is 697 mi^2, of which the bulk of the increase is attributable to the Deerfield River (557 mi^2 as measured at the USGS gage and 665 mi^2 as measured at its the confluence with the Connecticut River). The Deerfield River gage flow data were prorated by a factor of 1.25 (697/557) to represent the additional inflow from the 697 mi^2 drainage area. This prorated flow was then subtracted from the corresponding flow measured at the Montague gage to estimate flows at Turners Falls Dam.

Annual and monthly flow duration curves for the period Jan 1941 through Dec 2014 were calculated for Turners Falls Dam, and are presented in Figure 3.3.2.1.1-17 through Figure 3.3.2.1.1-21. With the Turners Falls Development having a hydraulic capacity of 15,938 cfs, on an annual basis, FirstLight can control discharges from the Turners Falls Development approximately 76% of the time; 24% of the time the Turners Falls Development's hydraulic capacity is exceeded. The annual and monthly mean and median flows, and flow per square mile of drainage area, are shown in Table 3.3.2.1.1-4.

Overview of Water-Related Project Features

This section describes the major water-related components of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, associated gaging stations maintained by the Licensee, and typical water level and flow conditions measured at these gages based on 10 years of data (2000-2009). FirstLight maintains hourly data (elevations, discharges, generation, and pumping) on daily log sheets. These data were used to develop numerous graphs in this section to summarize how the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development operate. The hourly data from 2000-2009 were used to develop duration curves of elevation and flow. Both annual and monthly (three months/plot) duration curves were developed to illustrate seasonal variability. All gages referenced below are shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.1-22. Note that all FirstLight gages that measure the water surface elevation are based on the same msl datum (specifically NGVD 1929 datum).

Water Withdrawals

This section summarizes additional surface water withdrawals in the TFI. The Massachusetts Water Management Act (MAWMA), which became effective in March 1986, authorizes the MADEP to regulate the quantity of water withdrawn from both surface and groundwater supplies. The MAWMA consists of a registration program (for withdrawals existing in 1988) and a permit program for withdrawals commencing after 1988. Since 1988, persons withdrawing water from ground or surface sources in excess of an annual average of 100,000 gallons per day (GPD) or 9 million gallons in any three month period must either file an annual registration (for existing withdrawals) or apply for a MAWMA Permit (new withdrawals). Non-consumptive uses, such as hydroelectric facilities, are not required to register or obtain MAWMA permits.

The TFI is not used as a source of domestic drinking water supply or for industrial purposes. Farms along the TFI use river water for irrigation.

A list of current MAWMA water registrations and permits was obtained from the MADEP. The water withdrawal registrations and permits within the Connecticut River basin, for the towns of Northfield and Montague (including the Village of Turners Falls) were reviewed. The MADEP shows that the only current surface water withdrawal permitted or registered under the MAWMA from Connecticut River waters is for agricultural purposes: Four Star Farms, in Northfield (MAWMA Permit No.: 9P2-1-06-217.03), is allowed an authorized daily withdrawal volume of 0.167 million gallons per day (MGD or 0.26 cfs) from the TFI. Compared to the Connecticut River flow at this location, this withdrawal volume is negligible. In addition to Four Star Farms, Sudbury Nurseries West, LLC at Great Meadow Road in Northfield is currently permitted a withdrawal from the TFI under the MAWMA.

In addition to the registered Four Star Farms withdrawal under the MAWMA, FirstLight is aware of four water withdrawals, in the Massachusetts reach of the TFI, where no MAWMA water registrations and permits were obtained from the MADEP. From north to south, they include:

Nourse Farms, Inc. Caldwell Road, West Northfield, MA (two withdrawal locations);
Smiarowski Brothers, LLC, Great Meadow Road, Northfield, MA;
Northfield Mount Hermon School, off Main Street, Gill, MA;
Spilt River Farm, River Road, Gill MA.

There are several entities withdrawing water from the Turners Falls power canal. For a description of water usage on the canal, refer to Exhibit A (Table 1.4-1) which lists the water users, approximate hydraulic capacity, and FERC project number (where applicable).

3.3.2.1.2 Water Quality

Water Quality Standards and Classifications

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards (314 CMR 4.00) assign all inland, coastal, and marine waters to classes according to the intended beneficial uses of those waters. For example, Class A waters are designated as the source of public water supplies and, where compatible with this use, should also be suitable for supporting aquatic life, recreational uses such as swimming and boating, and fish consumption. Class B waters are not designated as a source of public water supplies, but are designated for all of the other Class A uses. Class C waters should be suitable for aquatic life and recreational uses where contact with the water is incidental, such as boating and fishing, but may not be suitable for swimming, diving, or water skiing. Inland waters are also subcategorized as to fishery type (e.g., “warm water fishery”) based on the waterbody’s natural capacity to support these resources.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts classifies the entire Connecticut River as Class B, Warm Water Fishery. Applicable water quality standards for Massachusetts are listed in Table 3.3.2.1.2-1.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire water quality standards apply to the Connecticut River upstream of the Massachusetts border. The state of New Hampshire has designated the entire Connecticut River as Class B.

According to applicable water quality standards for New Hampshire, Class B waters shall: have *Escherichia coli* levels that do not exceed a geometric mean of 126 colonies/100 milliliter (ml, based on at least 3 samples obtained over a 60-day period) or more than 406 colonies/100 ml in any one sample; have no objectionable physical characteristics; and contain a dissolved oxygen content of at least 75% of saturation.

The New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Act (RSA 483) provides general guidance for future land use in the New Hampshire corridor of the Connecticut River. Under this act, the Connecticut River is designated as a rural river segment from the point 0.3 miles below the Vernon Dam to the Massachusetts line (RSA 483:15, VIII). The law defines these waters as "*adjacent to lands which are partially or predominantly used for agriculture, forest management and dispersed or clustered residential development. Management of rural river... segments shall maintain and enhance the natural, scenic, and recreational values of the river for agricultural, forest management, public water supply, and other purposes which are compatible with the instream public uses of the river and the management and protection of the resources for which the...segment is designated*" (RSA 483:7-a River Classification Criteria, I(b)).

Vermont

Although the Connecticut River is commonly thought to define the boundary between Vermont and New Hampshire, it is located in New Hampshire (i.e., the state border is on the Vermont shoreline[32]). However, Vermont considers most of the Connecticut River to be a Class B waterbody. Vermont's water numerical quality standards for Class B waters include: *Escherichia coli* are not to exceed 77 organisms/100 ml, and dissolved oxygen levels shall not be less than 5 milligram/liter (mg/l) and 60% saturation at all times (for warm water fish habitat waters). Vermont's water quality standards also include narrative protective criteria.

Historical Water Quality

The following sections describes water quality conditions in the Project area based on information from historical studies.

Water Quality Assessment and Impairments

Every two years, states must file a document called the "Integrated List" to comply with sections 303d and 305b of the Clean Water Act. The Integrated Lists for Massachusetts and New Hampshire divide the Connecticut River into distinct segments for the purpose of determining water quality uses and impairments. The 2014 Integrated Lists for Massachusetts and New Hampshire report that the entire Connecticut River is water quality impaired. Impaired waters are listed as "Category 5," which indicates that a total maximum daily load (TMDL) study is required for that particular water body.

From upstream to downstream, a description of each water body segment and associated water quality impairments is listed below.

Based on New Hampshire's Watershed Report Card (2012 report), the Connecticut River from the Vernon Dam downstream to the state line (Segment NHRIV802010501-05) is listed as impaired (Category 5 – TMDL Needed). This segment supports swimming and boating uses, but does not meet state standards for supporting aquatic life due to aluminum, copper, and low pH from unknown sources. New Hampshire's general statewide fish consumption advisory due to mercury applies to this segment of the Connecticut River.

Vermont's Integrated List (2014 report) indicates that the Connecticut River from the Vernon Dam downstream to the state line (Segment VT13-05) is impacted by flow alteration (Part F - Waters Altered by

[32] The border between New Hampshire and Vermont was set by King George II in 1764 as the western bank of the Connecticut River. The U.S. Supreme Court re-affirmed this boundary in 1934 as the ordinary low-water mark on the Vermont shore, and markers were set. In some places, the state line is now inundated by the impoundments of dams built after this time.

Flow Regulation). The aquatic life support use is impacted by fluctuating flows due to hydropower production.

The entire mainstem Connecticut River in Massachusetts is listed as impaired due to PCBs in fish tissue based on results from the Connecticut River Fish Tissue Contaminant Study (Hellyer, 2006) as discussed further below.

From the New Hampshire/Vermont border to the Route 10 Bridge (Segment MA34-01, 3.5 miles) in Massachusetts, the Connecticut River is listed as impaired by MADEP (Category 5- Waters Requiring a TMDL) due to "other flow regime alterations," and "alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers."

The section of the river between the Route 10 Bridge crossing the TFI and the Turners Falls Dam (Segment MA34-02, 11.2 miles) is listed as impaired by MDEP (Category 5- Waters Requiring a TMDL) due to "alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers." Additionally, Barton Cove is listed as impaired for non-native aquatic plants (Eurasian water milfoil).

From the Turners Falls Dam to the confluence with the Deerfield River (Segment MA34-03, 3.6 miles), the Connecticut River is listed as impaired (Category 5- Waters Requiring a TMDL) due to total suspended solids, "low flow alterations" and "other flow regime alterations."

From the confluence with the Deerfield River to Holyoke Dam (Segment MA4-04, 34.4 miles), the Connecticut River is listed as impaired (Category 5- Waters Requiring a TMDL) due to *E. coli* bacteria.

The Northfield Mountain Reservoir (Segment MA34061) is listed as a Massachusetts Category 3 Waters, meaning "No Uses Assessed."

2003 Massachusetts Water Quality Assessment

Water quality sampling in the Connecticut River Watershed was conducted by MADEP in April - September 2003, as part of its five-year rotating watershed monitoring and management schedule (Carr & Kennedy, 2008). This effort includes two locations in the Connecticut River in the Project area: Station CT06 on the Connecticut River, at the Route 10 Bridge in Northfield; and Station 02A on the Connecticut River, downstream of the Fourmile Brook confluence in Northfield, and east of Pisgah Mountain Road in Gill (Figure 3.3.2.1.2-1). The parameters included in the sampling were: dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, water temperature, total dissolved solids, total suspended solids, ammonia, nitrate–nitrite, total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, fecal coliform, and *E. coli* bacteria.

Water quality data collected at stations CT06 and 02A are summarized in Table 3.3.2.1.2-2 and Table 3.3.2.1.2-3. The data were used by the MADEP to assess the status of the designated uses as defined in the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards.

Data collected from Station CT06 between April and October 2003 were used to assess water quality conditions as the river entered the state. All measurements were indicative of good water quality conditions (Carr & Kennedy, 2008).

Station 02A is located in the TFI, downstream of the Fourmile Brook confluence, approximately 5.5 river miles downstream of station CT06, in the vicinity of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage picnic area. Data were collected from this station between July and September 2003. All measurements were indicative of good water quality conditions (Carr & Kennedy, 2008).

NHDES Water Quality Data

The NHDES, assisted by the USEPA, assessed the entire Connecticut River mainstem in New Hampshire in 2004. The parameters included in the sampling were bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH, specific conductance, temperature, and metals. Sampling locations included the Connecticut River at the Route 10 Bridge in Northfield, and the Ashuelot River at the Route 119 Bridge in Hinsdale.

Results from this effort were reported by the Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC) and indicated that the river's quality fully supports swimming and other forms of recreation, although it was reported that elevated aluminum and copper levels may affect aquatic habitat in the river below Vernon Dam. The copper levels may be related to contributions from the Ashuelot River (CRJC, 2009).

CRWC Volunteer Monitoring

The CRWC conducted a volunteer water quality monitoring program in the Connecticut River in 2007 and 2008. Sampling was conducted at six locations, which included four sites in the Connecticut River. One of these sites was located in the TFI, at the Franklin County Boat Club docks at Barton Cove in Gill, MA (Figure 3.3.2.1.2-1). Parameters included water temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity and transparency.

In 2007, measurements were collected on: August 30, September 20, and October 23. In 2008, measurements were collected on: June 11, July 9, August 13, September 9 and 18, and October 7. The data for the Barton Cove site are presented in Table 3.3.2.1.2-4. The results reported that all the water temperature and dissolved oxygen measurements met the Massachusetts Water Quality Standard for warm water fisheries. Dissolved oxygen at the Barton Cove site ranged from 7.14 mg/l to 9.55 mg/l. Specific conductance readings at the site ranged from 80.7 microsiemens (µS) to 146.2 µS. Transparency was consistently measured as greater than 120 centimeters (cm), indicating very clear water.

In addition, the CRWC, in cooperation with Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the University of Massachusetts Water Resources Research Center, has conducted water sampling for bacterial analysis in the TFI at the state boat launch at Barton Cove for the last several years. Data from 2010-2011 is presented in Table 3.3.2.1.2-5. Several measurements from this location in 2011 exceeded the Massachusetts Water Quality maximum standard of 235 colonies/100 ml for *E. coli*. River flows were appreciably higher in 2011 compared to 2010. All of the corresponding *E. coli* measurements from 2010 met the Massachusetts Water Quality Standard.

USGS Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality measurements were occasionally taken by the USGS at the Montague City gage site. Data includes physicochemical measurements and nutrients collected most recently in 2006-2007, as shown in Table 3.3.2.1.2-6. In addition to collecting data from this site, a study of total nitrogen concentrations and loads was conducted by the USGS from December 2002 to September 2005 at 13 river sites in the upper Connecticut River Basin. In this study, the mean annual load and yield of total nitrogen at the Connecticut River at North Walpole, NH, was estimated at 9.60 million pounds/year and 1,750 (pounds/mi^2)/year, respectively. The mean annual load and yield of total nitrogen leaving the upper Connecticut River Basin, as estimated at the Connecticut River at Thompsonville, CT, was 21.6 million pounds/year and 2,230 (pounds/mi^2)/year, respectively (Deacon *et al.*, 2006).

USEPA Connecticut River Fish Tissue Contaminant Study

The Connecticut River Fish Tissue Contaminant Study (Hellyer, 2006) was a collaborative federal and state project designed to provide a baseline of tissue contaminant data from several fish species, to better understand the risk to human health from eating Connecticut River fish, and to learn what threat eating these fish poses to other mammals, birds, and fish. For this study the Connecticut River was divided into eight sampling reaches with Reach 4 being the TFI.

Smallmouth bass, yellow perch and white suckers were collected during 2000 from the mainstem of the Connecticut River and composite samples were analyzed for total mercury, PCBs, organochlorine pesticides, and dioxins. Levels of contaminants were compared to USEPA and other current human health subsistence and recreational (sport) fisher and ecological risk screening criteria, and also were statistically compared between reaches and species.

Based on the information from this study, it was reported that fish tissue in the Connecticut River contained contaminants exceeding various human health and ecological risk screening values, and that state health agencies will evaluate existing advisories and consider the need for others, to adequately protect human health (Hellyer, 2006).

Existing Water Quality

As part of the relicensing process, FERC approved Revised Study Plan No. 3.2.1 *Water Quality Study*. As noted earlier (Section 1.4.3.1), closure of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant (VY), located upstream of the Northfield Project, would change certain environmental baseline conditions during the relicensing study period. Due to the impending closure of VY, the implementation of the water quality study was delayed for a year. Consequently, the final results of the water quality study are not available for inclusion in the Draft License Application; a final report is due to be submitted to FERC by March 1, 2016.

The purpose of the water quality study was to document baseline water quality conditions including water temperature, DO and other water quality parameters upstream and downstream of the Project.

A total of 18 water quality sampling stations were located from below Vernon Dam to downstream of Cabot Station as summarized in Table 3.3.2.1.2-7. Sampling sites were located in the TFI (Sites 1-7), bypass reach (Sites 8-9), Turners Falls power canal (Site 10), below Cabot Station and above the Deerfield River confluence (Site 11) and below Cabot Station below the Deerfield River confluence (Sites 12-18). At each sampling site one of the following was measured a) continuous temperature and DO, b) vertical profiles of temperature and DO, or c) continuous temperature (see Table 3.3.2.1.2-7).

Continuous temperature and DO data were collected every 15 minutes from early April to mid-November 2015 at nine (9) locations as shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.2-2, 3.3.2.1.2-3 and 3.3.2.1.2-4. DO and temperature profiles were collected bi-weekly from early April to mid-November at three (3)[33] relatively deep locations within the TFI as shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.2-5. In addition, continuous temperature data were collected every 15 minutes from early April to mid-November at seven (7) locations downstream of Cabot Station to Holyoke Dam as shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.2-6.

3.3.2.2 Environmental Effects

3.3.2.2.1 Water Quantity

The following subsections address the expected water quantity effects of FirstLight's proposed operation.

Hydrology and Streamflow

Under FirstLight's proposed action, the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development would continue to withdraw and discharge water from/to TFI. These operations would continue to alter the TFI impoundment levels on an intra-daily timeframe.

Other than the evaporative losses due to the Upper Reservoir, which are small, the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development does not result in any net water loss to the Connecticut River Basin.

Under FirstLight's proposed action, the Turners Falls Development would continue to operate to alter flow on an intra-daily timeframe.

3.3.2.2.2 Water Quality

Study No. 3.2.1 Water Quality Study is incomplete, therefore, the effects of Project operations on DO and temperature are yet to be determined. A final report is slated to be completed by March 1, 2016.

[33] At one of these locations—Upstream of the Turners Falls Dam boat barrier--continuous DO and temperature data were collected as well.

3.3.2.3 Cumulative Effects

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations define "cumulative effects" as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions" (40 CFR §1508.7).

For this analysis, the action is the relicensing and continued operation of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. FERC has identified the geographical extent of cumulative effects on water quantity and water quality to include the Connecticut River from the base of Moore dam to the mouth of the Connecticut River at Long Island Sound. This geographic area was chosen to recognize the cumulative operational influences of the upstream water storage, and the operations of the five Connecticut River projects on water quantity throughout this area and subsequently on water quality that could occur downstream to mouth of the Connecticut River at Long Island Sound. The temporal scope of this analysis includes a discussion of the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and their effects on the resource 50 years into the future.

The potential impact of the Project is associated with whether the continued operation of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development affects water quantity and quality of the Lower Connecticut River, which had already been altered by construction of numerous dams. These potential impacts will be better understood when relicensing studies are complete.

3.3.2.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

No environmental measures are proposed at this time.

3.3.2.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Cabot Station peaking operations, under FirstLight's proposed action, would continue to alter flow on an intra-daily time step in the Connecticut River below Cabot Station.

This section will be developed following completion of the data analyses and reporting for the ongoing studies.

Table 3.3.2.1.1-1: Connecticut River at North Walpole, NH (USGS Gage No. 01154500), Drainage Area= 5,493 mi^2, Period of Record: Mar 1942-Sep Dec 2014 (cfs)

Statistic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ann
Mean	7,677	7,095	13,563	27,134	16,386	8,517	5,201	4,393	3,978	6,976	9,127	9,209	9,941
Mean/mi^2	1.40	1.29	2.47	4.94	2.98	1.55	0.95	0.80	0.72	1.27	1.66	1.68	1.81
Median	6,000	5,860	9,910	23,000	14,000	7,025	3,820	3,150	3,050	6,911	7,550	7,280	6,490
Median/mi^2	1.09	1.07	1.80	4.19	2.55	1.28	0.70	0.57	0.56	1.26	1.37	1.33	1.18

Data Source: USGS, mean daily flows

Table 3.3.2.1.1-2: Connecticut River below Vernon Dam (USGS Gage No. 01156500), Drainage Area= 6,266 mi^2, Period of Record: Oct 1944-Sep 1973 (cfs)

Statistic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ann
Mean	7,422	7,300	14,558	32,110	18,991	8,750	4,833	3,636	3,704	5,270	8,550	8,809	10,319
Mean/mi^2	1.18	1.17	2.32	5.12	3.03	1.4	0.77	0.58	0.59	0.84	1.36	1.41	1.65
Median	6,400	6,400	9,400	27,050	15,800	7,030	3,800	3,080	2,970	3,880	7,105	7,170	6,535
Median/mi^2	1.02	1.02	1.50	4.32	2.52	1.12	0.61	0.49	0.47	0.62	1.13	1.14	1.04

Data Source: USGS, mean daily flows

Table 3.3.2.1.1-3: Connecticut River at Montague City, MA (USGS Gage No. 01170500), Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2, Period of Record: Apr 1940-Dec 2014 (cfs)

Statistic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ann
Mean	12,094	11,565	21,144	37,154	21,726	13,408	9,383	8,574	7,152	13,211	15,560	16,984	15,909
Mean/mi^2	1.54	1.47	2.69	4.73	2.76	1.71	1.19	1.09	0.91	1.68	1.98	2.16	2.02
Median	9,600	9,345	15,500	33,700	19,100	9,910	5,650	4,680	4,700	6,850	11,100	11,300	9,800
Median/mi^2	1.22	1.19	1.97	4.29	2.43	1.26	0.72	0.60	0.60	0.87	1.41	1.44	1.25

Data Source: USGS, mean daily flows

Table 3.3.2.1.1-4: Estimated Connecticut River at Turners Falls Dam Drainage Area= 7,163 mi^2, Period of Record Jan 1941-Dec 2014 (cfs)

Statistic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ann
Mean	10,242	9,682	18,514	34,713	19,680	11,887	8,432	7,549	6,267	11,710	13,810	14,793	14,079
Mean/mi^2	1.43	1.35	2.58	4.71	2.75	1.66	1.18	1.05	0.87	1.63	1.93	2.07	1.97
Median	7,963	7,711	13,200	30,238	17,316	8,900	4,965	4,147	4,059	6,058	9,845	9,613	8,489
Median/mi^2	1.11	1.08	1.84	4.22	2.42	1.24	0.69	0.58	0.57	0.85	1.37	1.34	1.19

Data Source: Estimated from manipulation of USGS gages

Table 3.3.2.1.2-1: Massachusetts Water Quality Standards for Class B Waters – Warm Water Fisheries

Parameter	Standard
Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	Shall not be less than 5.0 mg/l in warm water fisheries. Where natural background conditions are lower, DO shall not be less than natural background conditions. Natural seasonal and daily variations that are necessary to protect existing and designated uses shall be maintained.
Temperature	Temperature shall not exceed 83 °F (28.3 °C) in warm water fisheries. The rise in temperature due to a discharge shall not exceed 3 °F (1.7 °C) in rivers and streams designated as cold water fisheries nor 5 °F (2.8 °C) in rivers and streams designated as warm water fisheries (based on the minimum expected flow for the month).
pH	Shall be in the range of 6.5 through 8.3 standard units and not more than 0.5 units outside of the natural background range. There shall be no change from natural background conditions that would impair any use assigned to this Class.
Bacteria – beaches	E. coli: the geometric mean of the five most recent samples taken during the same bathing season shall not exceed 126 colonies per 100 ml and no single sample taken during the bathing season shall exceed 235 colonies per 100 ml. Enterococci: the geometric mean of the five most recent samples taken during the same bathing season shall not exceed 33 colonies per 100 ml and no single sample taken during the bathing season shall exceed 61 colonies per 100 ml.
Bacteria – other waters	E. coli: the geometric mean of all samples taken within the most recent six months shall not exceed 126 colonies per 100 ml typically based on a minimum of five samples and no single sample shall exceed 235 colonies per 100 ml. Enterococci: geometric mean of all samples taken within the most recent six months shall not exceed 33 colonies per 100 ml typically based on a minimum of five samples and no single sample shall exceed 61 colonies per 100 ml.
Solids	These waters shall be free from floating, suspended and settleable solids in concentrations and combinations that would impair any use assigned to this Class, that would cause aesthetically objectionable conditions, or that would impair the benthic biota or degrade the chemical composition of the bottom.
Color and Turbidity	These waters shall be free from color and turbidity in concentrations or combinations that are aesthetically objectionable or would impair any use assigned to this Class.
Oil and Grease	These waters shall be free from oil, grease and petrochemicals that produce a visible film on the surface of the water, impart an oily taste to the water or an oily or other undesirable taste to the edible portions of aquatic life, coat the banks or bottom of the water course, or are deleterious or become toxic to aquatic life.
Taste and Odor	None in such concentrations or combinations that are aesthetically objectionable, that would impair any use assigned to this Class, or that would cause tainting or undesirable flavors in the edible portions of aquatic life.

Note: MA Standards also include narrative criteria applicable to all surface waters related to aesthetics, bottom pollutants or alteration, nutrients, radioactivity, and toxic substances.

Table 3.3.2.1.2-2: MADEP 2003 Water Quality Data Results – Physical Parameters

Date	Temp (°C)	pH	Conductivity (μS/cm)	TDS (mg/l)	DO (mg/l)	DO (% sat)
Station CT06 – Connecticut River at Route 10 Bridge						
04/29/03	8.9	7.1 c	92.5	59.2	12.1	106
06/02/03	16.6	7.2	122	77.9	9.4	99
08/05/03	23.9	7.2 c	121	77.2	7.7 u	92 u
08/06/03	23.9	7.0 c	120	76.8	7.0	84
09/09/03	21.5	7.3 uc	153	98.0	8.5	97
10/01/03	15.8	7.2	112 u	71.9 u	9.4 u	95 u
Station 02A – Connecticut River downstream of Fourmile Brook confluence						
07/08/03	27.7	7.6	139	90.0	8.3 i	105 i
07/09/03	27.2	7.5	138	89.0	7.8 i	99 i
08/05/03	23.7	7.2 uc	119	78.0	7.6	90
08/06/03	23.7	7.3 c	108	70.0	7.5	88
09/09/03	21.7	7.5 uc	152	99.0	9.3	106

Notes:
i = potentially inaccurate reading
u = unstable reading
c = meter not calibrated or calibration result outside accepted range of calibration standard

Table 3.3.2.1.2-3: MADEP 2003 Water Quality Data Results – Biological and Chemical Parameters

Date	Time (24 hr)	QA/QC	Fecal coliform (CFU/ 100mL)	E. coli (CFU/ 100mL)	Turbidity (NTU)	Alkalinity (mg/L)	Hardness (mg/L)	Chl-a (mg/m^3)	NH3-N (mg/L)	NO3-NO2-N (mg/L)	TN (mg/L)	TP (mg/L)	TSS (mg/L)
Station CT06 – Connecticut River at Route 10 Bridge													
04/30/03	08:00	-	2	1	1.4	-	-	-	<0.06	-	-	0.021	5.2
06/04/03	08:05	-	20	5	0.40	26	37	-	<0.02	-	-	0.016	2
07/09/03	08:15	-	30	16	0.46	28	44	<1.0	<0.02	-	-	0.011	<2
08/06/03	07:45	-	250	30	1.0	25	33	1.0	0.11	-	-	0.019	4
09/10/03	08:00	-	4	2	-	-	-	<1.0	<0.02	0.17	R	0.010	<2
10/01/03	08:20	-	500	120	-	-	-	-	<0.02	0.14 f	R	R	6
Station 02A – Connecticut River downstream of Fourmile Brook confluence													
07/09/03	09:09	Left	24	20	-	-	-	<1.0	-	-	-	-	-
		Right	40	12	-	-	-	1.1	-	-	-	-	-
		Center	30	10	0.50	30	44	-	<0.06	-	-	0.011	<2
08/06/03	07:55	Left	500	160	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Right	600	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Center	1900	130	1.3	23 d	29	1.3	<0.02	-	-	0.020	2
09/10/03	08:12	Left	10	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Right	12	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Center	<2	<2	-	-	-	1.6	<0.02	0.16	R	0.008	<2

Note: R = data removed due to quality assurance flag in report.

Table 3.3.2.1.2-4: CRWC 2007-2008 Water Quality Data Results for Barton Cove

Date	Time (24 hr)	Air Temp (°C)	Water Temp (°C)	Transparency (cm)	Specific Conductance (µS)	DO (mg/l)	DO (% sat)
8/30/2007	8:33	22.9	25.2	>120	146.2	7.22	86.1
9/20/2007	8:32	16.7	20.0	>120	138.7	7.33	99.3
10/23/2007	8:33	17.5	17.0	>120	134.8	7.81	82.0
6/11/2008	8:57	21.8	23.7	>120	126.7	9.55	113.1
7/9/2008	8:50	25.8	26.5	>120	104.5	8.52	105.1
8/13/2008	8:33	19.1	20.3	>120	80.7	8.52	93.5
9/9/2008	8:49	19.3	23.1	>120	117.4	7.14	83.3
9/18/2008	10:12	19.3	20.7	—	120.3	8.41	93.3
10/7/2008	8:43	10.8	14.9	>120	126.4	8.06	79.7

Sources: Donlon, 2008 and Donlon, 2009

Table 3.3.2.1.2-5: CRWC Bacteria Sampling Results for Barton Cove, 2010-2011

Date	E. coli (colonies/100 ml)	Wet Weather Event[1]	Montague Daily Flow (cfs)
6/2/2010	63		4,870
6/9/2010	65		15,900
6/16/2010	80		7,620
6/23/2010	186	Wet	8,780
6/30/2010	17		13,500
7/7/2010	98		4,540
7/14/2010	114		3,440
7/21/2010	23		4,710
7/28/2010	12		5,140
8/4/2010	35		5,650
8/11/2010	224		5,860
8/18/2010	2		2,950
9/8/2010	21		2,960
9/15/2010	3		3,000
9/22/2010	9		2,570
9/29/2010	171	Wet	8,990
10/6/2010	33	Wet	23,200
5/25/2011	1553.1*		25,200
6/1/2011	1046.2*		33,700
6/8/2011	83.9		10,400
6/15/2011	228.2		22,500
6/22/2011	1553.1*		10,600
6/29/2011	224.7	Wet	17,000
7/6/2011	387.3*		9,440
7/20/2011	218.7		5,040
8/3/2011	275.5*		2,670
8/17/2011	488.4*	Wet	26,800
8/24/2011	172.5		12,900

[1]"Wet" signifies wet weather event defined as >0.1 inches of rain in 24 hours.
*Result indicates exceedance of Massachusetts Criteria for single E. coli sample of 235 colonies/100ml.
Source: http://www.umass.edu/tei/mwwp/ctrivermonitoring.html

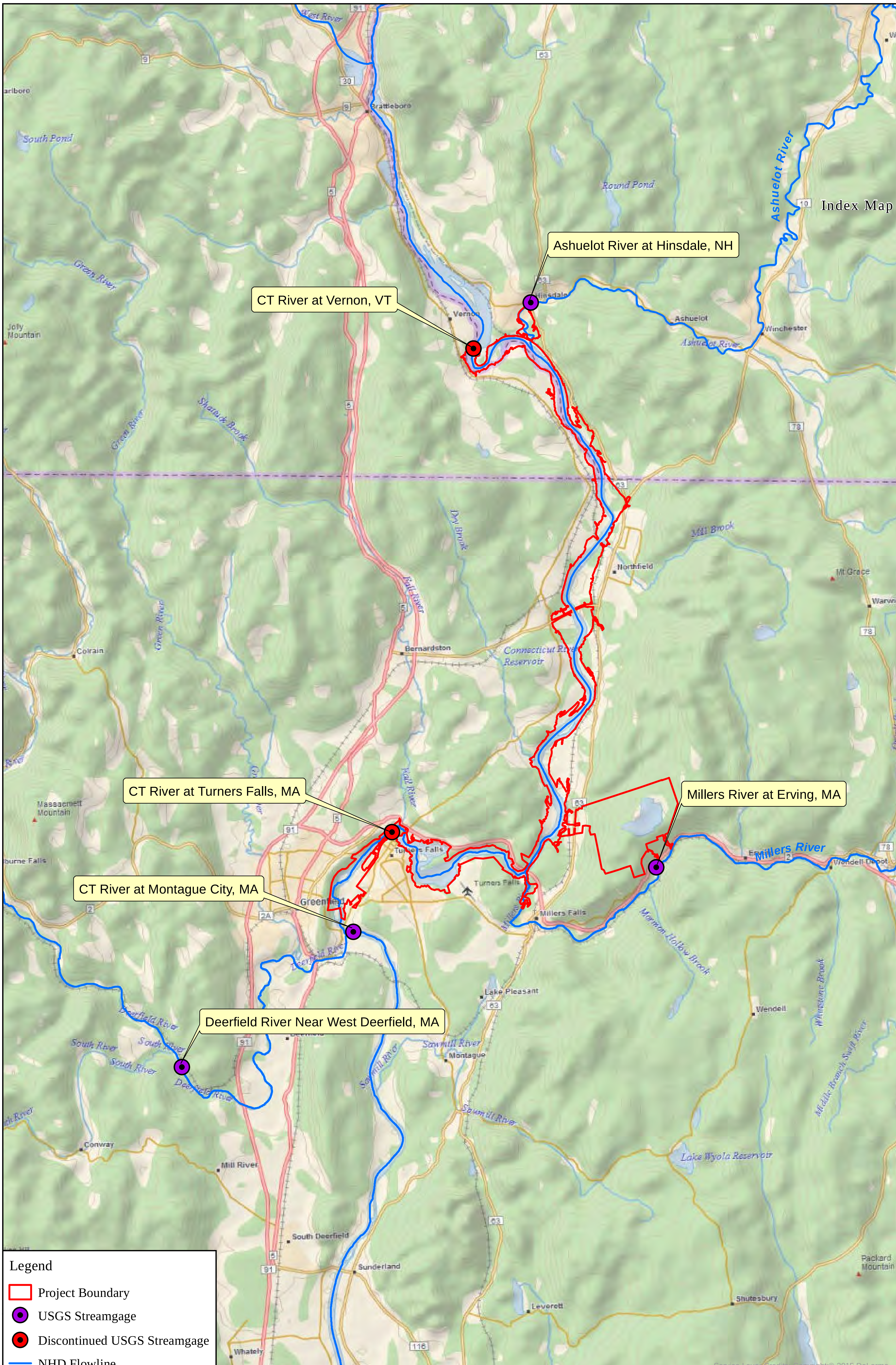
Table 3.3.2.1.2-6: Select Water Quality Data from USGS Montague City Gage

Date/Time	Discharge (cfs)	pH	Nitrogen, total (mg/l)	Ammonia, as N (mg/l)	Nitrate + Nitrite (mg/l)	Orthophosphate (mg/l)	Phosphorus, total (mg/l)
10/26/2006 9:15	21,600	7.0	0.47	0.011 e	0.190	< 0.018	0.075
12/15/2006 7:30	16,000	7.3	0.46	0.023	0.285	0.013 e	0.040
2/8/2007 11:30	7,790	6.9	0.63	0.034	0.458	0.020	0.033
3/29/2007 11:00	53,800	7.0	0.75	0.030	0.339	0.012 e	0.142
4/20/2007 11:00	78,800	7.0	0.63	0.010 e	0.254	0.011 e	0.160
5/3/2007 11:15	35,200	7.0	0.49	0.011 e	0.268	0.012 e	0.034
5/17/2007 11:45	24,200	7.3	0.52	0.014 e	0.287	0.009 e	0.033
6/28/2007 12:00	2,430	7.3	0.51	0.020 e	0.310	0.013 e	0.016
8/2/2007 12:30	1,790	7.5	0.46	< 0.020	0.257	0.017 e	0.015
9/6/2007 8:00	1,750	7.4	0.39	0.014 e	0.238	0.013 e	0.008
Nutrient Criteria Reference Conditions for Ecoregion VIII Streams - Subecoregion 58 (Northeastern Highlands)							
Minimum			0.34		0.010		0.002
Maximum	-	-	0.84	-	2.850	-	0.450
25th percentile			0.42		0.160		0.005

Notes: "e" = estimated. Nutrient criteria from USEPA, 2001

Table 3.3.2.1.2-7: Water Quality Monitoring Sampling Locations

Station No.	Type	Location	Comments
Connecticut River- Turners Falls Impoundment (Temperature and DO)			
1	Continuous	Below the Vernon Dam and Ashuelot River Confluence	Near thalweg at 25% depth
2	Profile	Deep area upstream of Northfield Mountain	Collect profile at one meter depth increments
3	Continuous	Above the Northfield Mountain Tailrace; Downstream of Kidds Island	Near thalweg at 25% depth
4	Continuous	Northfield Mountain Tailrace	Within the Northfield Mountain Tailrace at 25% depth
5	Continuous	Below the Northfield Mountain Tailrace; Upstream of Millers River Confluence	Near thalweg at 25% depth
6	Profile	Deepest area of Turners Falls Impoundment	Collect profile at one meter depth increments
7	Profile and Continuous	Upstream of the Turners Falls Dam at Boat Barrier	Collect profile at one meter depth increments and install continuous meter at 25% depth
Connecticut River- Bypass Reach (Temperature and DO)			
8	Continuous	Upstream of Station No. 1	Mid-channel, mid-depth
9	Continuous	Upstream of Rock Dam; west channel at Rawson Island	Mid-channel, mid-depth
Turners Falls Power Canal (Temperature and DO)			
10	Continuous	At the Railroad Bridge	Mid-channel, mid-depth
Connecticut River- Below Cabot Station (Temperature and DO)			
11	Continuous	Below the Cabot Station tailrace, upstream of Deerfield River confluence	Thalweg, mid-depth.
Connecticut River- Cabot Station to Holyoke Dam (Temperature)			
12	Continuous	Downstream of the Deerfield River confluence	Anchored near bottom, near shore
13	Continuous	Third Island	Anchored near bottom, near shore of island
14	Continuous	Second Island, near shore of island.	Anchored near bottom, near shore of island
15	Continuous	Submerged shallow bar	Anchored near bottom, at sandbar
16	Continuous	Submerged shallow bar	Anchored near bottom, at sandbar
17	Continuous	River right channel at Elwell Island	Anchored near bottom, near shore
18	Continuous	Mitch’s Island	Anchored near bottom, near shore



FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 1 2 4 Miles

Figure 3.3.2.1.1-1
USGS Stream Gage Locations

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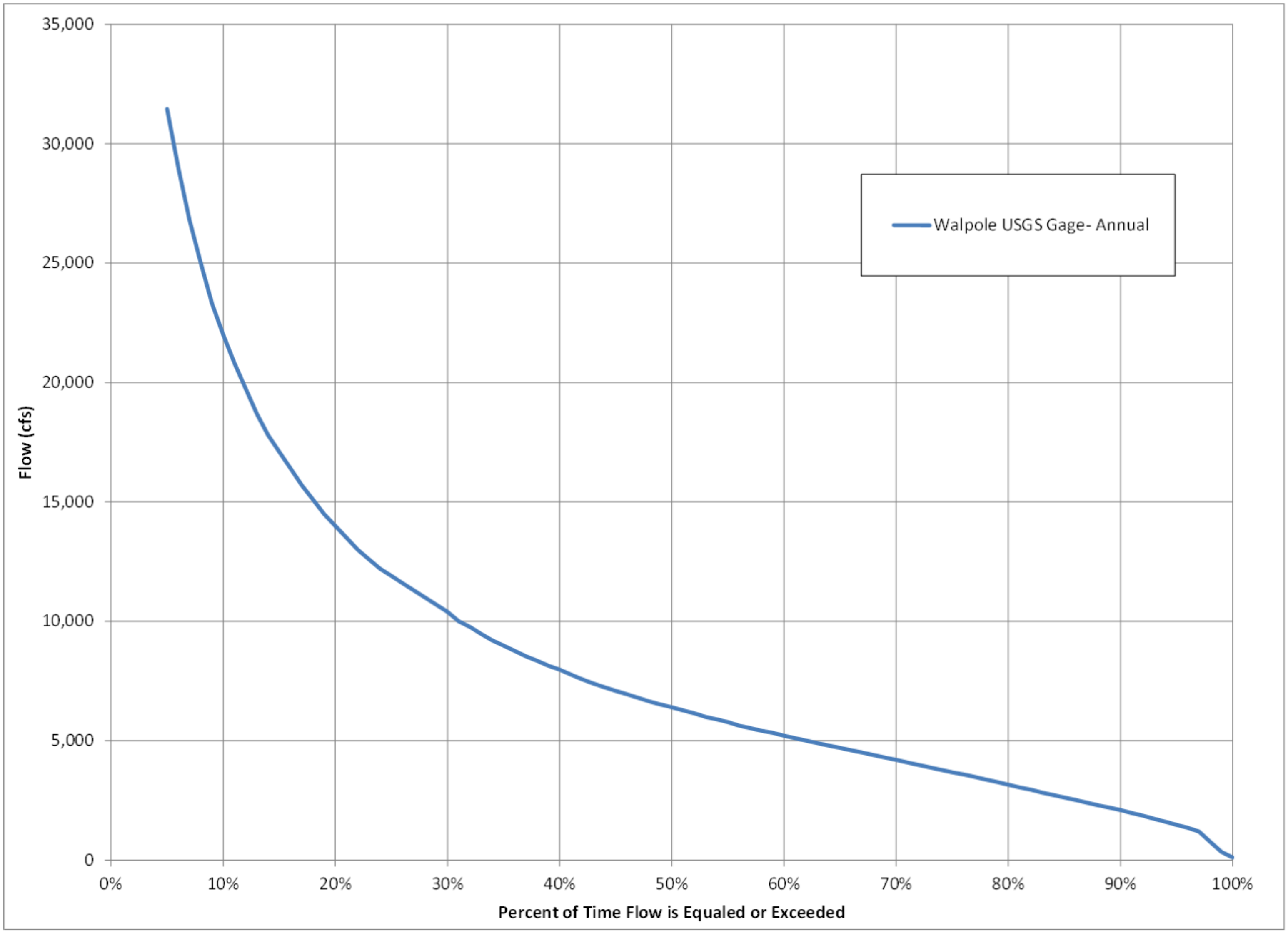


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-2: Connecticut River at Walpole, NH, Annual Flow Duration Curve, Mar 1942-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 5,493 mi^2

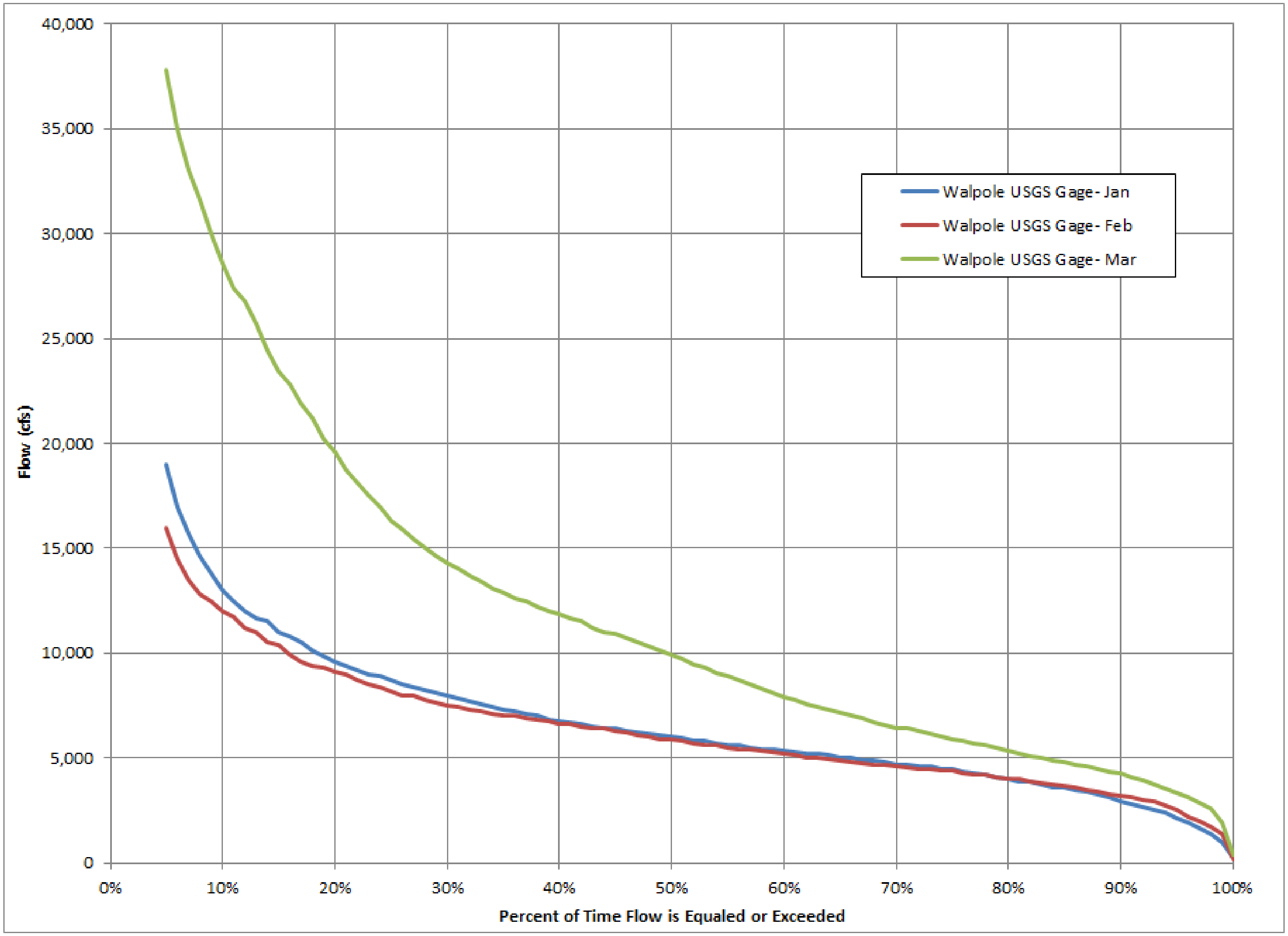


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-3: Connecticut River at Walpole, NH, Jan, Feb and Mar Flow Duration Curve, Mar 1942-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 5,493 mi^2

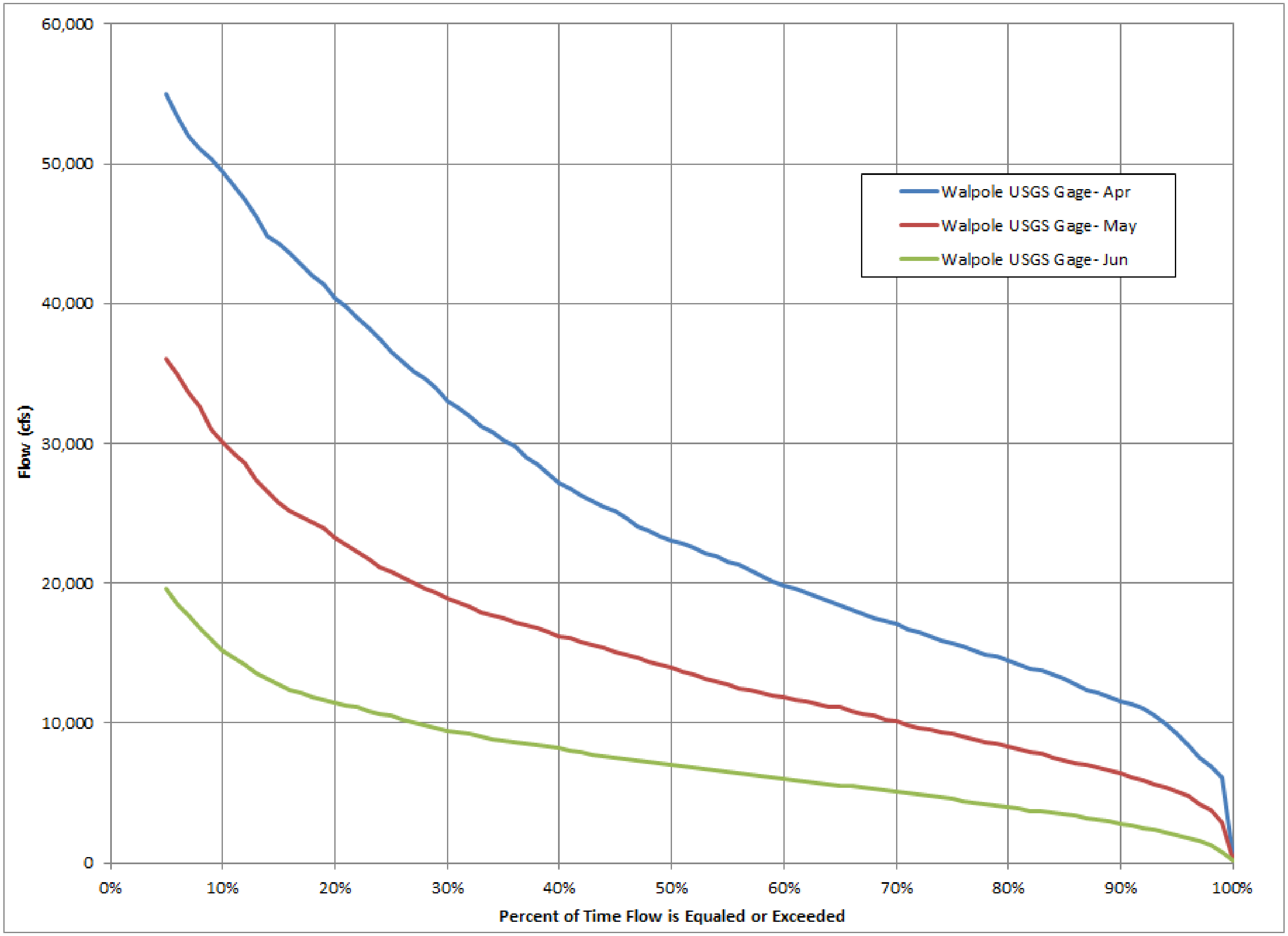


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-4: Connecticut River at Walpole, NH, Apr, May and Jun Flow Duration Curve, Mar 1942-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 5,493 mi^2

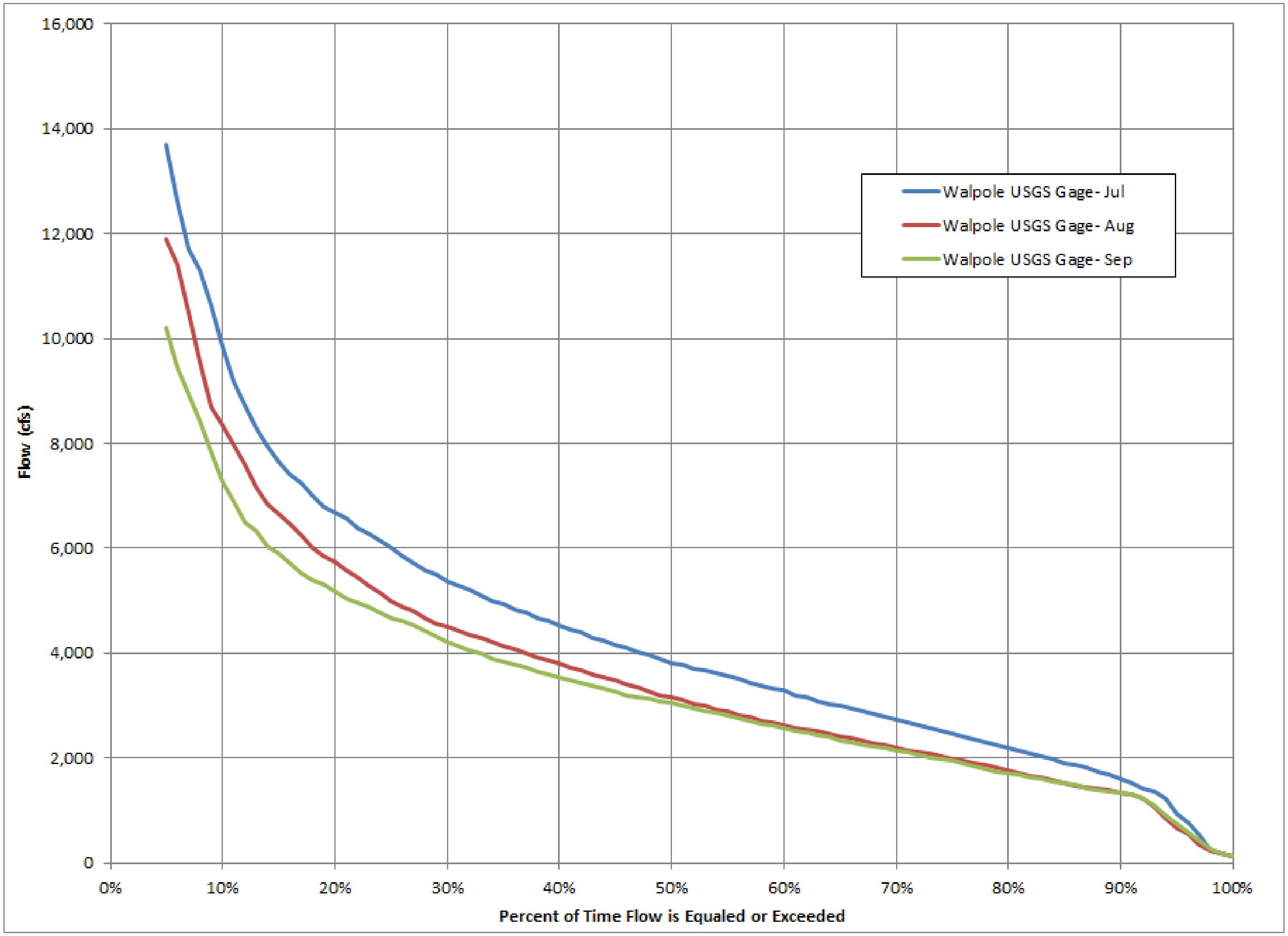


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-5: Connecticut River at Walpole, NH, Jul, Aug and Sep Flow Duration Curve, Mar 1942-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 5,493 mi^2

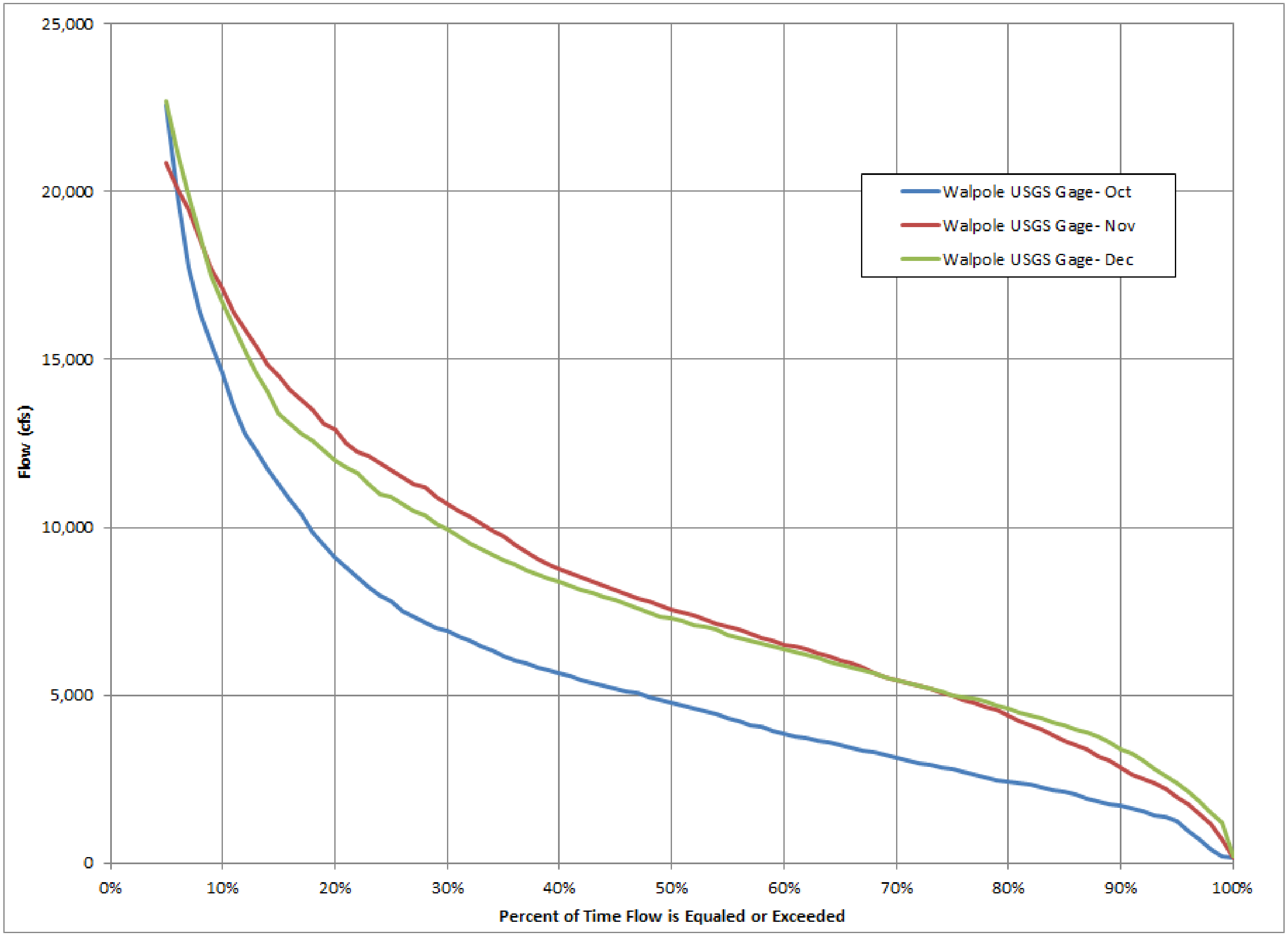


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-6: Connecticut River at Walpole, NH, Oct, Nov, and Dec Flow Duration Curve, Mar 1942-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 5,493 mi^2

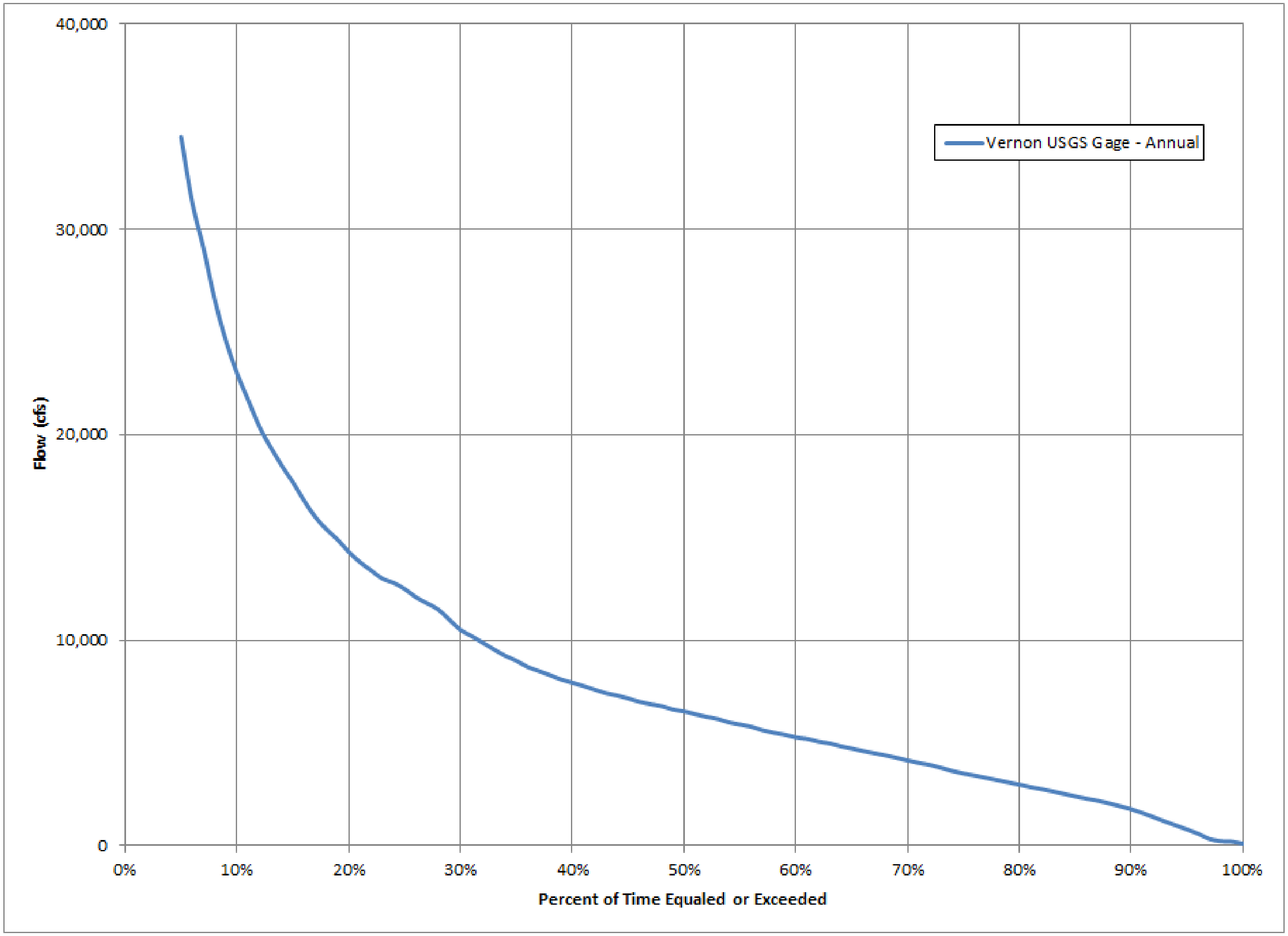


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-7: Connecticut River below Vernon Dam, VT, Annual Flow Duration Curve, Oct 1944-Sep 1973, Drainage Area= 6,266 mi^2

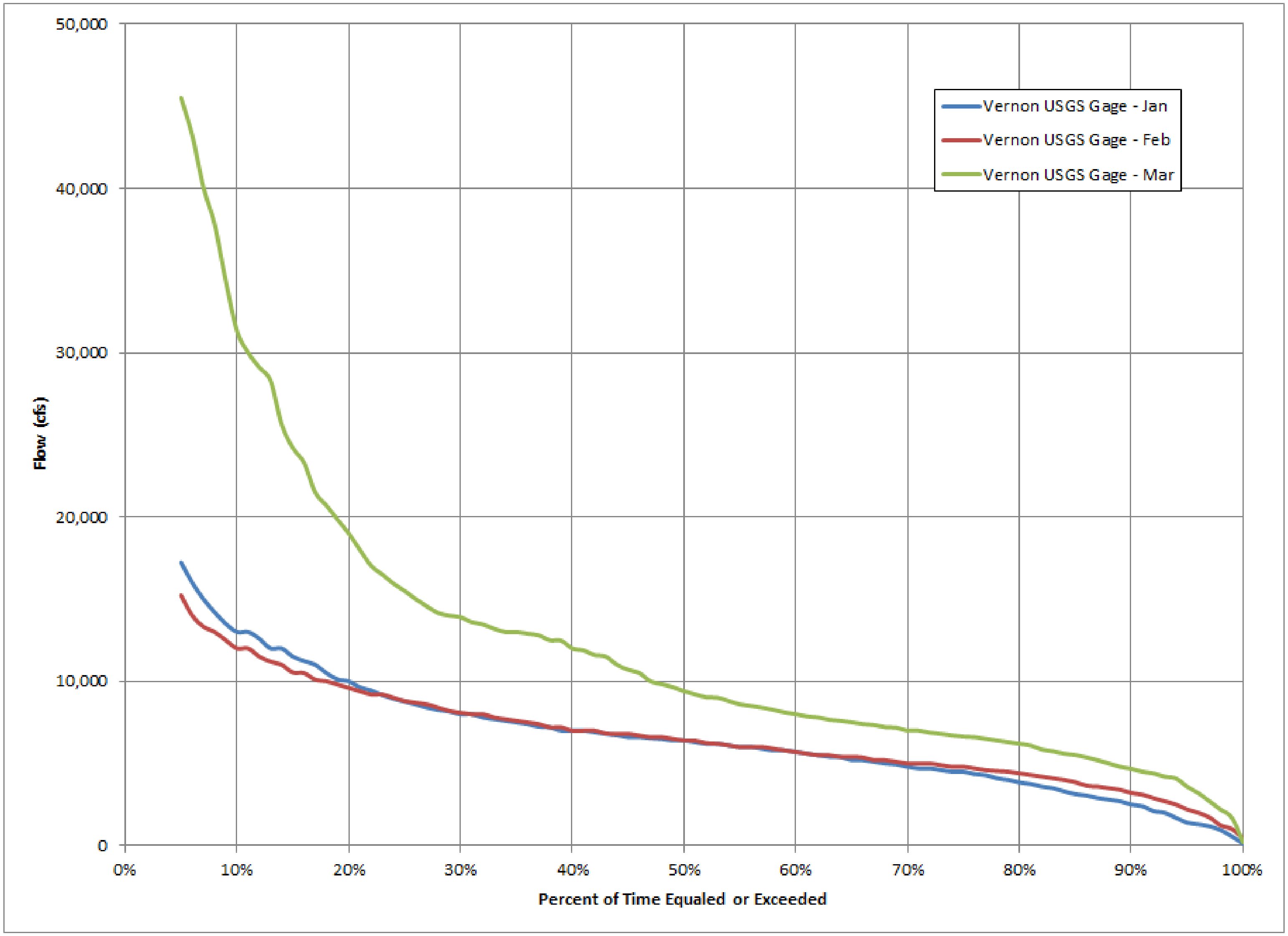


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-8: Connecticut River below Vernon Dam, VT, Jan, Feb and Mar Flow Duration Curve, Oct 1944-Sep 1973, Drainage Area= 6,266 mi^2

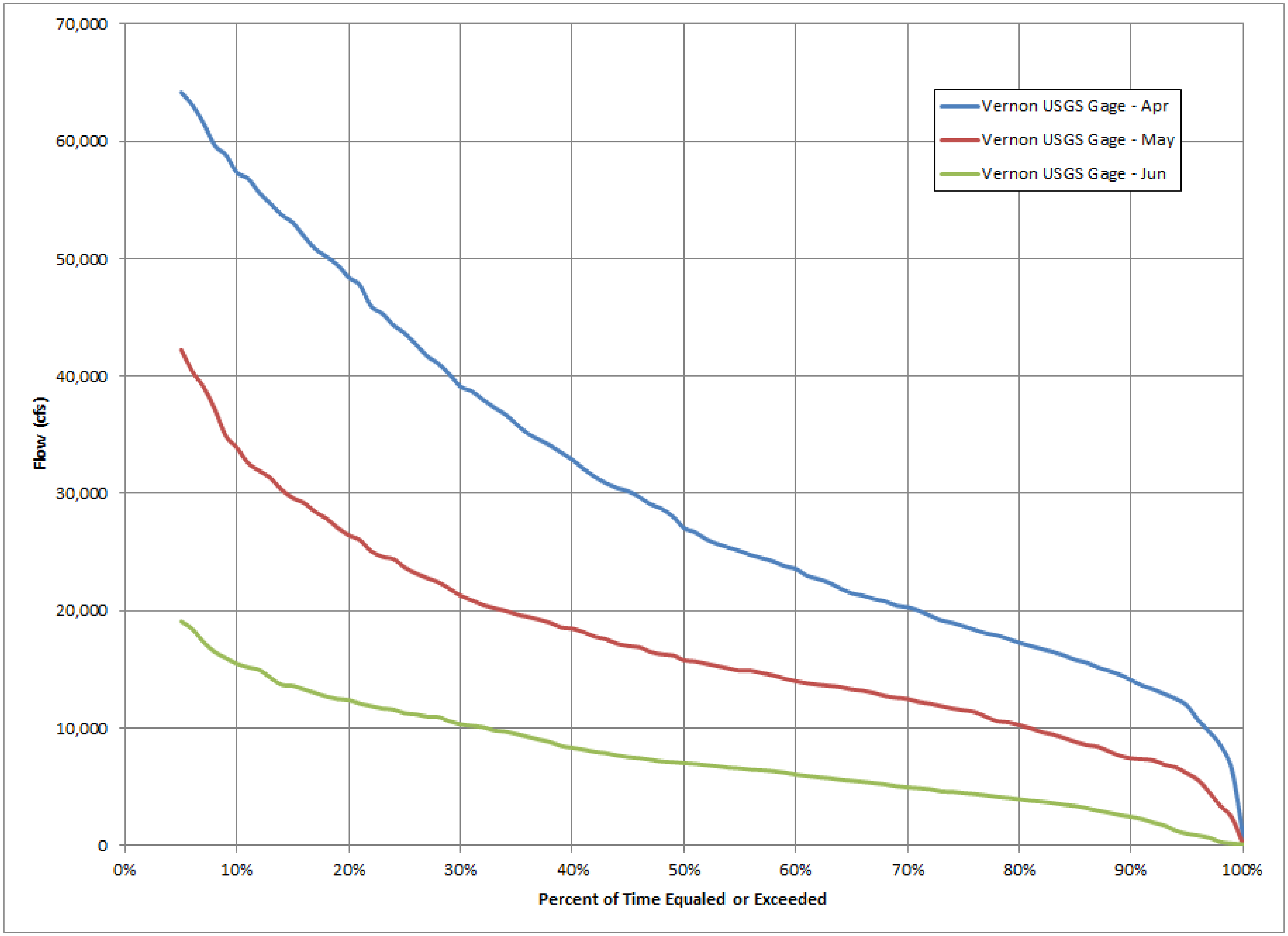


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-9: Connecticut River below Vernon Dam, VT, Apr, May and Jun Flow Duration Curve, Oct 1944-Sep 1973, Drainage Area= 6,266 mi^2

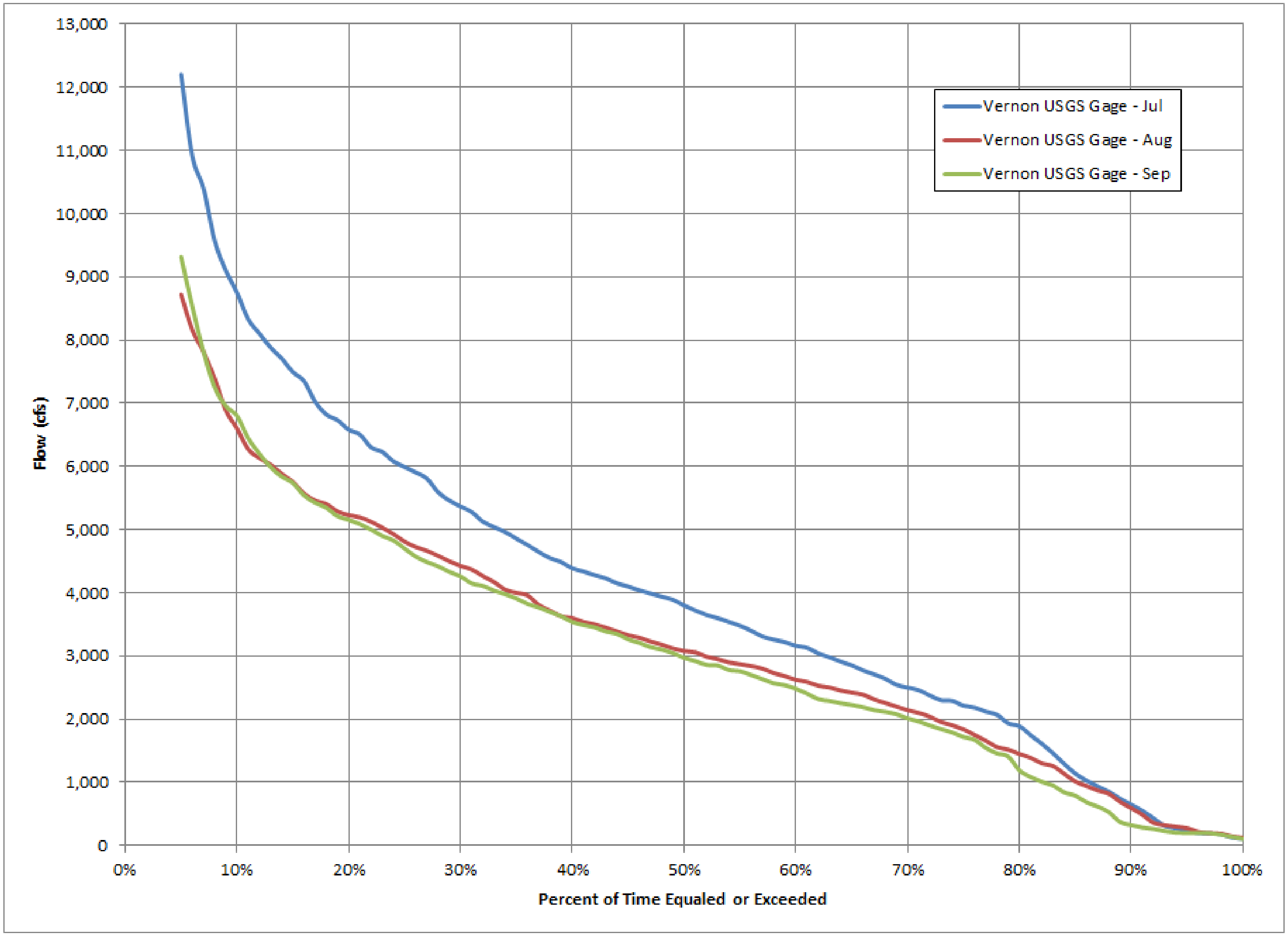


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-10: Connecticut River below Vernon Dam, VT, Jul, Aug and Sep Flow Duration Curve, Oct 1944-Sep 1973, Drainage Area= 6,266 mi^2

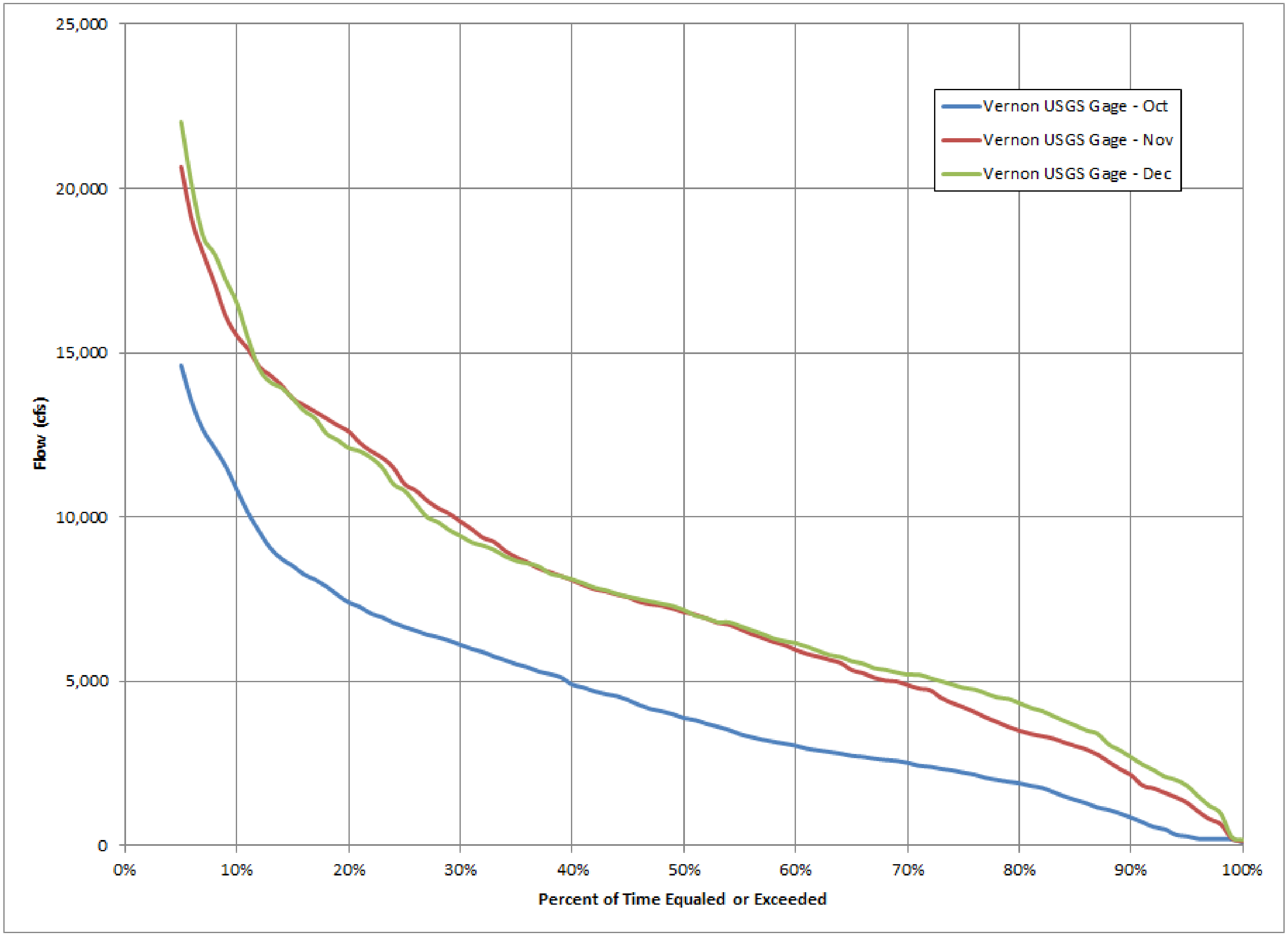


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-11: Connecticut River below Vernon Dam, VT, Oct, Nov and Dec Flow Duration Curve, Oct 1944-Sep 1973, Drainage Area= 6,266 mi^2

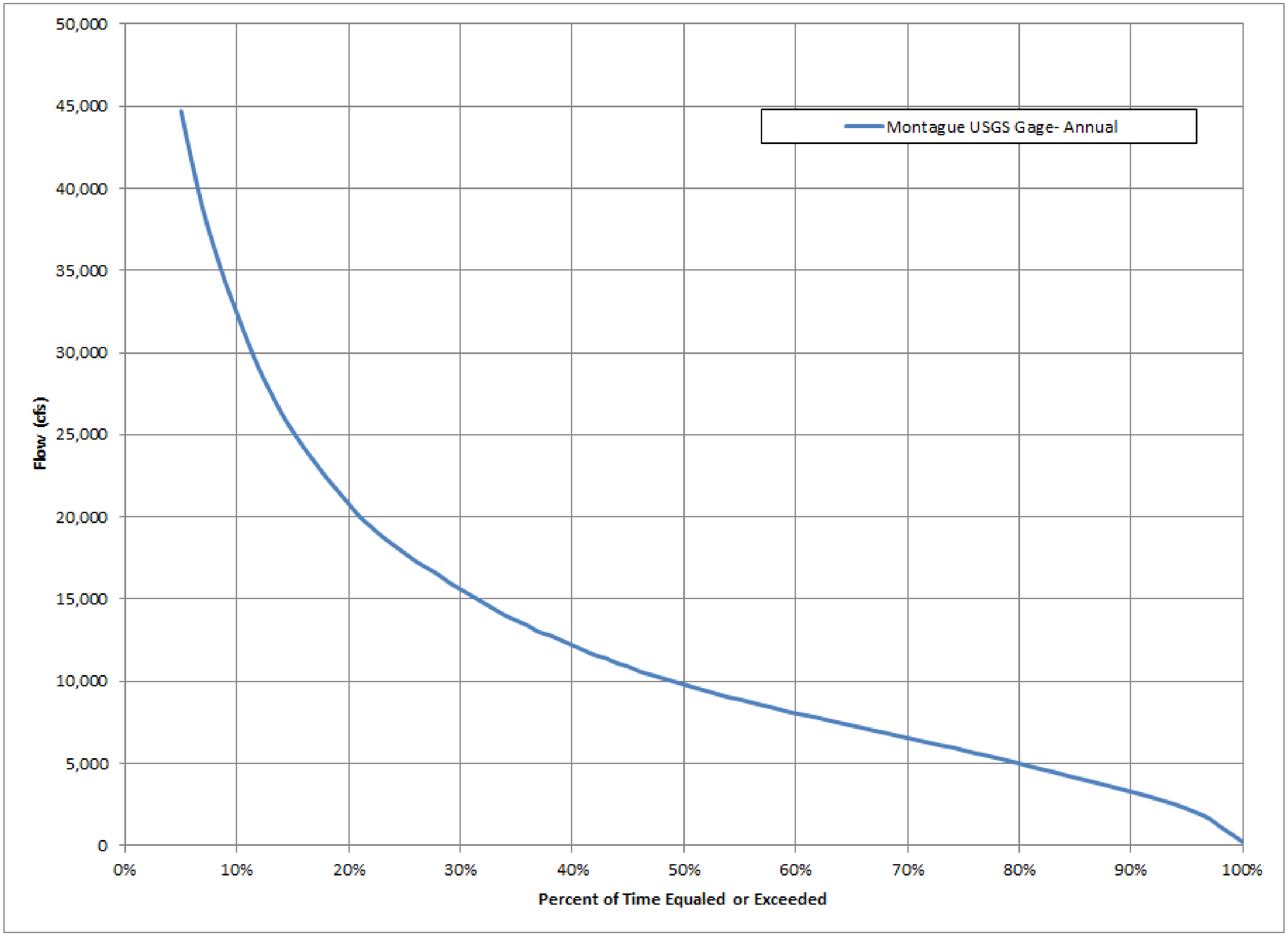


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-12: Connecticut River at Montague, MA, Annual Flow Duration Curve, Apr 1940-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

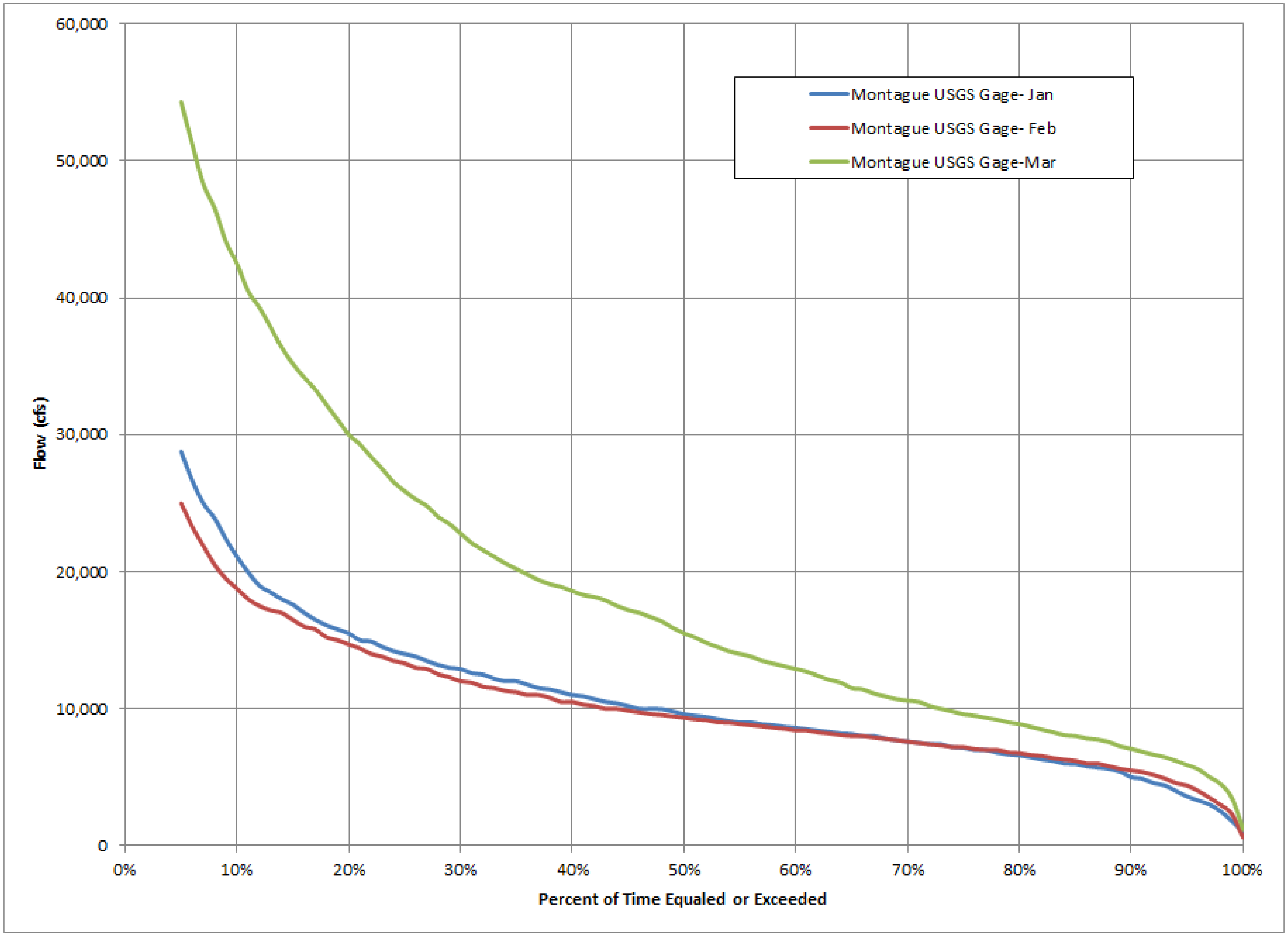


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-13: Connecticut River at Montague, MA, Jan, Feb and Mar Flow Duration Curve, Apr 1940-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

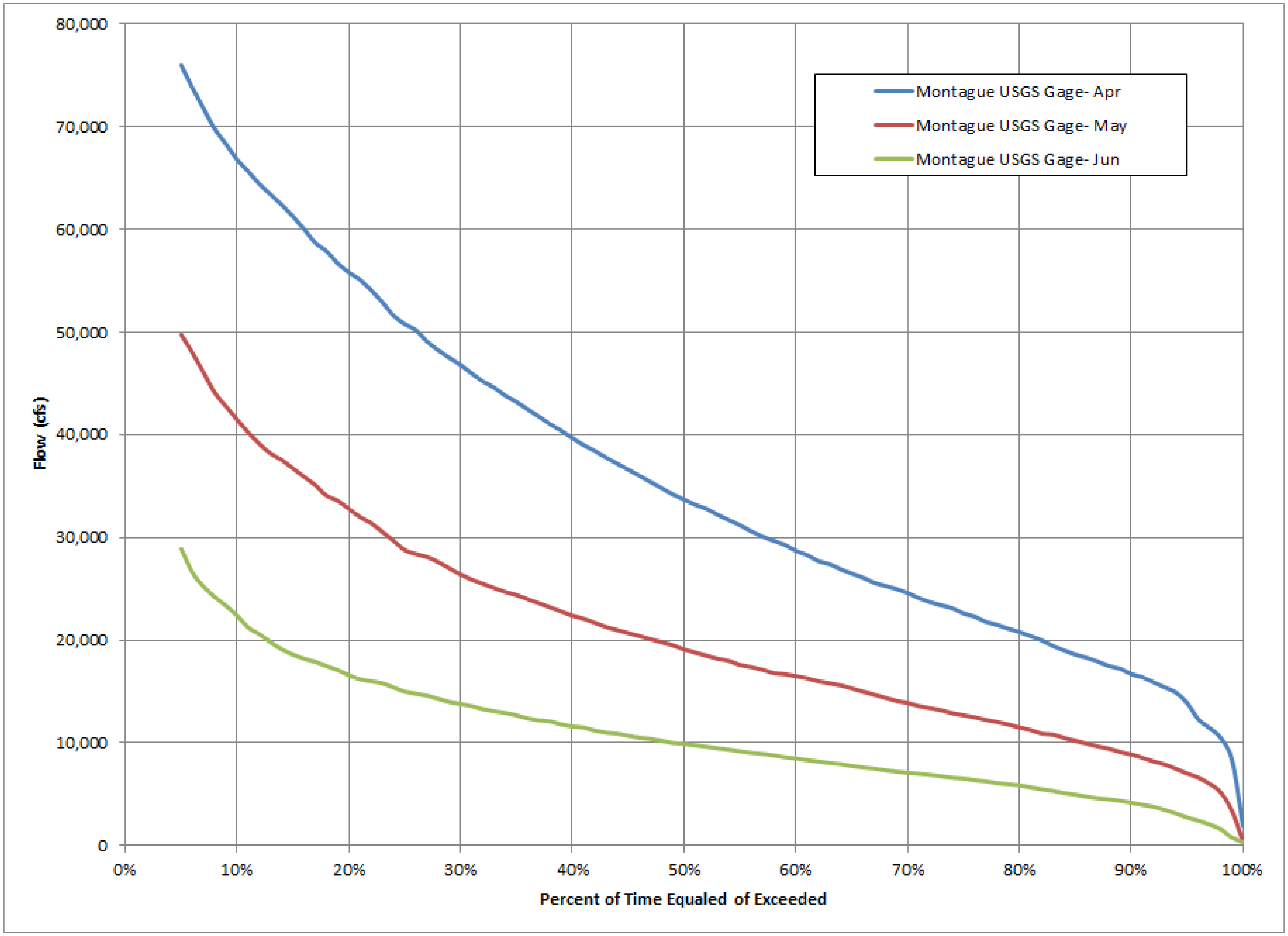


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-14: Connecticut River at Montague, MA, Apr, May and Jun Annual Flow Duration Curve, Apr 1940-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

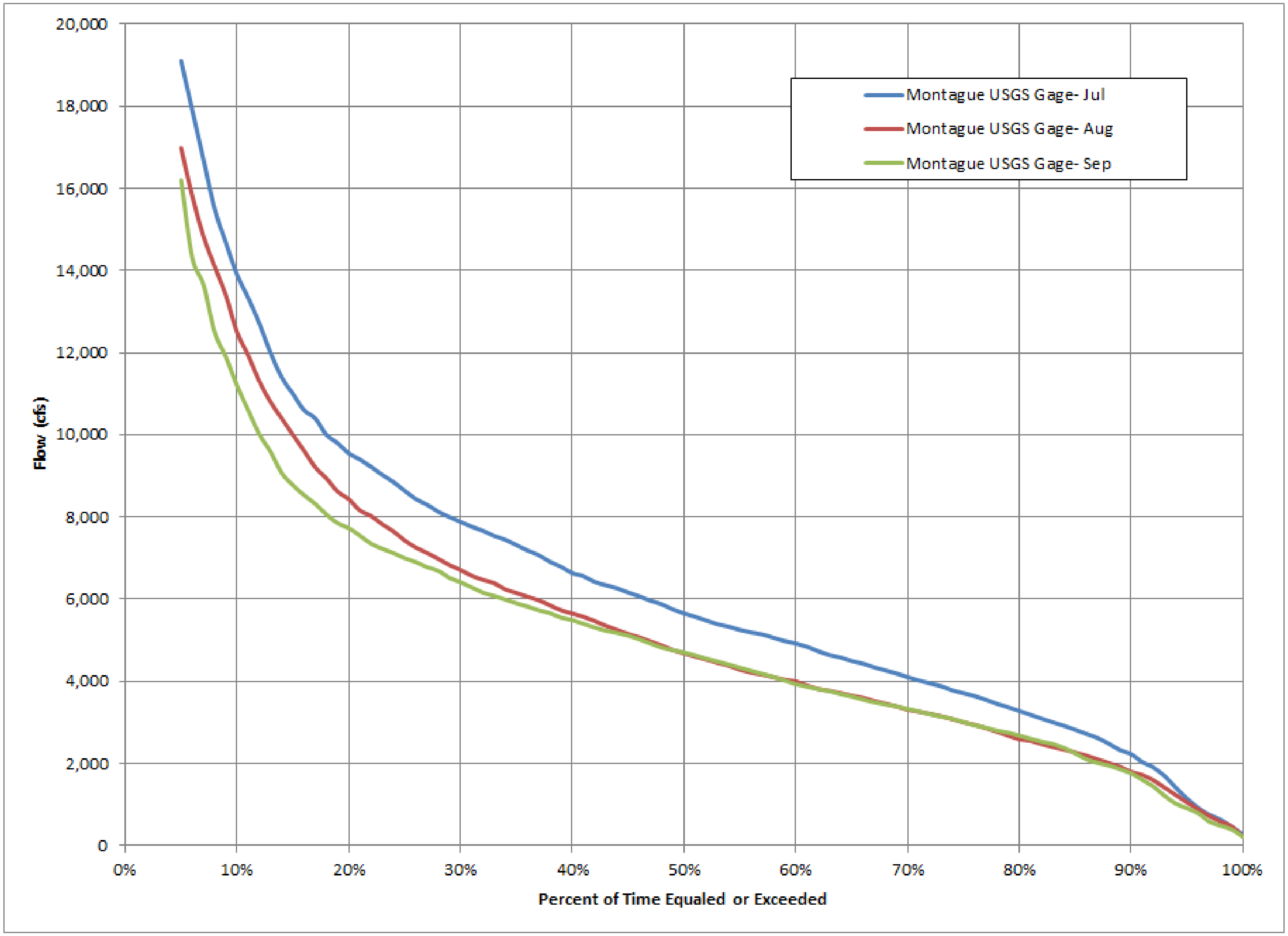


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-15: Connecticut River at Montague, MA, Jul, Aug and Sep Flow Duration Curve, Apr 1940-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

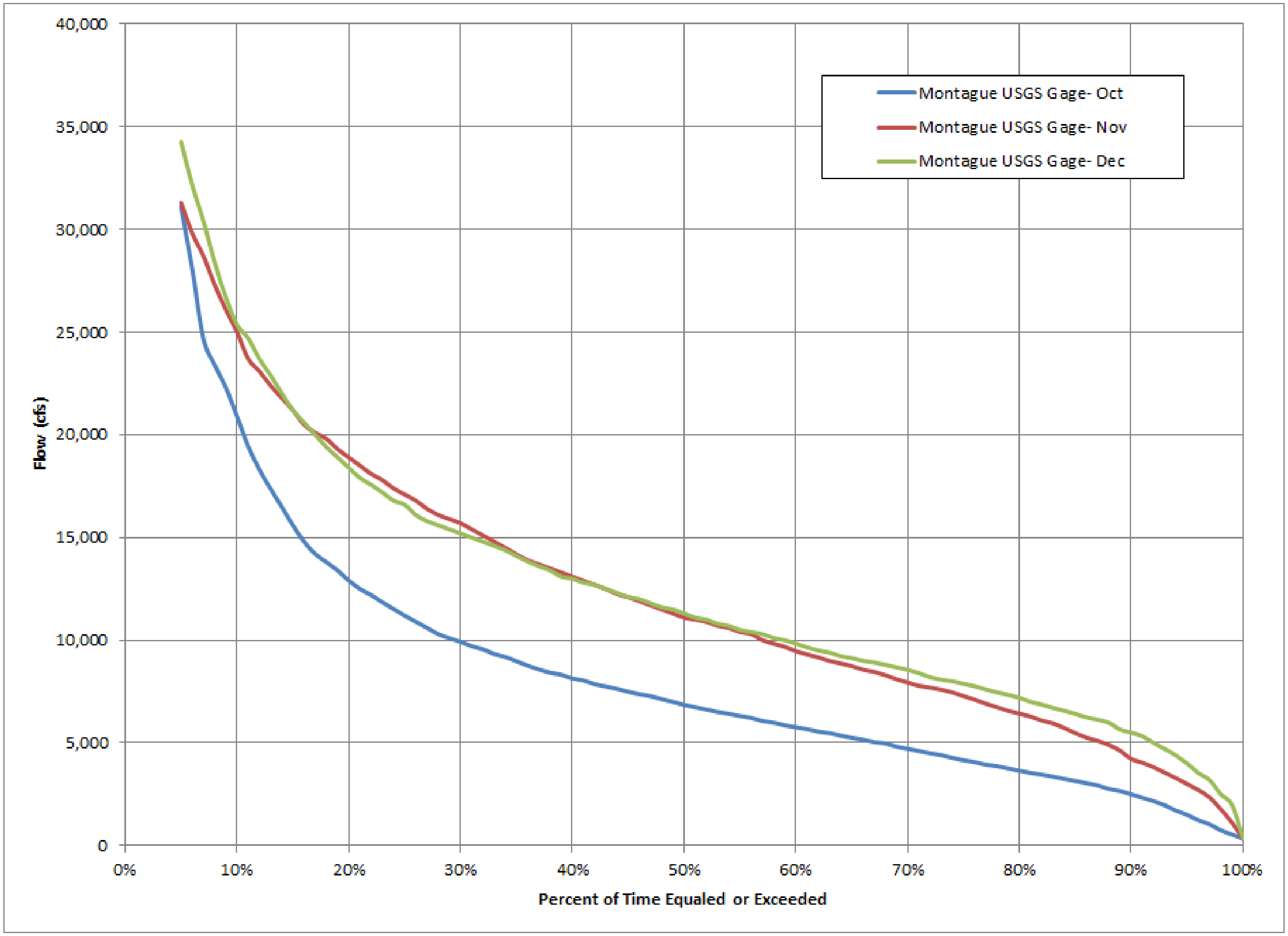


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-16: Connecticut River at Montague, MA, Oct, Nov and Dec Flow Duration Curve, Apr 1940-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

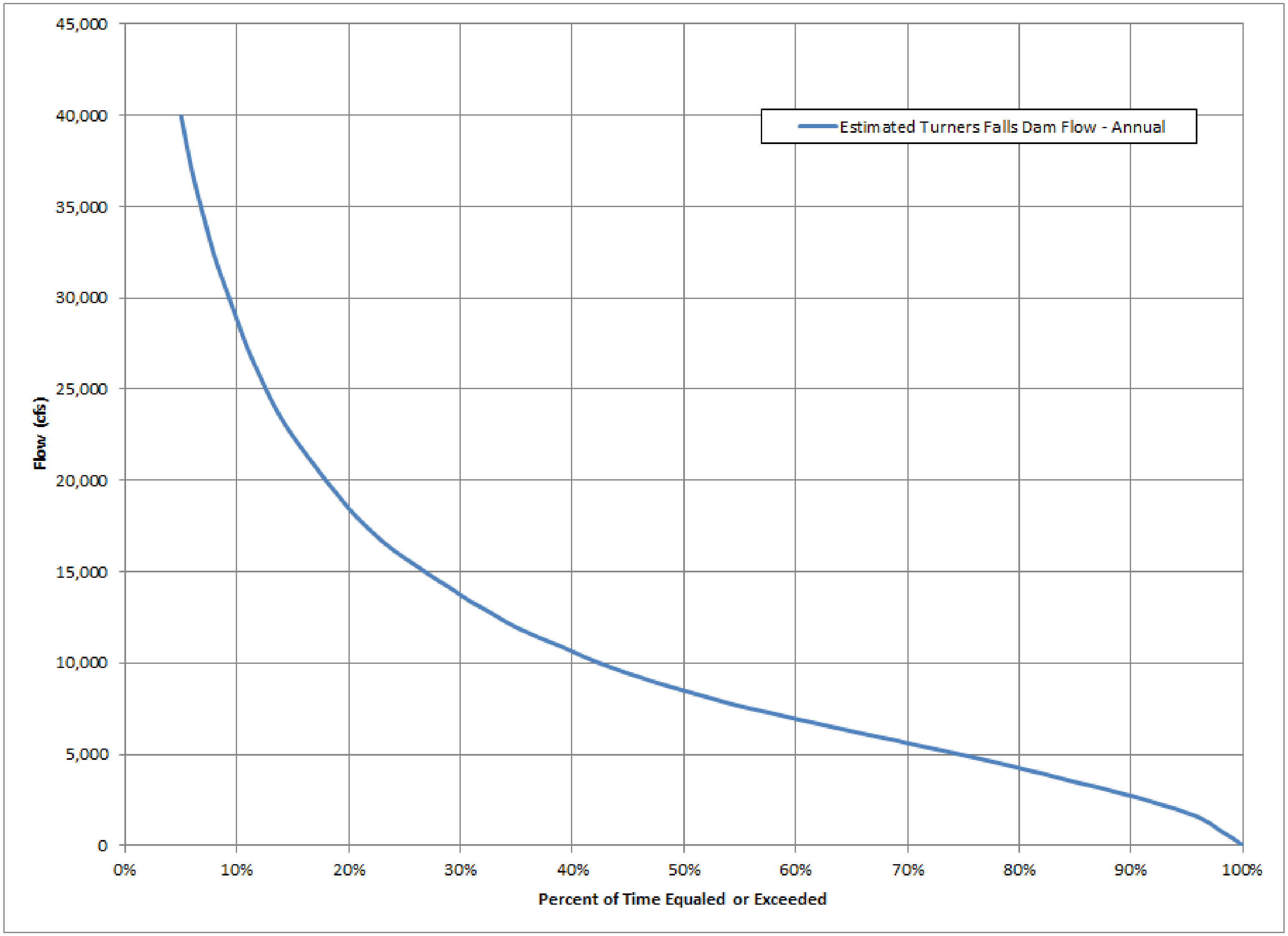


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-17: Connecticut River at Turners Falls Dam, Annual Flow Duration Curve, Jan 1941-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

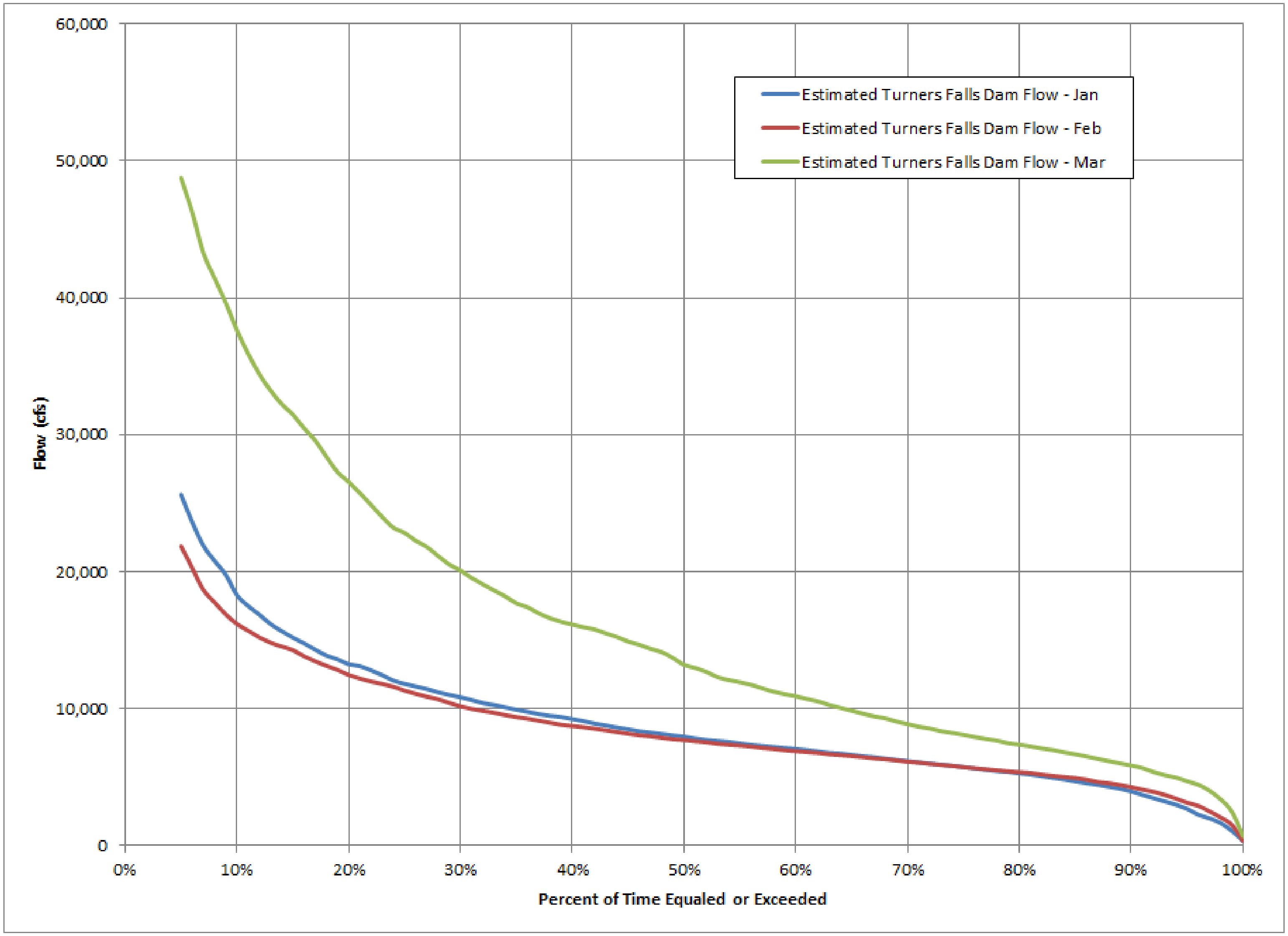


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-18: Connecticut River at Turners Falls Dam, Jan, Feb and Mar Flow Duration Curve, Jan 1941-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

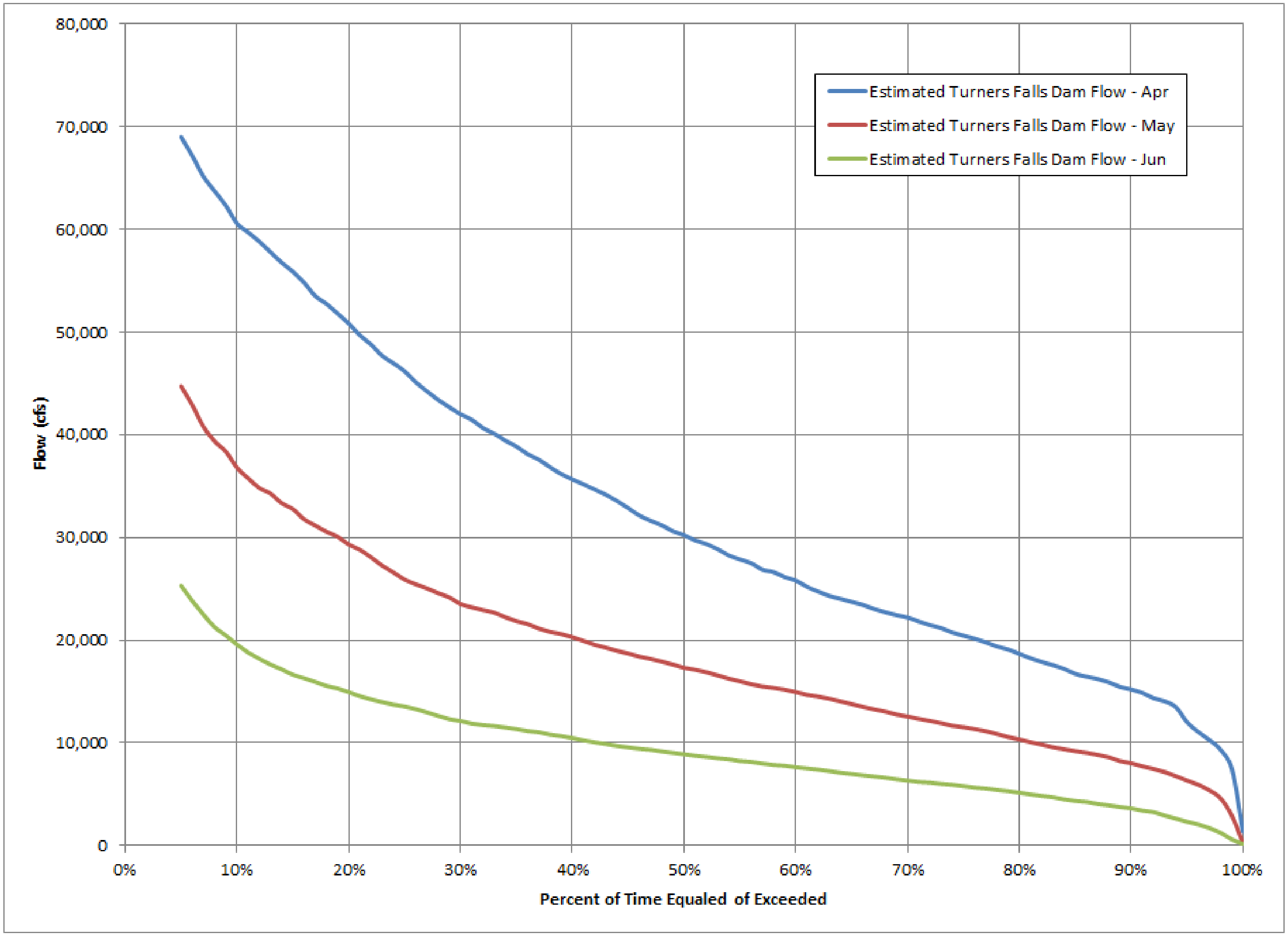


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-19: Connecticut River at Turners Falls Dam, Apr, May and Jun Annual Flow Duration Curve, Jan 1941-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

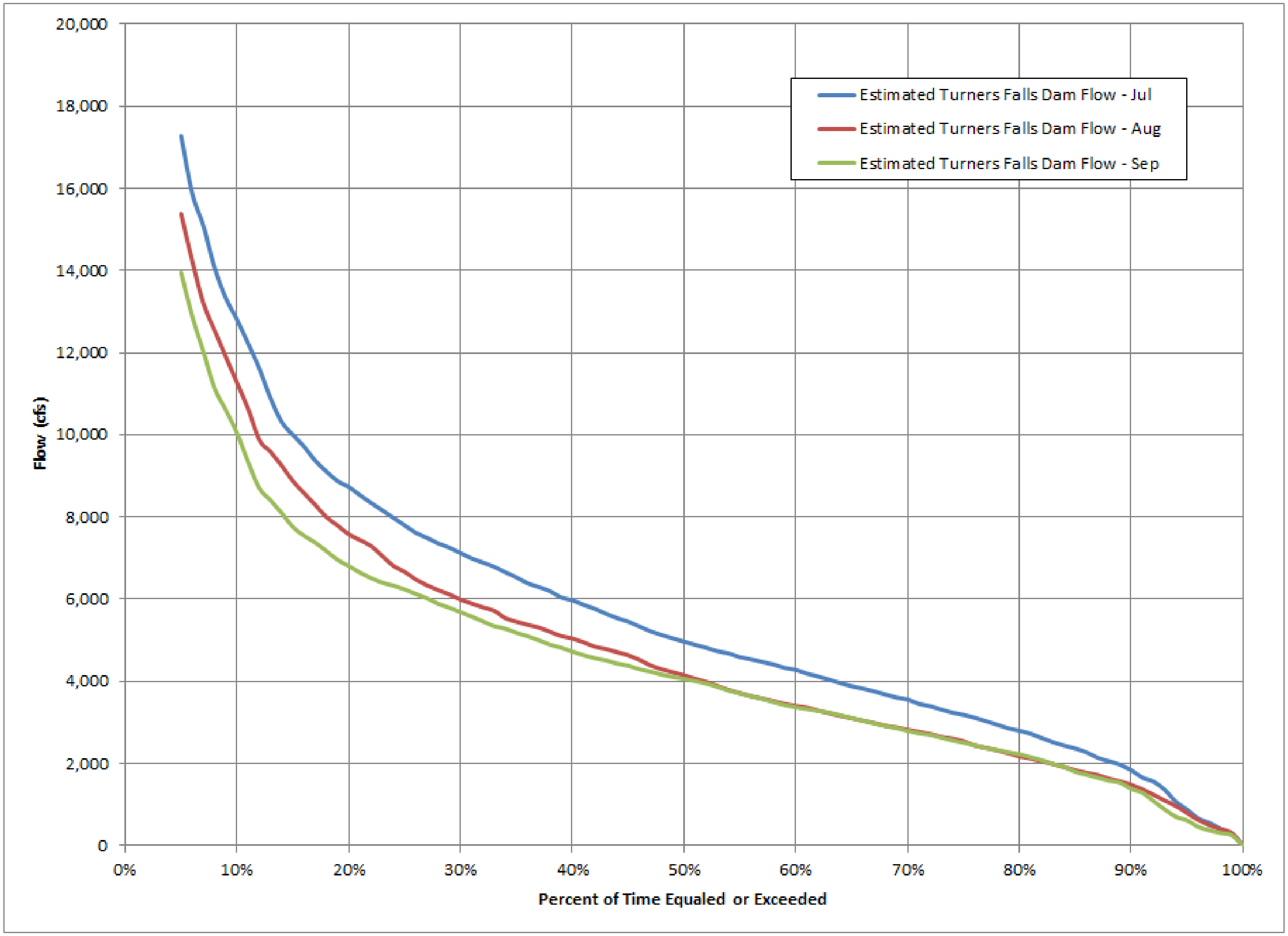


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-20: Connecticut River at Turners Falls Dam, Jul, Aug and Sep Flow Duration Curve, Jan 1941-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2

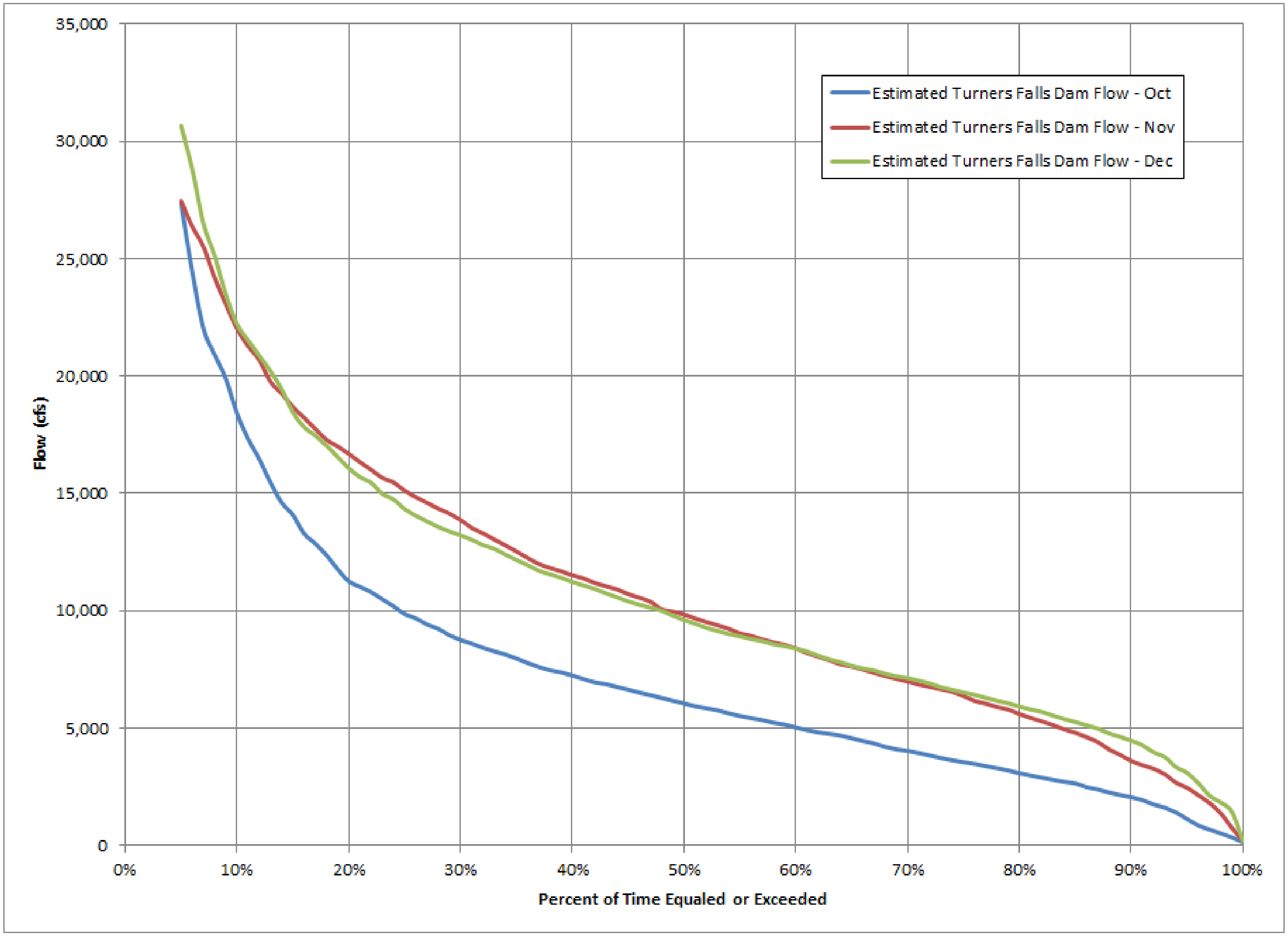
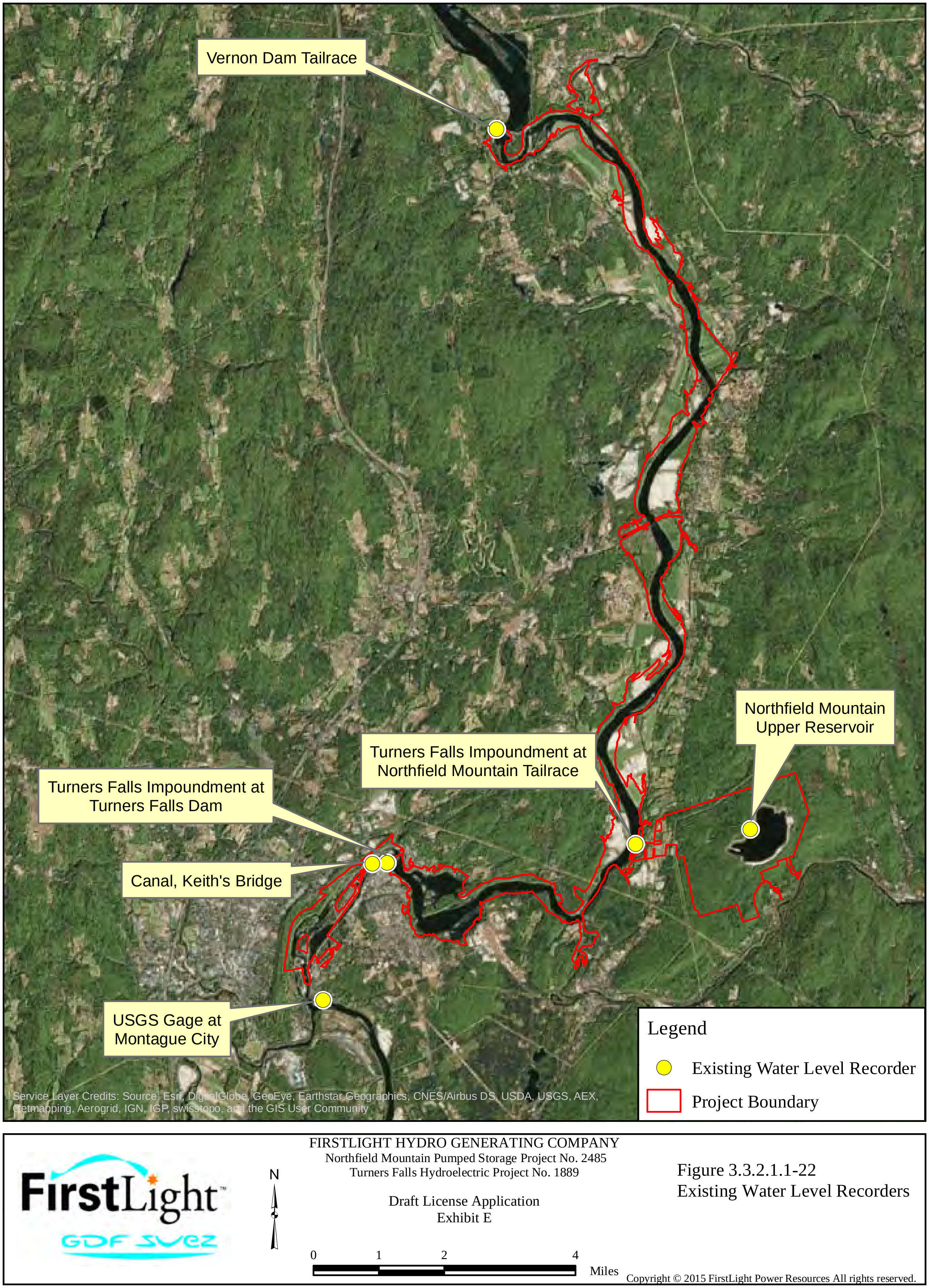


Figure 3.3.2.1.1-21: Connecticut River at Turners Falls Dam, Oct, Nov and Dec Flow Duration Curve, Jan 1941-Dec 2014, Drainage Area= 7,860 mi^2



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Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

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Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.2.1.1-22
Existing Water Level Recorders

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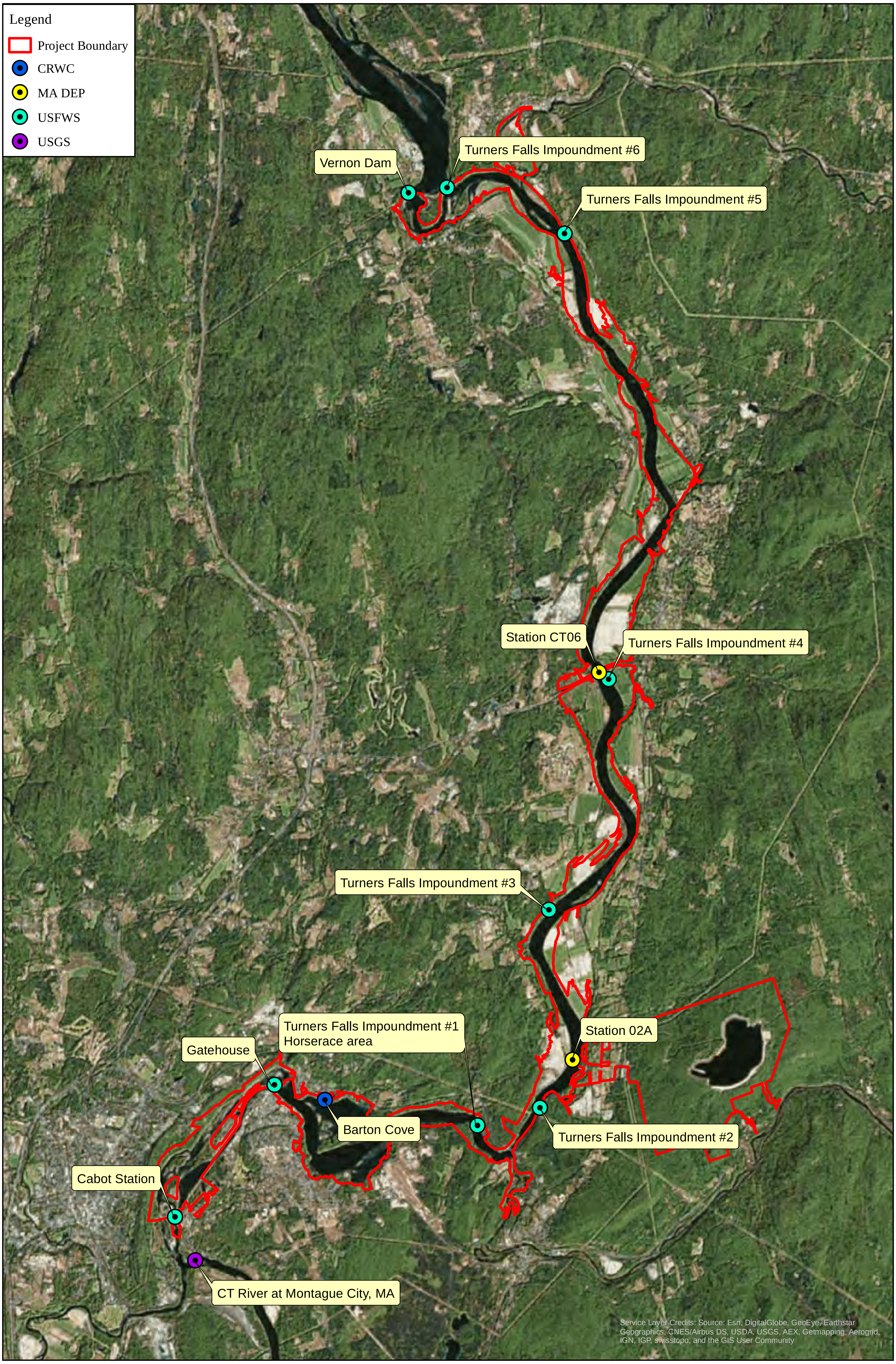

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N

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Figure 3.3.2.1.2-1
Water Quality Sampling Locations
(Agency and Volunteer Groups)
in the Vicinity of the Project

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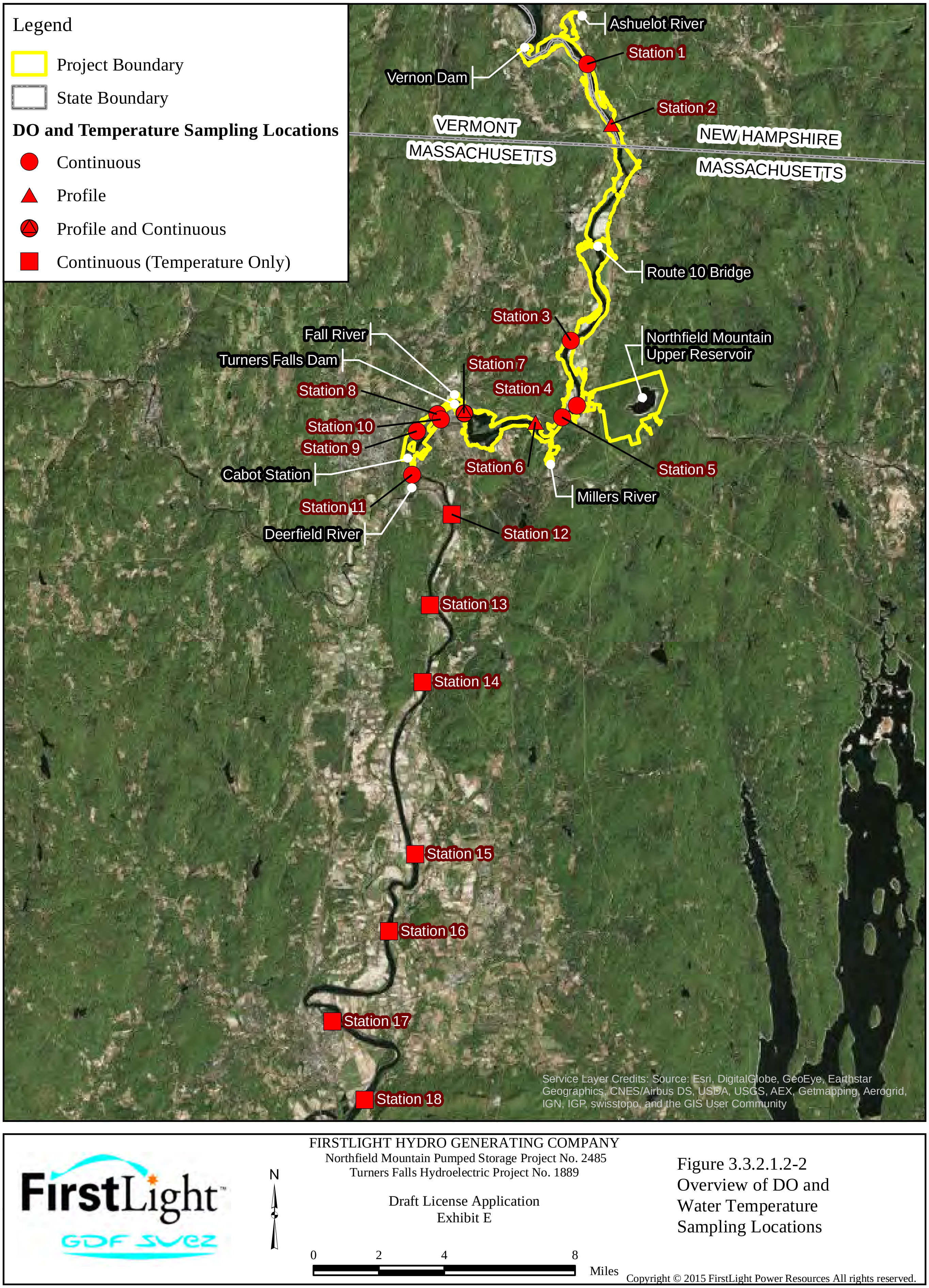

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Figure 3.3.2.1.2-2
Overview of DO and Water Temperature Sampling Locations

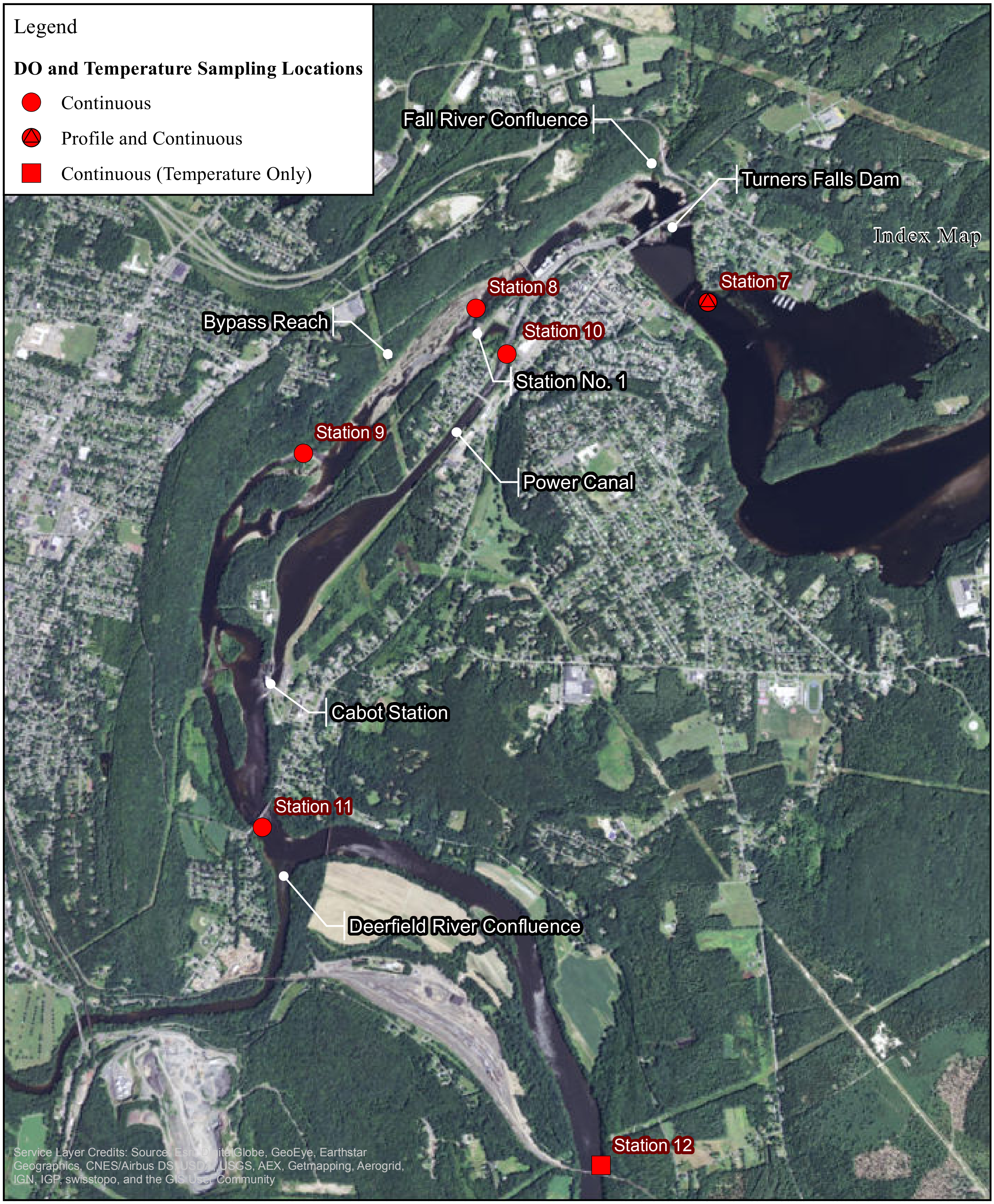

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Figure 3.3.2.1.2-3
Water Quality Sampling Locations Near Turners Falls Dam

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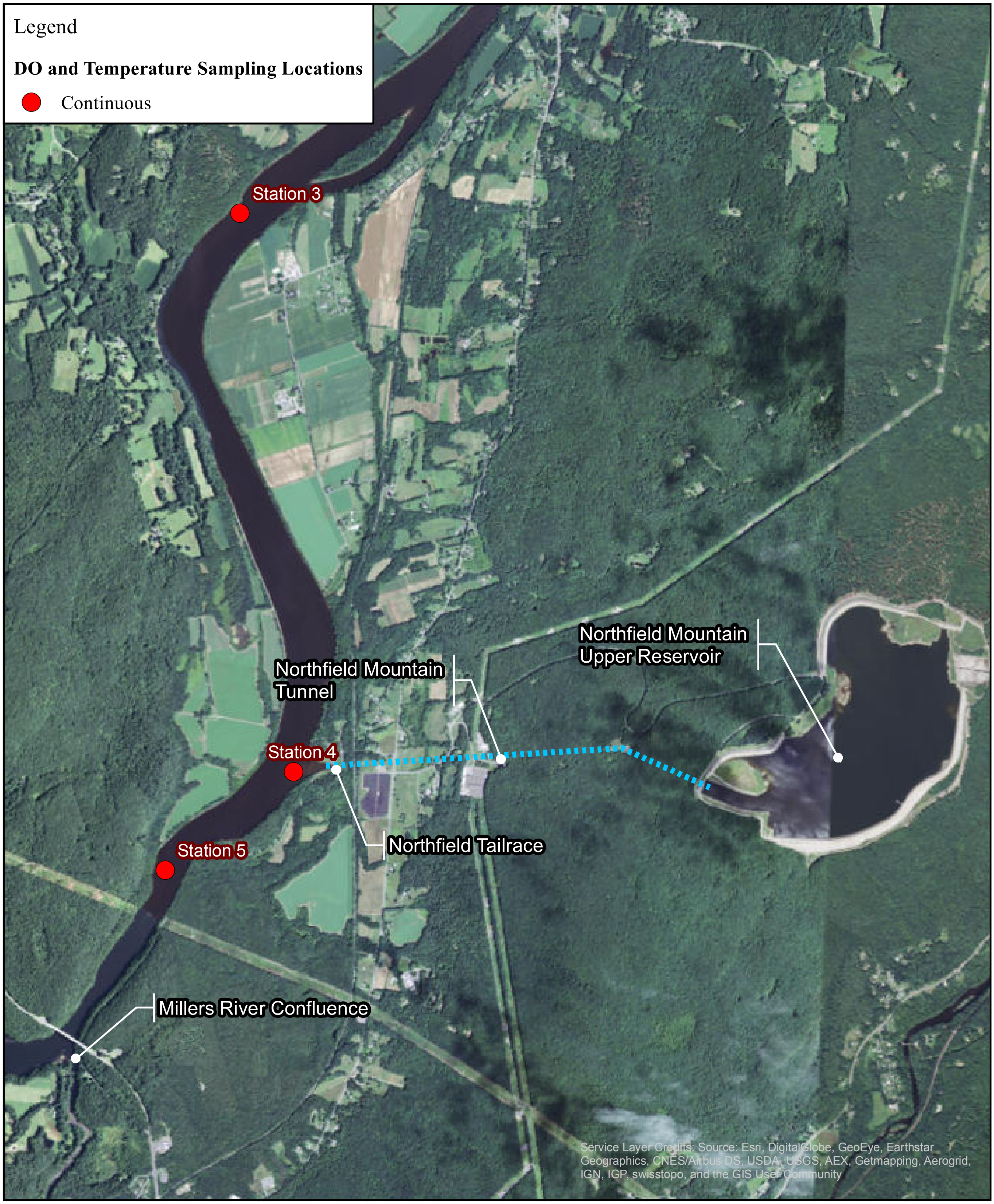

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Figure 3.3.2.1.2-4
Water Quality Sampling Locations Near the Northfield Mountain Tailrace

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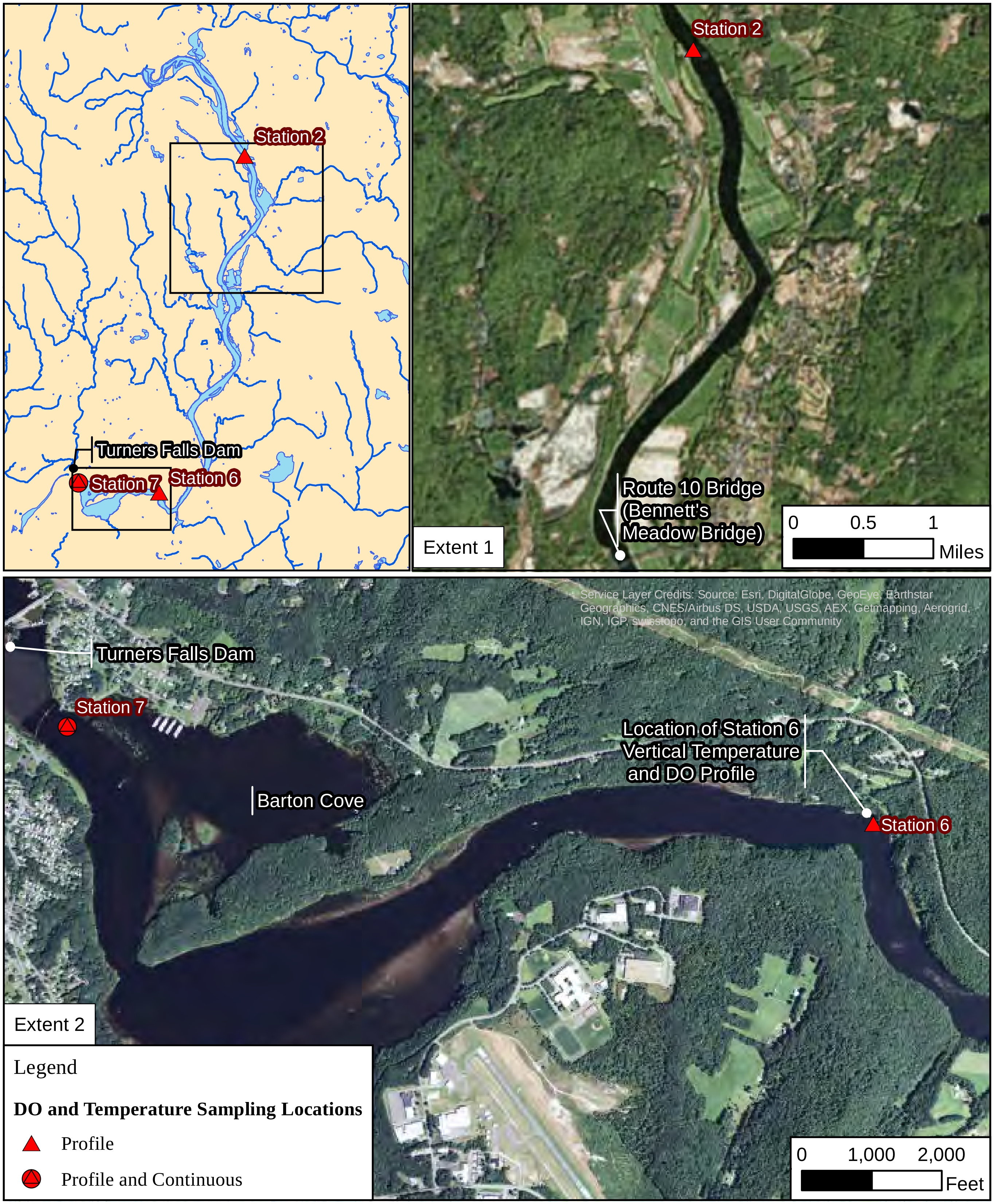

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Figure 3.3.2.1.2-5
Turners Falls Impoundment
Vertical Profile Locations

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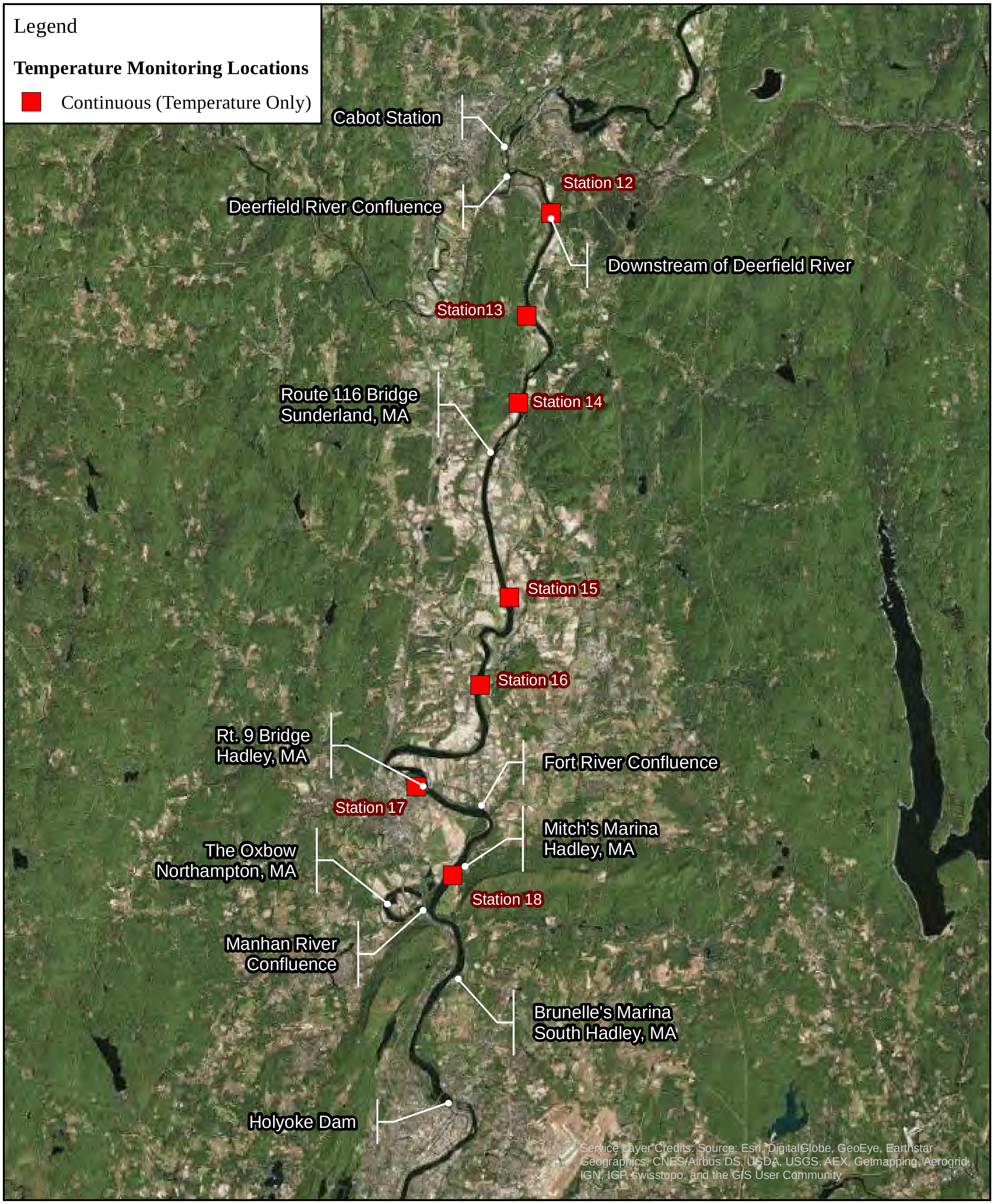

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Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

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Miles

Figure 3.3.2.1.2-6
Continuous Water Temperature Monitoring Locations Cabot Station to Holyoke Dam

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3.3.3 Aquatic Resources

The Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development provide aquatic habitat for a variety of plants and animals. Studies conducted in the Project area provide information on the presence and distribution of the aquatic biota and on potential effects of Project operation on these resources.

FERC Relicensing Studies

As noted earlier (Section 1.4.3.1), closure of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant (VY), located upstream of the Northfield Project, would change certain environmental baseline conditions during the relicensing study period. Due to the impending closure of VY, the implementation of 18 proposed or requested studies pertaining to aquatic resources were delayed for a year. Consequently, the final results of these studies are not available for inclusion in the Draft License Application.

3.3.3.1 Affected Environment

The Connecticut River in the vicinity of the Northfield Project area is generally narrow, with areas of floodplain and terraces of silt, sand and gravel. The basin is steep and makes for quick drainage to the river during mild rain events, snow melts and storms. The Northfield Project area from upstream to downstream consist of aquatic habitats associated with the TFI, bypass reach, and downstream riverine area. In addition, there is a 2.1-mile long power canal that is an important part of the passage route for migratory fish.

Turners Falls Impoundment

The TFI extends approximately 20 miles upstream from the Turner Falls Dam to the Vernon Dam (FERC No. 1904) tailrace and includes two major tributaries (Ashuelot and Miller Rivers) as well as several smaller tributaries (Figure 3.3.3.1-1). Both lentic and lotic conditions are present in the impoundment. The Licensee has undertaken a study, in accordance with the approved RSP, to determine the distribution and abundance of aquatic habitat within the TFI. The distribution and abundance of aquatic habitats, including biological and geomorphological characteristics, were documented during field surveys in 2014 and 2015. Survey results were used to develop maps depicting the distribution of mesohabitat. Habitat maps of the TFI, bypass reach and below Cabot Station are shown in Figure 3.3.3.1-2.

The upstream reach of the TFI, extending approximately 15 miles from Vernon Dam tailrace to the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailwater, is located within a broad flood plain and is relatively uniform and generally shallow, with gentle bends. A river channel exists with rock shorelines and lotic conditions. The substrate in this reach is variable ranging from sand to boulders.

There are a few narrow islands comprised of alluvial materials such as gravel, cobble and fines. Scour holes and shoals generally are confined to locations downstream of features such as bridge piers and there are few deep pools. Scour holes provide the most extensive cover; object cover in the littoral zone is sparse, and limited to isolated patches of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and clusters of woody debris.

The downstream reach of the TFI extends from the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace approximately five (5) miles to the Turners Falls Dam and is dominated by bedrock, which controls much of the stream geometry and substrate features. The geometry of the lower impoundment is complex. It is defined by both bedrock and depositional features, and includes a complex of embayment, points, coves, islands, and a wide range of substrates, and features shallow lacustrine littoral habitat with a deeply incised thalweg, in contrast to the riverine habitat found further upstream in the TFI. The lower section of the TFI has several large areas off the channel which are shallow, with SAV and muck bottom habitats characteristic of lentic conditions.

The littoral zone in the TFI is composed of varied substrates. In some locations the littoral zone is absent due to vertical bedrock cliffs, while in others there are broad horizontal shoals composed of gravel, sand or other fines, particularly in embayed sections (Figure 3.3.3.1-2). The thalweg is deeply incised. Most banks are wooded and composed of predominantly deciduous trees. Shoreline development ranges from residential (seasonal and year round homes) to urban. The least developed shorelines are those furthest upstream from Gill and Turners Falls.

Littoral zone substrates composed of fines (e.g., sand/silt, clay) and cobble collectively accounted for about 50% of all littoral substrate (Table 3.3.3.1-1). Fines comprised 29% of the study area, followed by cobble (21%), then bedrock (17%) and gravel (16%). Littoral areas where cobble substrates were combined with either fines (6%) or boulder (1 %) also occurred. However, these patches were scattered and small. Littoral areas with fines were widely distributed throughout the study area; however, cobble and gravel were most common above the French King Gorge area. Bedrock and wetland areas were most abundant in the reach from French King Gorge downstream. Riprap accounted for approximately 7% of littoral substrates and occurred in patches throughout the study area where either erosion abatement or other infrastructure such as bridges or developed shorefronts were located.

Bypass

The 2.1-mile long bypass reach runs from the base of Turners Falls Dam to the tailrace of Cabot Station. This reach has a low gradient (approximately 0.3%); contains mostly bedrock, boulder, cobble, and gravel substrates; is primarily comprised of pool mesohabitat, followed by riffle and backwater types. It has minimum flow requirements during certain times of the year as noted in Section 2.1.5. Minimum bypass flows are provided beginning May 1 and continuing until water temperatures fall below 7°C (typically November) to enhance conditions for upstream migratory species and Shortnose Sturgeon. The distribution and abundance of aquatic habitats, including biological and geomorphological characteristics were documented during field surveys of 2012 and were utilized to develop maps depicting the distribution of mesohabitat (Figures 3.3.3.1-3, Maps 1 & 2).

Downstream Riverine Habitat

Habitat downstream of Cabot Station was mapped in 2012. This low-gradient reach forms a wide flood plain with alluvial-dominated substrates, with a meandering channel in many places. Run habitat comprises over 75% of the riverine reach by length, with pool comprising the next most abundant mesohabitat type (13%). Riffle habitat is extremely uncommon and is most concentrated in the stream reach immediately downstream from the Cabot Station discharge. The Deerfield River enters the Connecticut River just downstream of Cabot Station (Figure 3.3.3.1-1). The distribution and abundance of aquatic habitats, including biological and geomorphological characteristics were documented during field surveys of 2012 and were utilized to develop maps depicting the distribution of mesohabitat (Figures 3.3.3.1-3, Maps 3 through 22).

3.3.3.1.1 Aquatic Vegetation

During the summer of 2014 submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) beds within the TFI were mapped and dominant species were identified. Dominant species identified during the survey are shown in Table 3.3.3.1.1-1. Patches of SAV and wetlands, emergent aquatic vegetation (EAV) such as lily pads or cattail patches occur in areas with finer substrates. Areas with bedrock substrates have limited or no riparian vegetation. Beds of SAV vegetation, outside of the areas near Barton Cove, generally occur as narrow bands located parallel to the TFI shoreline. In some cases shallow shoals within the TFI, often associated with islands, support large beds of SAV. Native species include wild celery, various pondweeds, musk grasses, and coon tail. Wild celery occurs throughout the majority of the identified SAV beds.

Several exotic and invasive aquatic species are currently found within the Project, including variable leaf milfoil, Eurasian milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, fanwort, and water chestnut. The majority of the exotic species occur immediately upstream of the Turners Falls Dam with fewer occurrences upstream of the

French King Bridge. In general, exotic species are not as widespread and occur at lower densities upstream of the French King Bridge.

3.3.3.1.2 Fisheries

The Connecticut River in the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development vicinity supports a variety of cool and warm water resident fish as well as migratory species. The federally endangered Shortnose Sturgeon is also present in the reach between the Turners Falls and Holyoke Dams. These fish species are discussed in the following sections.

Resident Fish Species

The Connecticut River in the vicinity of the Northfield Project supports a variety of warm water resident fish. Dominant family groups include Centrarchidae (sunfishes), Percidae (perches) Catostomidae (suckers), and Cyprinidae (minnows). The centrarchid family includes important warmwater game fishes such as Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass, crappies and sunfish (Hartel *et al*., 2002). Among the Cyprinidae species reported in the Connecticut River are the Spottail Shiner, Fallfish and Common Shiner. Catostomids are closely related to the Cyprinids and are a highly diverse taxonomic group. Although the Longnose Sucker was historically found in the mainstem Connecticut River, recently only the White Sucker has been reported in the project area. Yellow Perch and Walleye are two common Percids, and northern pike and chain pickerel are two common Esocids found in the area (Hartel *et al.*, 2002) of the Northfield Project.

Fish Assemblage Study

FirstLight conducted Study No. 3.3.11 *Fish Assemblage Study* to gather baseline information pertaining to the current population(s) within the study area. The study area includes the Connecticut River from Vernon Dam to the Cabot Station tailwater. In order to sufficiently sample representative habitat types throughout the study area, and the range of strata within these reaches, sampling methods included boat electrofishing, gill netting, and seining. Sampling was performed during the early summer in July 2015 in the TFI and again in the fall (September) in the TFI and also in the bypass reach between Turners Falls Dam and Cabot Station tailrace. Twelve (12) electrofishing stations were sampled in the TFI. Gillnets were also deployed in deep holes concurrent with electrofishing, and beach seining was conducted where feasible in the middle and lower TFI strata. In several locations where beach seining was not feasible due to snags or unwadable shorelines, supplemental boat electrofishng was conducted. Data analyses and reporting will follow completion of the fall field work. While data analysis has not yet occurred for the summer sampling, a preliminary list of species captured is provided in Table 3.3.3.1.2-1.

<u>Littoral Zone Fish Spawning and Spawning Habitat</u>

In accordance with the RSP, the Licensee performed a study to identify littoral zone fish spawning and spawning habitat in the mainstem, tributaries and backwater of project-affected areas to supplement information on resident species. Prior to initiating the field surveys, a desktop review was performed to determine the typical timing of spawning, spawning habitats, and spawning behaviors for resident species (Table 3.3.3.1.2-2). Field sampling was then conducted by systematically traversing the littoral zone (depth < 6 feet) of the TFI via boat and/or foot (wading) to visually identify any fish nests, egg masses/deposits, and/or spawning habitat. Identified habitats, egg deposits and nests were geo-referenced with a GPS unit, and water quality parameters, including temperature, velocity, clarity, and depth, were recorded. Other relevant information collected included sediment grain size associated with nests, presence of aquatic vegetation, occupied/abandoned nests, weather conditions, and other relevant observations or descriptive information.

The early spring survey was performed from May 4-6, 2015, after river flow had receded to safe levels. Water temperature during this period ranged from 10.1 to 11.7°C, except in the lower reaches of tributaries such as Pauchaug Brook and Millers River which were warmer (16-16.7°C). Prevailing naturally routed inflow to the impoundment during this period ranged from approximately 12,000 to 15,000 cfs, and water clarity was generally good (6-7.5 ft visibility), allowing clear view of the littoral zone bottom.

The late spring survey was initiated on June 1, 2015 but aborted due to rising river flow. The survey resumed June 11 and extended to June 13, but relatively high river flow persisted and visibility was reduced to 4-6 ft. Water temperature during late May had slowly climbed to approximately 18°C, but on June 1 was 16°C due to rains and persistent cold weather. After field work resumed on June 11 temperatures ranged from 17 to 21.5°C during the course of the survey.

A total of 18 spawning locations were surveyed during the early spawning season and 16 locations were surveyed during the late spring season. A number of spawning locations, particularly in the late spring featured multiple nests clustered in close proximity to each other. Figure 3.3.3.1.2-1 illustrates the location and distribution of spawning sites that were identified during the two surveys.

Migratory Fish Species below the Turners Falls Dam

The Connecticut River in the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development vicinity supports a variety of migratory fish species (anadromous and catadromous), including American Shad, Blueback Herring, Striped Bass, Sea Lamprey, and American Eel[34]. Before reaching the Project Area, these migrants must successfully pass the hydroelectric facility at Holyoke (RM 87) using the fish lift or eel passage ladders at this facility. In addition, a population of Shortnose Sturgeon is known to inhabit the Connecticut River between the Turners Falls Dam and Holyoke Dam.

<u>American Shad</u>

American Shad migrate into the lower Connecticut River during late March or April, reaching Cabot Station in late April or early to mid- May as they move upstream to spawn. In 2015, it was reported that over 58,000 shad successfully passed upstream of the Turners Falls Dam. Shad spawning typically occurs from April into June. Young-of-Year (YOY) shad remain in southern New England freshwater rivers throughout summer before initiating seaward migration which typically occurs in September or October. Most daily movement occurs in evening hours until about 2300 hours, but movement can occur around-the-clock (Hartel *et al.*, 2002). The young migrate to areas in the North Atlantic and remain at sea for four to six years before returning to their native river to spawn. American shad are repeat spawners and can return to their natal rivers more than once.

American Shad tend to spawn in areas dominated by runs and glides, 3 to 18 feet deep, and have been observed to spawn over a variety of substrates, but prefer sand and gravel bottom (Stier & Crance, 1985). This type of habitat most closely corresponds to the runs and glides occurring downstream of Cabot Station, but is very limited in the bypass reach. Female shad broadcast their eggs, about 290,000 per individual, in open water.

Shad spawning surveys were conducted by the Licensee from May through June 2015. The surveys were generally conducted 2-3 times per week through June 22, 2015, for a total of 18 survey nights, at four general locations: 1) in the TFI (upstream of Turners Falls Dam to the tailrace of Vernon dam), 2) within the Turners Falls Power Canal, 3) in the vicinity of the Rock Dam in the bypass reach, and 4) from Cabot Station to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland. Shad spawning was observed in the river reach downstream of Cabot Station (Figure 3.3.3.1.2-2), in one area of the bypass reach and in one area of the lower Turners Falls power canal (Figure 3.3.3.1.2-3), as well as in the TFI, adjacent to Stebbins Island (Figure 3.3.3.1.2-4). Spawning was observed in the downstream reach (Cabot Station to Route 116 Bridge) where water

[34] At a meeting of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commisison on July 10, 2012 the USFWS announced that it will no longer culture salmon for restoration efforts in the Connecticut River Basin. Agency representatives indicated that they supported the salmon restoration for 45 years, but low return rates and the science supporting salmon restoration have caused them to refocus efforts on other anadromous fish.

temperatures ranged from 15.8 to 20.2°C, depths ranged from 3.3 to 16 ft, velocity (1 ft below the surface) velocities ranged from 0.05 to 2.84 ft/sec, and secchi depth ranged from 5.5 to 9.5 ft. The types of substrate in the observed spawning areas are being analyzed and will be incorporated into a final report. Similarly, plankton samples collected downstream from the observed spawning events in the TFI (adjacent to Stebbins Island) are being processed to validate the visual observations of spawning and the downstream drift of eggs and larvae.

Blueback Herring

Together Blueback Herring and Alewife are known as river herring. Alewife use the lower portion of the Connecticut River, but rarely pass above the Holyoke Dam. Thus Blueback Herring is the only river herring found in the Project area (Hartel *et al*., 2002). Pre-spawning Blueback Herring enter the mouth of the Connecticut River at about the same time as American Shad. Blueback Herring broadcast spawn on hard substrate in swift-flowing tributaries to the lower Connecticut River. Presumably, some spawning also occurs in the mainstem Connecticut River, where swift-flowing habitats with hard substrate are available (Hartel *et al*., 2002). Females may produce 122,000 to 261,000 eggs; larger fish generally produce more eggs.

Blueback herring elsewhere have been reported to spawn in both swift-flowing, deeper stretches and in slower-flowing tributaries and flooded low-lying areas adjacent to the main stream; substrates may vary from coarse to fine materials (Pardue, 1983). Active spawning may occur over a wide range of water velocities. FirstLight (2012) identified that the uppermost segments of the reach below Cabot consist of riffle habitat with swift-flowing conditions, but swift-flowing runs are well distributed throughout the 30 mile reach downstream of Cabot tailrace evaluated in 2012, along with portions of the bypass reach below Turners Falls Dam. Most of the runs featuring the hard substrates (i.e. cobble gravel) can be found in the first 14 miles of river below the Cabot tailrace. Fines such as sand dominate the substrates in the remaining downstream reaches. Eggs are initially demersal, but become planktonic. Pardue (1983) reports that larvae in Chesapeake Bay remain near or slightly downstream of presumed spawning areas, and in Nova Scotia are associated with relatively shallow (<6.6 ft), sandy, warm areas in and near areas of observed spawning.

Assuming that suitable plankton and water quality exist downstream from Cabot Station, this reach should provide extensive suitable habitat for this species, especially in the transition area between cobble/gravel and finer substrates.

Juveniles remain in the river, feeding on zooplankton, until the fall of the year then emigrate to the sea (Collette & Klein-MacPhee, 2002). These characteristics of their development parallel those of American Shad and the young of the two species are difficult to distinguish. Juvenile Blueback Herring begin their seaward migration slightly earlier and at higher water temperatures (peaking at 14 to 15°C) than American Shad. Adult Blueback Herring spend three to six years at sea before returning to spawn in their natal streams. The average length of adults is less than 300 mm (Hartel *et al*., 2002).

Blueback Herring in the Connecticut River and coast-wide experienced a decline in the mid-1990s; however, the decline of Blueback Herring was much more dramatic than American Shad. Few Blueback Herring have been recorded in the Project Area since the late 1990's. Causes for the decline were thought to be similar to those listed for American Shad with offshore bycatch and predation by Striped Bass most likely accounting for the decline in the Connecticut River.

Blueback Herring are not an important sport or commercial species in the Connecticut River, although some are captured for use as bait in coastal fisheries, and they are harvested at sea for human consumption and animal feed.

A petition to list Blueback Herring as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq., ESA) was submitted to the NMFS on August 5, 2011 by the Natural Resources Defense Council. In its 90-day review of the 2011 Petition, NMFS concluded that the Petition presented substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted (76

FR 67652-67656), and initiated a status review for the species. Upon completion of the status review in August 2013, NMFS determined that listing was not warranted.

Striped Bass

Striped Bass is native to Atlantic coastal waters from the St. Lawrence River in Canada to the St. Johns River in Florida, moving into freshwater to spawn or feed. Major spawning areas include the Hudson River and tributaries to Chesapeake Bay, although spawning occurs in rivers from the Maritimes to the southeastern United States. They may grow to several feet in length and are highly predatory, feeding on a variety of fishes and invertebrates. Adult and juvenile striped bass in freshwater habitats feed largely on other fish, and have been shown to feed on river herring, American Shad, and American Eel. The recent declines in Connecticut River populations of these species (herring, shad, and eel) have been linked to the resurgence of the Atlantic coast Striped Bass population (Savoy & Crecco, 2004).

During the past decade Striped Bass have become abundant in the Connecticut River; over 5,700 Striped Bass have been passed into the Holyoke impoundment below the Turners Falls Development since 2000. From 1980 to 1999, Striped Bass were rarely noted at the upstream passage facilities at the Project. Striped bass spawning has not been documented in the Connecticut River.

A three year study supported by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) was begun in 2005 to assess the abundance, temporal and spatial distribution, and population structure of Alewife, Blueback Herring, and Striped Bass, and to describe predator/prey interactions between these species in the Connecticut River (Davis *et al*., 2009). The study found that Striped Bass predation is a large source of mortality for migrating adult Blueback Herring and it was estimated that over 200,000 herring were consumed by Striped Bass in the Connecticut River in May 2008.

Striped Bass supports recreational fishing in the Connecticut River. Commercial fishing is not permitted.

Sea Lamprey

Sea Lamprey is an anadromous species that spawns in the Connecticut River and its tributaries. Sea Lamprey spawn during the spring in shallow areas of moderate current with gravel, and rubble substrate. Subsequent to the larval stage, Sea Lamprey mature into ammocoetes, which burrow into soft sediments and exist as filter feeders, emerging from the sediment surface to feed. This stage lasts up to seven years; the ammocoetes then undergo a transformation into the parasitic adult phase and migrate to sea. Downstream migration occurs in both the spring and fall, but primarily in the spring. Pre- spawning adults create a depression in the substrate by carrying larger rocks out of the nest area and by sweeping smaller particles out using rapid body movements. The female then deposits eggs, fertilized by the male, moving more rocks and gravel as necessary. Spawning in one nest, or redd, may continue for 16 hours to 3.5 days. During the spawning run, adults undergo considerable physiological change and deterioration; they die after spawning.

During late spring and early summer 2015 (as part of Study No. 3.3.15 *Assessment of Adult Sea Lamprey Spawning within the Project Area*), the Licensee assessed spawning activity and habitat within the Project area utilizing radio telemetry techniques and visual surveys of identified redds. Forty (40) adult Sea Lamprey were collected downstream of the Project at the Holyoke Dam fish lift and implanted with radio tags. Their movements were subsequently tracked between the Mount Hermon School and Holyoke Project from June 3 to July 7, 2015. All radio frequencies were shared with TransCanada in the event that fish move from the Turners Falls Development into the Vernon Project vicinity. Analysis of tracking data is ongoing.

The adults parasitize other fish species, using a sucking disc and rasping teeth and tongue to attach to and penetrate the tissues of prey species. The sucking disc is also used during spawning to construct 1-3 foot diameter nests in the substrate. Similar to other anadromous species, Sea Lamprey do not feed during their upstream spawning migration and thus are not parasitic while in the river (Hartel *et al*., 2002).

Areas fitting the general description of Lamprey spawning habitat were inspected to find specific locations suitable for spawning based on substrate and depth; the presence or absence of actively spawning lamprey was noted. A total of 30 redds were GPS located in five (5) distinct regions of the project area as summarized in Table 3.3.3.1.2-3.

Five (5) of the 30 redds were capped using a 4 x 4 ft, weighted PVC framed collection net (1 mm mesh) that funneled into a collection jar on the downstream end in order to capture emerging larvae. Caps were deployed only after Sea Lamprey spawning was initially observed and revisited for multiple days to ensure lamprey were no longer actively spawning on the site. Caps remained in place for 14 to 21 days, at which point samples were collected in jars, fixed with formaldehyde and transported to the lab to be further analyzed. Spawning grounds within the project area were monitored from the time of Sea Lamprey arrival until water temperatures exceeded 22°C. All 30 redds were monitored over a range of conditions: observed changes to the habitat or redd quality were recorded.

The Sea Lamprey is not of recreational or commercial value in the Connecticut River.

American Eel

The American Eel is a catadromous species whose young enter estuarine or freshwater to feed and mature, and then the adults return to the sea to spawn. After spending five (5) to 20 years in fresh or coastal waters, eels migrate to spawning grounds located in the Sargasso Sea in the South Atlantic (Collette & Klein-MacPhee, 2002). Eggs are fertilized and released in the water column. The eggs and larvae are pelagic, drifting via the Florida current and the Gulf Stream to coastal North America and Europe. The young eels ultimately leave these currents and move shoreward and either reside in estuarine coastal waters or move into fresh water, following cues that are not well understood.

Eels moving into the estuaries are called glass eels because of their transparent appearance. Once they become pigmented they are referred to as elvers until they gain the yellow cast typical of eels. Eels may reside in an estuary throughout their entire life or move upstream in freshwater during the first few years. At maturation, the species undergoes another color change to the silver eel stage and migrates downstream, usually at night during fall.

In accordance with the FERC approved RSP (Study No. 3.3.4 *Evaluate Upstream Passage of American Eel*), the Licensee conducted a study during 2014 to determine the presence of eels as well as to identify areas where eels congregated or attempted to ascend wetted Project structures. Eleven (11) nighttime surveys were performed between June 11 and October 9, 2014. Several areas within the Project, including the Cabot Station discharge area and fishway, Station No. 1 discharge area, various canal discharge areas, the Turners Falls Dam and spillway fishway, were routinely surveyed and the approximate number of eels, the date and time, eel behavior, and the environmental conditions (e.g., weather, leakage, discharge) were recorded. The Turners Falls spillway fishway accounted for 94%, of the 6,263 total eels observed during the study period.

In 2015, FirstLight conducted the second year study, installing temporary eel passes at three locations as follows: in the spillway fishway; in the Cabot fishway; and at the Cabot emergency spillway. The temporary passes were constructed of ¾-in marine plywood with ramp sections approximately 24-in wide by 5-in tall and included plywood covers to prevent avian predation. Each ramp was fitted with two sizes of milieu-type substrate mounted side-by-side to pass eels of varying sizes. Three-foot tall plastic holding tanks were placed at the upper ends of the ramps to collect eels that successfully traversed the temporary passes. Two Medusa traps were deployed at the Station No. 1 discharge in July 2015 to monitor eels in that area. These traps were designed to passively collect juvenile eels seeking refuge and consisted of submerged 5-gallon buckets containing mop heads. The ramps and Medusa traps were operated continuously through October 2015 with collections quantified every 2-3 days. Recorded data included location, trapping interval, numbers of eels trapped, relative eel sizes, and hydraulic and environmental conditions during the trapping period. All eels collected were transported to and released in the TFI following processing. Data analyses are ongoing; results of the analyses will be included in the final report slated for completion by March 1, 2016.

The Licensee has also conducted a study to assess downstream passage of adult outmigrating silver American Eel (Study No. 3.3.5 *Evaluate Downstream Passage of American Eel*) to better understand migration timing as it relates to environmental factors and operations at the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development.

A combination of split beam sonar and a dual frequency identification sonar (DIDSON) was used to monitor entrainment and determine the timing, duration and magnitude of the downstream run through the project area from August 1 to October 31, 2015. The sonar equipment was deployed at the Northfield intakes, within the Turners Falls Canal, and in front of the Cabot Station intake. The sonar units collected data continuously throughout the duration of their deployment.

The Licensee has also assessed downstream passage of adult American Eel using radiotelemetry techniques at the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development beginning in late October 2015. The passage route studies required a large number of adult eel to achieve an adequate sample size (n=432). Because of a concern about the feasibility of collecting this quantity of eel within the Connecticut River drainage, the Licensee proposed and received agency approval to import adult eel from a commercial fishery in Newfoundland, Canada. A permit was issued for importation into the State of Massachusetts; the permit requires that the eels be determined to be pathogen-free before use in the Connecticut River studies.

The eels were examined to confirm that they were in the silver phase, the criterion being eye diameter measurements (e.g., eye diameter relative to body size - Pankhurst Index of approximately 6.5 or greater). Migration routes were assessed with the use of radiotelemetry techniques. Fixed receivers were located as indicated in Table 3.3.3.1.2-4; tagged eel were also tracked with mobile gear. Monitoring of tagged eels occurred until water temperatures reached 5 °C. Data analyses are ongoing and results will be included in the final report slated for completion in March 1, 2017 (for the second year study).

A petition to list American eel as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq., ESA) was submitted to the USFWS and NMFS on November 18, 2004. After initially finding that the petition presented substantial information indicating that listing the American eel may be warranted, the USFWS made a final determination in February, 2007 that listing of the eel under the ESA was not warranted. On April 30, 2010 the Council for Endangered Species Act Reliability submitted another petition to list American eels as threatened under ESA. Upon completion of this status review in October 2015, USFWS determined that listing was not warranted.

Shortnose Sturgeon

Shortnose Sturgeon is a federally listed endangered species that typically inhabits slow moving riverine waters or near shore marine waters and periodically migrates into faster moving fresh water areas to spawn. They are long-lived (30-40 years) and mature at late ages (5-10 years for males and 7-13 years for females) in the northern extent of their range (Dadswell *et al*., 1984). Shortnose Sturgeon exhibit three distinct movement patterns associated with spawning, feeding, and overwintering activities. In spring, as water temperatures rise above 8 ºC, pre-spawning Shortnose Sturgeon move from overwintering grounds to spawning areas. Spawning occurs from April to May and may last from a few days to several weeks depending upon water temperature. Shortnose Sturgeon spawning migrations are characterized by rapid, directed and often extensive upstream movement (NMFS, 1998). Female Shortnose Sturgeon are thought to spawn every three to five years while males spawn every two years. Fecundity estimates range from 27,000 to 208,000 eggs/female (Dadswell *et al*., 1984).

Sturgeon eggs become adhesive after fertilization and larvae begin downstream migrations at about 20-mm total length. Laboratory studies suggest that young sturgeon move downstream in two steps; a 2 to 3-day migration by larvae followed by a residency period by YOY, then a resumption of migration by yearlings in the second summer of life (Kynard, 1997).

Adults normally depart from their spawning grounds soon after spawning and movements include rapid, directed movements to downstream feeding areas in spring followed by local meandering in summer and fall (Dadswell *et al.*, 1984; Buckley & Kynard, 1985; O'Herron *et al*. 1993). Post-spawning migrations are associated with rising spring water temperature and river discharge (Kieffer & Kynard, 1993).

Historically in the Connecticut River, Turners Falls is believed to mark the extent of the upstream range of sturgeon due to the height of the natural falls. Completion of the downstream Holyoke Dam in 1849 blocked sturgeon from migrating beyond river mile 36. The first successful fishway to pass fish upstream, an elevator, was installed at the tailrace at Holyoke in 1955. In 1976, the existing tailrace fish lift at Holyoke was improved, and a lift was installed in the bypass area at the Holyoke Dam. These improvements allowed Shortnose Sturgeon to pass above Holyoke Dam and access the Connecticut River up to their historic limit at Turners Falls. Shortnose Sturgeon have not been observed in the Turners Falls fishways, and none have been observed or captured upstream of Turners Falls Dam.

During summer, the Shortnose Sturgeon population above Holyoke Dam congregates near the confluence of the Deerfield River; this group overwinters a few miles downstream from Cabot Station. The concentration area used by adult fish in the Connecticut River is in reaches where natural or artificial features cause a decrease in river flow, possibly creating suitable substrate conditions for freshwater mussels (Kieffer & Kynard, 1993), a major prey item for adult sturgeon (Dadswell *et al*., 1984). Both adults and juveniles have been found to use the same river reaches in the Connecticut River and have ranges of about 10 km during spring, summer and fall (Savoy, 1991; Seibel, 1991). In the winter, sturgeon move less than 2 km and assemble together in deep water (Seibel, 1991). The migration of juvenile and adult Shortnose Sturgeon from the Holyoke impoundment to points downstream of the Holyoke Dam appears to be a natural event coincidental with increased river discharges (Seibel, 1991; Kynard, 1997).

Shortnose Sturgeon in the upper river population spawn from the last week of April to mid-May, after the spring freshet (Taubert, 1980; Buckley & Kynard, 1985; Kynard, 1997). The spawning period is estimated to last from five to 17 days, occurring during the same 26-day period each year (April 27 – May 22) (NMFS, 2005). Shortnose Sturgeon are believed to spawn at discrete sites within the river (Kieffer & Kynard, 1993) in channel habitats containing gravel, rubble, or rock-cobble substrates (Dadswell *et al.*, 1984; NMFS, 1998). Additional environmental conditions associated with spawning activity include decreasing river discharge following the spring freshet, water temperatures ranging from 8 - 12ºC, and bottom water velocities of 0.4 to 0.7 m/sec (Dadswell *et al.*, 1984; NMFS, 1998).

Successful spawning has been documented at two sites in Montague (Vinogradov, 1997), just downstream of Cabot Station. These sites are just downstream of the species' historical limit in the Connecticut River at Turners Falls (RM 123) (NMFS, 2005). Sturgeon eggs and larvae were captured at the sites in 1993, 1994, and 1995 (Vinogradov, 1997). These sites are within the 0.9 mi reach from the natural rock formation called Rock Dam to 656 feet downstream of Cabot Station, where all common types of river habitat are present. Much of the river bottom in the area is rock and rubble. The 0.3-mi. long reach downstream of Cabot Station contains rubble/boulder shoals that can be exposed briefly in spring during low river discharge and low Cabot Station generation (Kieffer & Kynard, 2007).

Shortnose Sturgeon spawning in this area typically occurs from April to mid-May and the egg incubation period is about two weeks when water temperatures are between 8 and 12 °C. Upon hatching, larval Shortnose Sturgeon hide for about 12 days under available cover at the spawning site while absorbing the yolk-sac, before migrating downstream to deeper water between the mouth of the Deerfield River and Holyoke.

Upstream Passage

Upstream passage facilities for Connecticut River migratory fish are provided at a number of hydroelectric projects. Migrating fish first encounter the Holyoke Project (RM 87) where they are passed upstream through a fish lift. Turners Falls Dam is the second dam on the Connecticut, 37 mi upstream of Holyoke. The Deerfield River is a major tributary that enters the Connecticut River just downstream of Turners Falls Dam. Fish passing the Turners Falls Development (RM 122) can continue upstream migrating through the TFI, passing the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (RM 127) before encountering the Vernon Project (RM 142), 20 miles upstream of Turners Falls. Fish passage facilities at the Vernon Project allow migrants to continue upstream.

Upstream fish passage facilities began operating in 1980 at the Turners Falls Development pursuant to a Settlement Agreement signed by FirstLight's predecessor, Western Massachusetts Electric Company, state and federal resource agencies, and non-government organizations. There are three fish ladders at the Turners Falls Development: the Cabot fish ladder adjacent to Cabot Station; the Spillway fish ladder at Turners Falls Dam; and the Gatehouse fish ladder at the upstream end of the power canal. The Cabot and Spillway fish ladders are modified "ice harbor" designs and the Gatehouse fish ladder is a vertical slot ladder. These fish ladders were designed in consultation with state and federal resource agencies, based on Columbia River salmon fish ladder designs.

Fish ascending the Cabot Fishway enter the power canal, then pass through the Gatehouse Fishway into the TFI. Alternatively, they can swim through the bypass reach to the base of the Turners Falls Dam, ascend the Spillway Fishway, pass through the Gatehouse collection gallery that crosses the power canal, and enter the TFI through the Gatehouse Fishway, along with the fish passed through the Cabot Fishway.

As part of relicensing, FirstLight is conducting studies at the Spillway and Cabot fish ladder entrances (Study No. 3.3.9- *Computational Fluid Dynamics Modeling in the Vicinity of the Fishway Entrance and Powerhouse Forebays*). The study has not been completed as of the filing date of the Draft License Application, but will include analysis of velocities and depths in front of the fish ladder entrances under a range of flows and operating conditions. A separate CFD model and supporting report was developed for the Gatehouse fish ladder by Alden Research Laboratory in 2013 (Alden, 2013)[35], prior to initiation of the relicensing process.

Table 3.3.3.1.2-5 provides a summary of fish passage records for the Turners Falls fish passage facilities for the period of 1980 through 2014. The dates of peak passage have varied throughout the years, ranging from early to mid-May to mid to late June. American Shad and Sea Lamprey have been the dominant anadromous species observed at the passage facilities through the period of record. Substantial Blueback Herring passage was recorded for the 15-year period from 1983 to 1997, but few herring have been recorded since 1997. Use of the passage facilities by Atlantic Salmon has been low since most are collected downstream at Holyoke Dam; salmon were noted in 28 of the 31 years, but few individuals were recorded (1 – 29 annually). The 31-year period of record does not show any usage of the facilities by Shortnose Sturgeon.

Travel of adult American Shad through the TFI was studied from 1973 through 1976 (Layzer, 1976). During that time, 6,373 shad were transported to the TFI from the Holyoke Dam fish lift. Of those, 125 shad were tagged with ultrasonic transmitters and their movements were monitored. Most shad were found to exhibit one of four behavior patterns: 1) 45% of the tagged fish never migrated through the narrow turbulent area below the French King Bridge; 2) 18% remained within two miles of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace; 3) 21% migrated upstream passing the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace with little or no delay; and 4) 16% exhibited greater movement up and downstream than fish in the other groups including some movement up to Vernon Dam. Layzer (1976) reported that the distance traveled in the TFI was related to water temperature. Shad that were tracked displayed a preference

[35] The Alden, 2013 report was filed with FERC as Appendix F of the Revised Study Plan.

for deeper sections of the river. The Northfield tailrace had no clear effect on shad movement through the TFI. Some shad turned back upon reaching the Northfield tailrace both during operational and non-operational periods. Others milled at the Northfield tailrace; however, similar milling behavior occurred in other portions of the TFI outside the influence of the Project.

The ratio of American Shad passage at Holyoke Dam to the number that passed upstream toTurners Falls Dam Table 3.3.3.1.2-6 is low and except for 1991 was less than 10%. The areas between Holyoke Dam aand Turners Falls is a known spawning area for shad so many may have spawn belowTurners Falls and returned downstream. The Deerfield River is also below Turners Falls and shad may have entered the Deerfield River to spawn.

The ratio of American Shad passage at Vernon Dam to the number that passed upstream of Turners Falls Dam (Table 3.3.3.1.2-7) was highly variable but often high, with a mean of 41% for all years (when counts were available) and ranging to about 100% in some years (reported counts indicate ratios > 100% as a result of counting error). As a result of analysis of count data from several years and the 2011 cooperatively supported basin wide shad study conducted by USGS, it appeared that a passage bottleneck existed at Vernon Dam. Subsequent design improvements (repairs to baffles, silt removal, automating entrance elevation, etc.) to the Vernon ladder appeared to increase effectiveness in 2012 and thereafter.

Downstream Passage

Migratory fish in the TFI or entering the TFI after passing downstream of the Vernon Project migrate downstream through the Turners Falls Development and thence to the Holyoke Project as they return to the sea. These migratory fish include post-spawning adult and juvenile American Shad, Sea Lamprey, and adult American Eel. Other possible downstream migrants include Atlantic Salmon smolts and post-spawning adults, and post-spawning adult and juvenile Blueback Herring, and post-spawning and juvenile Striped Bass, but downstream passage of these three species would be uncommon as few adults have migrated upstream of the Turners Falls Development in recent years. Shortnose Sturgeon have not been recorded as passing upstream of the Project.

Fish passing downstream leave the TFI either by passing over the spillway at Turners Falls Dam to the bypass reach or by exiting through the Gatehouse into the power canal. Migrants entering the power canal have three avenues of outmigration: 1) Station No. 1 turbines, 2) Cabot turbines or 3) a log sluice adjacent to the Cabot Station.

From the power canal there is an approximate 700-foot-long by 100-foot-wide branch canal. At the end of the branch canal is the entrance to Station No. 1, consisting of eight bays, each 15 feet wide for a total intake width of 120 feet. Trashracks are mounted across the entire entrance, totaling 114 feet wide by 20.5 feet high. With a normal canal elevation of approximately 173.5 feet, the effective trashrack opening is approximately 114 feet wide by 15.9 feet high, resulting in a gross area of 1,813 square feet (ft^2). The bar thickness is 0.375 inches and the bars are 3 inches on center, thus the clear spacing between bars is 2.625 inches. At full hydraulic capacity (2,210 cfs), the velocity in front of the racks is approximately 1.2 feet/second. After passing the trashrack, the intakes narrow down to four individual 13'-1.5" diameter penstocks feeding the original seven horizontal Francis turbines housed in the powerhouse. Only five of the turbines are operational. Due to the lack of data on downstream passage at Station No. 1, the Licensee is conducting a turbine passage mortality study with juvenile American Shad (Study No. 3.3.3 *Evaluate Downstream Passage of Juvenile American Shad*) and adult American Eel (Study No. 3.3.5 *Evaluate Downstream Passage of American Eel*) in fall 2015. FirstLight is also conducting a study to evaluate velocities in front of the Station No. 1 and Cabot racks (Study No. 3.3.8 *Computational Fluid Dynamics Modeling in the Vicinity of the Fishway Entrances and Powerhouse Forebays*). The CFD modeling in front of the Station No. 1 racks will provide a better approximation of the intake velocity approximately one foot in front of the racks under a range of operating conditions. The downstream juvenile shad study report is slated for completion by September 1, 2016, and the downstream eel shad study report is slated for March 1, 2017 (second year of study).

The Cabot Station intake is 217 feet wide by 31 feet high, resulting in a gross area of 6,727 ft^2. At maximum hydraulic capacity of 13,728 cfs, the intake velocity immediately in front of the racks is approximately 2.0 feet/sec. The trashracks are angled from the vertical, and include upper and lower racks. The top 11 feet of the upper racks have clear bar spacing of 0.94 inches (15/16-inch, and the bottom 7 feet of the upper racks have clear bar spacing of 5 inches. The entire 13 feet of the lower racks have clear bar spacing of 5 inches. After passing through the trashracks, flow is conveyed through one of six penstocks to turbines housed in the powerhouse. Again, the CFD modeling will be used to refine the velocity approximation in front of the racks under a range of operating conditions. The CFD modeling report is slated for completion by December 1, 2015.

Downstream fish passage facilities at Cabot Station were designed and constructed in consultation with regulatory agencies and include reduced bar-spacing in the upper 11 feet of the intake racks; a broad-crested weir developed specifically to enhance fish passage at the log sluice; the log sluice itself, which has been resurfaced to provide a smooth passage route; above-water lighting; and a sampling facility in the sluice.

The log sluice adjacent to the Cabot Station intake racks is operated for downstream passage of Atlantic Salmon smolts, American Shad, and American Eel according to a schedule recommended by CRASC, with closures during periods of high flow to reduce erosion near the sluice discharge, and for intake rack maintenance as necessary. Under current guidelines, the sluice is operated 24 hrs/day from April 1 through November 15 annually: from April 1 through June 15 for the downstream passage of Atlantic Salmon smolts; from April 7 through July 31 for adult American Shad; from August 1 through November 15 for juvenile American Shad; and from September 1 through November 15 for adult American Eel.

Historical studies that investigated downstream passage of Atlantic Salmon smolts and juvenile Clupeids (Harza & RMC 1992a, 1992b, 1994a, 1994b; Nguyen & Hecker, 1992; NUSCO 1994, 1995, 1998a, 1998b; RMC 1994, 1995) indicated that 90% of juvenile Clupeids that entered the power canal exited through the log sluice. Similarly, 73-90% of salmon smolts utilized the downstream passage facilities at Cabot; the majority of American Eels passed through the turbines (Brown, 2005).

3.3.3.2 <u>Environmental Effects</u>

Several issues pertaining to fish and aquatic resources were identified in the scoping process for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and Turners Falls Development. In SD2, the following issues were identified:

- Effects of project operations and maintenance (including fluctuations in water levels, and downstream releases) on aquatic habitat and resources in the projects' vicinity (e.g., resident and migratory fish populations; fish spawning, rearing, feeding, and overwintering habitats; mussels and habitat).
- Effects of project facilities and operations, (including reservoir fluctuations, and generation releases) on fish migration through and within project fishways, canals, bypassed reaches, reservoirs, and the downstream riverine corridors.
- Effects of entrainment on fish.

3.3.3.2.1 Effect of Project Operations

Habitat Assessment

The Connecticut River and its tributaries in the Turners Falls Development area and in downstream reaches are composed of a variety of habitats for aquatic vegetation and for game and non-game fish species, including Spottail Shiner, White Sucker, Yellow Perch, Smallmouth Bass, Bluegill, Fallfish, Rock Bass, Pumpkinseed, Tessellated Darter, Walleye, Common Shiner, American Eel, Largemouth Bass, Golden Shiner, Black Crappie, Channel Catfish, Brown Bullhead, Common Carp, Chain Pickerel, Sea Lamprey, Mimic Shiner, Northern Pike, American Shad and other important minnow and forage species.

Turners Falls Impoundment

The Licensee has undertaken a study, in accordance with the approved RSP, to determine the types of aquatic habitats present within the TFI, and the distribution and abundance of those habitats (Section 3.3.3.1), and to identify any potential effects of operations of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development on those habitats.

The upstream reach of the TFI, extending from Vernon Dam tailrace to the Northfield Mountain tailwater, is located within a broad flood plain and is relatively uniform and generally shallow, with gentle bends. There are a few narrow islands comprised of alluvial materials such as gravel, cobble and fines.

The downstream reach from the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace approximately five miles downstream to the Turners Falls Dam is dominated by bedrock, which controls much of the stream geometry and substrate features. The lower reach impoundment geometry is complex. It is defined by both bedrock and depositional features, and includes a complex of embayment, points, coves, islands, and a wide range of substrates, and features shallow lacustrine littoral habitat with a deeply incised thalweg, in contrast to the riverine habitat in the upper reaches.

Data analyses remain ongoing to determine potential impacts of water level fluctuations on aquatic resources in the TFI; a report was previously filed with FERC on September 14, 2015; however, the impact of water level fluctuations still remains.

Bypass Reach and below Cabot Station

The Licensee has conducted instream flow studies in the following locations: a) in the bypass reach from the Turners Falls Dam to the Montague USGS Gage, and b) from the USGS Gage to the Sunderland Bridge (below Cabot Station). In addition, in the reach between the Sunderland Bridge and the Dinosaur Footprints Reservation, a habitat assessment will be conducted on state or federally listed mussels.

Aquatic habitat suitability was evaluated using techniques described in the Instream Flow Incremental Methodology (IFIM) developed by the National Ecology Research Center of the National Biological Survey (Bovee, 1982; Bovee, *et al*., 1998; Milhous *et al*. 1989). These techniques included standard field procedures and Physical Habitat Simulation (PHABSIM) modeling. The IFIM quantifies habitat for selected species over a range of flows using habitat suitability index (HSI) criteria that are based on depth, velocity and substrate

The study reaches identified in consultation with stakeholders were:

- Reach 1: Turners Falls Dam downstream to the tailrace of Station Number 1 (~0.75 miles)
- Reach 2: Tailrace of Station Number 1 downstream to Rock Dam (~1 mile)
- Reach 3: Rock Dam downstream to the confluence with the Deerfield River (including Cabot tailrace) near the Montague USGS stream flow gage (~1.5 miles)
- Reach 4: USGS Montague Gage downstream to Route 116 in Sunderland, MA (~9 miles)
- Reach 5: Sunderland Bridge downstream to Dinosaur Footprint Park (~22 miles)

Based on the results of literature reviews and consultation with stakeholders, HSI criteria were established for multiple life stages of American Shad, Shortnose Sturgeon, White Sucker, Fallfish, Longnose Dace, Tessellated Darter, benthic macroinvertebrates, and the following habitat use fish guilds: shallow-slow, shallow-fast, deep-slow, and deep-fast.

In Reach 1 and Reach 2, a one-dimensional model was developed to predict changes in depth and velocity as discharge varies. In addition, a two-dimensional model was developed to simulate hydraulics in the lowermost extreme of Reach 2, and also Reach 3 (the vicinity of the Cabot Station tailrace, from the upstream end of Rawson Island downstream to just below the Deerfield River confluence). Data collected to calibrate the model, included hydraulic data, bed profiles, substrate and cover data, and velocity/current data. Reach 4 will be modeled using the one-dimensional model approach. Field data collection for Reach

4 was completed in September 2015 and the results of the instream flow studies will be included in a final report slated for completion by September 1, 2016.

Tributary Streams

The Licensee performed systematic surveys in the spring, summer, and fall of 2014 to assess the effects of operations of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development on tributary and backwater area habitat and access to that habitat under a range of hydrologic conditions. The confluences of the Connecticut River with 19 tributaries located between Vernon Dam and the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland, MA were surveyed to determine if water level fluctuations from the operation of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Developments resulted in reductions of available aquatic habitat. Potential barriers to migration/movement were observed at three of the 19 tributaries, namely Merriam Brook, Pine Meadow Brook, and Fourmile Brook; however, it appeared that the barriers were attributable to natural phenomena, such as woody debris accumulation, sediment deposition, or seasonal flow characteristics, rather than to project-related water level fluctuations. As the observed barriers appeared temporary and localized, it appears that project operations do not substantially impact access to and habitat within the tributaries. The tributary access report was filed on September 14, 2015 as part of the Updated Study Report filing.

Power Canal

While typical Project operations do not materially affect water levels in the power canal, the Licensee performs week-long annual canal drawdowns to facilitate inspections and maintenance, typically during late September or early October. As requested by stakeholders, a field survey was conducted in the lower portion of the canal during the 2014 drawdown to gain an understanding of the effects of the drawdown on aquatic species. Since the upper portion of the canal remains wetted for the duration of the outage, the aquatic species survey was performed only in the lower portion of the canal, where it begins to widen along Migratory Way. The topography of the lower portion of the canal varies with large areas of silt deposits, areas of exposed bedrock, and areas with fines and cobble.

A survey was performed in the soft sediments in the lower portion of the Turners Falls Canal during the 2014 drawdown to document the presence of ammocoetes and to determine if the annual drawdown of the canal exposés Sea Lamprey burrowing substrate. Thirty-two 1 m x 1 m quadrats were sited within soft sediments and systematically searched for the presence of lamprey ammocoetes. The quadrat sampling was performed on the day immediately following the release of water from the canal (initial survey), as well as the day prior to rewatering. Of the 64 quadrats sampled (32 during initial survey and 32 during day-prior-to-rewatering survey), only 11 ammocoetes and one transformer (individuals transitioning from ammocoete to juvenile stage) were identified, all of which were alive. The lamprey specimens were all found buried in the substrate, which likely serves to prevent desiccation and support survival until the canal is refilled.

In addition to lamprey ammocoetes, quadrat sampling identified mudpuppies and two species of mussels, Eastern Elliptio and Alewife Floaters. Almost all of the mussels found were Eastern Elliptio (n=534); only one Alewife Floater was observed. Mussels tended to be concentrated at sites proximal to the canal’s thalweg. All mussels observed during the sampling events were alive, and 2 of the 3 mudpuppies observed were dead.

Twenty-two fish and one amphibian species were observed in the pools. Spottail Shiner, Tessellated Darter, and juvenile American Shad were the most abundant fish species observed. All fishes captured in the pools were alive at the time of collection, suggesting that observed mortalities at the time of sample processing were likely due to handling and temporary holding associated with sampling.

Based on results of the 2014 sampling effort, it appears that the annual drawdown has little effect on Connecticut River aquatic species. As the canal drawdown is initiated, the turbine bays at Cabot Station and Station No. 1, as well as various gates within the canal allow egress for fish. Canal geometry is such that the upper portion of the canal remains wetted for the duration of the drawdown, and Keith's Tunnel is open with substantial flow through it during the duration of the drawdown. This area provides a refuge area for fishes that remain following the release of water from the lower canal. In addition, a series of pools remain in the lower portion of the canal that provide wetted habitat for fishes and mussels that remain trapped within the canal for the week-long drawdown. Although the size of some of the pools decreased over the course of the week spanning the drawdown, some of the pools were observed to be hydraulically connected and allowed fish to progress downstream towards a larger pool that remains upstream of the Cabot intakes. In general, few stranded fish (including lamprey ammocoetes/transformers) were observed, suggesting minor impacts to fish species, and the absence of freshly dead mussels suggests that the drawdown did not adversely affect Connecticut River mussel populations.

The Canal Drawdown report (Study No. 3.3.18) was filed with in September 2014.

Migratory Fish

Several studies are being conducted to specifically examine potential effects of Project operation on migratory fish.

<u>American Shad</u>

A number of studies addressed American shad in Project area. These include Study 3.3.2 Evaluation of upstream and downstream passage of adults, Study 3.3.3 Evaluation of juveniles, Study 3.3.6 Impact of Project Operations on Shad Spawning, Spawning Habitat and Egg Deposition in the Area of the Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls Projects, and Study 3.3.20 American shad ichthyoplankton entrainment assessment at Northfield. Data analysis for these studies remains ongoing and results will be included in a final reports. The report for Study 3.3.2 Evaluation of upstream and downstream passage of adults is slated for completion by September 1, 2016. Study Report 3.3.3 Evaluation of juveniles is proposed to be final September 1, 2016. The final report for Study 3.3.6 Impact of Project Operations on Shad Spawning Habitat and Egg Deposition in the Area of the Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls Projects is proposed to be completed March 1, 2016. Study 3.3.20 American shad ichthyoplankton entrainment assessment at Northfield final report is slated for completion by March 1, 2016.

<u>Sea Lamprey</u>

The Licensee identified spawning locations within the project area and monitored redds in 2015 to assess whether operations of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development potentially impact these spawning areas. These data will be considered in conjunction with the hydraulic model and IFIM results to determine if project-induced flow alterations adversely affect Sea Lamprey spawning in the project area. The analysis is ongoing and results will be included in a final report slated for completion by March 1, 2016.

<u>Shortnose Sturgeon</u>

In support of relicensing, the Licensee committed to a study to assess the impact of sediment disturbance and excessive velocities resulting from emergency water control gate discharge and bypass flume spill events on Shortnose Sturgeon spawning and incubation habitat in the Cabot Station tailrace and downstream areas. The goal of this study is to determine the frequency of spill events during sturgeon spawning, and, if deemed necessary, determine appropriate protocols for operation of the emergency water control gates and bypass flume. The purpose of the protocols would be to protect sturgeon spawning and rearing areas below Cabot Station from excessive water velocities and exposure to transported sediments.

The Licensee is developing a two-dimensional model to define critical flow resulting in sedimentation/scour or potential adverse impacts to sturgeon spawning below Cabot. The report for Study 3.3.12 was previously filed with FERC in September 2014. In conjunction with sediment mapping (Study No. 3.3.1), the model will be used to assess the potential for sediment impacts to the sturgeon spawning areas or other areas of concern. The previously filed report will be updated to include the sediment impacts as noted and is slated to be filed by Mach 1, 2016. A draft biological assessment will be filed with FERC once the impact analysis is completed.

3.3.3.2.2 Effect on Fish Passage

The Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development may have effects on migratory fish. Upstream migrants that have successfully passed the Holyoke Project encounter and attempt to pass the structures at the Turners Falls Development. Similarly, downstream migrants also encounter these structures as they return to the sea. While the Northfield Mountain Project intake structure does not physically impede migrants passing upstream in the TFI, currents and velocities resulting from pumping and generating may affect migrants.

American Shad

The Licensee conducted a study, in accordance with the approved study plan, to evaluate the upstream and downstream passage of adult American Shad at the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. The purpose of the study was to assess effectiveness of existing fish passage facilities at Turners Falls Development, evaluate routes of upstream and downstream passage through the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, and evaluate the effects of operation of the projects on upstream and downstream shad migrants.

A combination of active and passive telemetry techniques were employed to assess impacts of the Project on adult shad migrating upstream. In total, 793 adult American Shad were collected, tagged and released in the Project area during May and June 2015. The upstream passage of the tagged fish was monitored at fixed stations within the Project area, as well as mobile tracked from Mount Hermon School and the Holyoke Project from May through early July. The report for the adult shad passage study is slated for completion by September 1, 2016.

A study conducted from 1973 through 1976 (Layzer, 1976) indicated that the Northfield tailrace had no clear effect on shad movement through the impoundment. . During that time, 6,373 shad were transported to the TFI from the Holyoke Dam fish lift. Of those, 125 shad were tagged with ultrasonic transmitters and their movements were monitored. Most shad were found to exhibit one of four behavior patterns: 1) 45% of the tagged fish never migrated through the narrow turbulent area below the French King Bridge (RM 126); 2) 18% remained within two miles of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace; 3) 21% migrated upstream passing the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace with little or no delay; and 4) 16% exhibited greater movement up and downstream than fish in the other groups including some movement up to Vernon Dam. Layzer (1976) reported that the distance traveled in the TFI was related to water temperature. Shad that were tracked displayed a preference for deeper sections of the river.

In addition to studies by the Licensee the USFWS Connecticut River Coordinator and CRASC have recently released radio tagged adult shad at various points in the river and tracked their movements from the release point to Vernon Dam. Results from that study will be available once data analysis has been completed.

To assess any effect of the Project on outmigrating juvenile American Shad, the Licensee evaluated the timing, duration, and magnitude of juvenile outmigration during fall of 2015 using hydroacoustics (split beam sonar) equipment that was installed at the Northfield Mountain intakes, Turners Falls Canal, and Cabot Station. Radio telemetry was used to evaluate route selection as juveniles migrated downstream past the Northfield Mountain intakes and Turners Falls Development. External radio transmitters (Lotek NanoTag Series model NTQ – 1) were affixed to 224 juvenile American Shad and their movements through the project area were tracked.

American Eel

Currently, there are no passage facilities for American Eel at the Turners Falls Development although some young eels apparently enter the TFI by ascending the fishways or other wetted structures associated with the Project.

In accordance with the FERC approved RSP, the Licensee conducted a study during the 2014 upstream eel migration season to identify and assess potential locations for upstream eel passage at the Turners Falls Development. The objectives of the study were to identify areas where eels congregated or attempted to ascend wetted structures, to assess whether eels could be passed in substantial numbers, and to identify sites for permanent eel passage structures. Eleven nighttime surveys were performed between June 11 and October 9, 2014. Several areas within the Project, including the Cabot Station discharge area and fishway, Station No. 1 discharge area, various canal discharge areas, and the Turners Falls Dam and spillway fishway were routinely surveyed and the approximate number of eels, the date and time, eel behavior, and the environmental conditions (e.g., weather, leakage, discharge) were recorded. Turners Falls Spillway Fishway accounted for 94%, of the 6,263 eels observed during the study period.

Temporary eel passes were installed in 2015 at the spillway fishway, Cabot fishway, and the emergency spillway at Cabot to quantify the eel passage at the project and to help select a location or locations for permanent passage structures. In addition, two Medusa traps were deployed at the Station 1 discharge in July 2015 to monitor eels attempting to migrate up through Station 1. The traps consist of mop heads contained within submerged perforated 5-gallon buckets, designed to passively collect juvenile eels seeking refuge. The temporary passes and Medusa traps are being monitored through the end of October, with data analyses and a final report to be completed.

In addition to evaluating upstream passage at the Turners Falls Development, the Licensee has conducted a study to assess downstream passage of outmigrating silver American Eels relative to environmental factors and operations of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. A combination of split beam sonar and dual frequency identification sonar (DIDSON) was used to monitor eel entrainment and movement and through the project area from August 1 to October 31, 2015. The split beam sonar equipment was deployed at the Northfield intakes, within the Turners Falls Canal, and in front of the Cabot Station intake. Both the DIDSONs and the split beam sonar collected data continually throughout the duration of their deployment.

The downstream fish bypass at Cabot Station was sampled on twelve to 18 nights in September and October to ground-truth the hydroacoustic data and compare the percent of eels passing via the Cabot log sluice and Cabot StationAnalysis of these will be included in a final report.

In addition to assessing migration timing, the Licensee assessed the routes selected during downstream passage and the entrainment survival of adult American Eel using radiotelemetry techniques at the Turners Falls and NMPS Projects, beginning in October 2015. Fixed radio receivers were located as indicated in Table 3.3.3.2.2-1 and tagged individuals were mobile-tracked as well. The movements of tagged eels were monitored until water temperature had declined to 5°C.

The passage route and survival studies required a large number of adult eel to achieve an adequate sample size (n=432). There was concern that collecting this quantity of eel within the Connecticut River drainage might not be achievable. For that reason, the Licensee proposed and received agency approval to import silver eel from a commercial fishery in Newfoundland, Canada. A permit was issued for importation into the State of Massachusetts; the permit required a quarantine inspection to ensure that eels for use in the Connecticut River studies would be pathogen-free. The eye diameter and length of the study eels were measured to confirm that they were in the silver phase (i.e.., eye diameter relative to body size - Pankhurst Index of approximately 6.5 or greater). Analysis of the data collected during this study will be incorporated in the final report slated for completion by March 1, 2016 (for the first year of study).

3.3.3.2.3 Entrainment

Resident and migratory fish in the TFI may be subject to entrainment and turbine passage. At the Turners Falls Development, downstream migrants may pass through the turbines at Station No. 1 or Cabot Station. At the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, fish entrained during pump-back pass through the intake/discharge tunnel and turbine(s) before being discharged to the upper reservoir. Any fish entrained in the upper reservoir intakes during hydropower generation pass through the turbine(s) and intake/discharge tunnel and then are discharged to the TFI. Features that determine the likelihood of entrainment include the velocity at the intakes, and the fish species and habitat available in the area.

As fish pass through the turbines at the two projects, mortality may occur due to collision of individual fish with blades, wicket gates, or vanes, shear forces, and/or pressure changes. Turbine passage mortality of resident fish was assessed in studies approved by FERC and by using empirically validated blade strike models to estimate potential mortality (Franke *et al.*, 1997). Field studies of adult American Eel and juvenile American Shad are being used to supplement the blade strike analyses. Both the analysis of data from the field studies and the blade-strike analyses will be incorporated in the final report.

Resident Fish

Some resident fish species in the Turners Falls Development area may be subject to entrainment at Cabot, Station Number 1, or the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development (during pumpback). A qualitative scale of entrainment potential ranging from “Low” to “High” was developed for each resident fish species which were documented in the TFI during the baseline fish assemblage assessment

Migratory Fish

American Shad

An evaluation of entrainment of shad eggs and larvae at Northfield Mountain was performed by the Licensee from May 28 through July 17, 2015. During pump-back operations (including 1, 2, 3, and 4 pump operations), which typically occurs during the night, service water was diverted through an ichthyoplankton sampler equipped with a 0.5 m diameter, 0.333 mm mesh plankton net to collect eggs and larvae. The objective was to filter approximately 100 m3 of intake water per sample, which allowed two samples to be collected on the nights of sampling. Samples were preserved with a 10% formalin solution and processed in a laboratory with the aid of a dissecting scope. Once the samples are sorted, American Shad eggs and larvae will be enumerated; the number of eggs and larvae collected per volume of water sampled (sample density) will be used to estimate weekly entrainment by multiplying that ratio by the volume of water pumped during the week. The weekly estimates will be summed to approximate seasonal entrainment of shad eggs and larvae. Further, the estimated numbers of eggs and larvae entrained will be converted into the number of equivalent adults by applying published survival fractions for a given life stage. Sample densities will also be compared to the densities of shad eggs and larvae in the river. Laboratory processing of the ichthyoplankton samples and data analyses are ongoing and a final report will be completed.

Impacts to adult shad migrations were assessed by a telemetry study employing radio and passive integrated transponder (PIT) technologies to assess behavior, approach routes, passage success, survival, and delay by adult American Shad as they encounter the Turners Falls Development during downstream passage and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development during both upstream and downstream migration. Analyses of these data will be incorporated in the final report slated for completion by March 1, 2016.

Impacts to juvenile shad outmigration at the projects were evaluated using a combination of methodologies and technologies including: hydroacoustics, radio telemetry and HI-Z Turb’N tags. Analyses of these data will be incorporated in the final report slated for completion by March 1, 2016.

Atlantic Salmon

Entrainment studies have been conducted at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development to evaluate and mitigate the impacts of the operations on Atlantic Salmon smolts. The studies determined that an estimated 28.6% of Atlantic Salmon were entrained (NUSCO, 1999; LMS, 1993a; LMS 1993b).

In an effort to mitigate entrainment of Atlantic Salmon smolts, a fixed-position guide net was installed annually beginning in 1995 to reduce entrainment of Atlantic Salmon smolts at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. After an evaluation of the net returned encouraging results, field testing of modified netting configurations was completed in 1996 and 1997. A radio telemetry study was conducted in 1999 to determine the guidance efficiency of the net (NUSCO, 1999). A limited number of 6.7% radio-tagged smolts became entrained at Northfield Mountain. Fourteen migrating smolts (not radio tagged) became entangled in the net. Results also indicated that radio-tagged smolts moved quickly along the net.

Following the 1999 testing, the fixed-position guide net to reduce Atlantic Salmon smolt entrainment has been deployed annually. The net is typically installed in mid-to-late-April after the spring freshet. Portions of the net occasionally need to be repaired or replaced because of damage due to debris. Due to cessation of the Atlantic Salmon restoration program in the Connecticut River, the Licensee plans to discontinue deploying the guide net.

American Eel

Entrainment of outmigrating adult American Eel at Northfield Mountain was estimated through radio telemetry studies. A total of 72 tagged eels were released 3km upstream of Northfield just before pumping began. In addition turbine and dam passage survival evaluations were conducted by the Licensee in the fall of 2015. HI-Z Turb'N tags were used to evaluate passage survival of 300 adult eels were injected into the turbines of Station No 1 and Cabot Station, as well as into spill over the Turners Falls Dam. Analyses will be included in a final report slated for completion by March 1, 2017 (for the second year of study).

Cumulative Effects

This section will be developed following completion of the data analyses and reporting for the ongoing studies.

3.3.3.3 Proposed Environmental Measures

The number of shad passing through the Turners Falls fishways from 1980 through 1998 did not meet agency goals. FirstLight's predecessor received a letter from USFWS in 1998 requesting discussion of potential structural and operational fishway improvements. FirstLight responded with a five-year plan written in consultation with USFWS and other members of CRASC to evaluate shad passage and develop concepts for fishway enhancements as appropriate. To that end, FirstLight and its predecessor have supported evaluation of the Cabot and gatehouse fishways conducted by researchers from the Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center (CAFRC).

Evaluation of the Cabot Fishway was conducted from 1999 through 2005. Various modifications of the weirs within sections of the Fishway were evaluated, including some that were the result of a physical hydraulic model of fishway pools constructed at CAFRC (Noreika & Haro, 2005). Although some of the modifications in selected sections of the Fishway produced marginal improvements in passage, none appeared likely to result in significant increases in overall shad passage. Evaluation was discontinued in 2005, and in consultation with representatives of CRASC designs were developed for a fish lift to replace the existing Cabot Fishway. Conceptual fish lift plans were developed and reviewed with the agencies but further design was put on hold pending relicensing evaluations.

A new Gatehouse Fishway entrance was constructed in 2007 after several years of evaluation and testing of a prototype structure (CAFRC, 2005). The new entrance includes a 70-foot-long flume built on the side of the canal opposite the original entrance. The flume joins the existing entrance gallery near the Spillway ladder exit. One of the two remaining Gatehouse Fishway entrances was closed to assure adequate flow through the new entrance and the spillway ladder. Starting in 2008, biologists from the CRASC have evaluated shad passage through the new entrance. Results of these evaluations and review of shad counts conducted by FirstLight have demonstrated that shad successfully pass through the new entrance flume, and have also led to modifications implemented since operation of the new entrance was initiated. These improvements have included the installation of flow controls within the Fishway entrance gallery, modification of canal operating protocols, relocation of water level sensors, and installation of a temporary rock ramp from the bottom of the canal to the original entrance (the ramp in no longer in place).

Currently, shad appear to pass readily through the new entrance, but not through the original entrance. Flow control changes intended to ensure adequate flow through the new entrance and to the Spillway Fishway have resulted in excessive velocity and turbulence at the original entrance that may be inhibiting shad passage.

Additional measures may be developed following completion of the data analyses and reporting for the ongoing studies.

3.3.3.4 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

This section will be developed following completion of the data analyses and reporting for the ongoing studies.

Table 3.3.3.1-1: Relative Abundance of Littoral Zone Habitat Identified in the TFI

Habitat Type	Length (ft)	Length (miles)	% of Total
Fines	53,715	10.2	29%
Cobble	39,115	7.4	21%
Bedrock	30,850	5.8	17%
Gravel	30,555	5.8	16%
Riprap	12,945	2.5	7%
Fines / Cobble Patch	10,895	2.1	6%
Wetlands	7,045	1.3	4%
Boulder / Cobble Patch	1,260	0.2	1%

Table 3.3.3.1.1-1: Observed Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

Common Name	Scientific Name
Pondweed	*Potamogeton ssp.*
Milfoil	*Myriophylum spp.*
Coontail	*Ceratophyllum demersum*
Wild celery (Eelgrass)	*Vallisneria americana*
Clasping leaf pondweed	*Potamogeton perfoliatus*
Waterweed	*Elodea nuttallii*
Eurasian milfoil	*Myriophyllum spicatum**
Muskgrass	*Chara ssp.*
Fanwort	*Cabomba caroliniana**
Large leaf pondweed	*Potamogeton amplifolius*
Variable leaf milfoil	*Myriophylum heterophyllum**
Water chestnut	*Trapa natans**
Curly-leaved pondweed	*Potomageton crispus**

*Exotic Species

Table 3.3.3.1.2-1: Fish Species Collected in the Turners Falls Impoundment During July 2015 Effort for the Fish Assemblage Survey

Species listed in declining order of numeric abundance (provisional information).

Common Name	Scientific Name
Spottail Shiner	*Notropis hudsonius*
White Sucker	*Catostomus commersoni*
Yellow Perch	*Perca flavescens*
Smallmouth Bass	*Micropterus dolomieu*
Bluegill	*Lepomis macrochirus*
Fallfish	*Semotilus corporalis*
Rock Bass	*Ambloplites rupestris*
Pumpkinseed	*Lepomis gibbosus*
Tessellated Darter	*Etheostoma olmstedi*
Walleye	*Sander vitreus*
Common Shiner	*Luxilus cornutus*
American Eel	*Anguilla rostrata*
Largemouth Bass	*Micropterus salmoides*
Golden Shiner	*Notemigonus crysoleucas*
Black Crappie	*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*
Channel Catfish	*Ictlurus punctatus*
Brown Bullhead	*Ameiurus nebulosus*
Common Carp	*Cyprinus carpio*
Chain Pickerel	*Esox niger*
Sea Lamprey	*Petromyzon marinus*
Mimic Shiner	*Notropis volucellus*
Northern Pike	*Esox lucius*
American Shad	*Alosa sapidissima*

Table 3.3.3.1.2-2: Summary of Spawning Information for Resident Species Obtained from Desktop Literature Review

Common Name	Spawning Strategy	Notes	Spawning Period	Temperature Range
Yellow Perch	Broadcast spawn in shallow weedy areas	Eggs adhesive, no guardianship	April and May	6.7-12.2°C
Pumpkinseed	Nest scoured in sand/fines	Male adult guardianship	late spring to mid-summer	20°C
Smallmouth Bass	Sand/gravel nest near object cover	Male adult guardianship	late spring to early summer	16.1-18.3°C
Largemouth Bass	Sand/fines nest near object cover	Male adult guardianship	Mid-spring to early summer	16.7-18.3°C
Bluegill	Sand/fines nest	Male adult guardianship	Mid-May to mid-summer	17 -31°C
Spottail Shiner	Broadcast spawn on sand at mouths of streams	No guardianship	May to mid-June	
White Sucker	Gravel bars in tributary or shoals	No guardianship	Mid-April to May	10°C
Walleye	Cobble riffle or shoals	Broadcast spawn, no guardianship	April	7-11°C
Golden Shiner	Submerged vegetation in shallow water	Broadcast spawn, eggs are adhesive, no guardianship	May to August	20°C
Black Crappie	Nest scoured in sand/fines	Male adult guardianship	Mid-spring to early summer	19-20°C
White Perch	Broadcast spawn	Eggs planktonic	Mid-spring	11-15°C
Rock Bass	Sand/gravel nest near object cover	Male adult guardianship	June	15.6-21.1°C
Brown Bullhead	Sand/fines nest	Male adult guardianship	Late May through June	21.1°C
Chain Pickerel	Broadcast spawn glutinous egg strings in marshes	Eggs adhesive, no guardianship	March to May	8.3-11.1°C
Fallfish	Gravel in low velocity stream margins	Nest builder, no guardianship	Late April through May	12-16.6°C
Common Carp	Shallow vegetation	Broadcast spawn, no guardianship	Late spring to late summer	

Table 3.3.3.1.2-3: Locations of Monitored Sea Lamprey Redds in Project Area

Location	Number of redds monitored	Number of capped redds
Connecticut River mainstem within close proximity of Vernon Dam (both sides of Stebbins Island)	7	1
Ashuelot River confluence with the Connecticut River	11	1
Millers River confluence with the Connecticut River	5	1
Fall River confluence with the Connecticut River	2	1
Hatfield S curve below Rt. 116 Bridge	5	1
Total	30	5

Table 3.3.3.1.2-4: Location and Types of Telemetry Equipment Used to Evaluate Silver Eel Emigration at the Turners Falls and NMPS Projects, Turners Falls and Northfield MA

Location	RM	Receiver Station
Montague Wastewater	119.5	A Lotek SRX receiver with double yagi antennae will monitor the full width of the River
Cabot Station Tailrace	120	A Lotek SRX with yagi antenna will monitor the full river width. An Orion receiver and double yagi antennae will monitor the tailrace immediately downstream of the station.
Cabot Station Forebay	120	Two radio receivers will monitor the forebay area: 1) An Orion with double yagi and dropper antennae will monitor the full width of the forebay area 2) An Orion with dipole antenna will monitor the entrance to the Cabot downstream bypass
Station 1 Forebay	121	An Orion with yagi and dropper antenna will monitor the full width of the forebay area
Station 1 Tailrace	121	A Lotek SRX with yagi antenna will monitor the tailrace area. Detection zone will monitor the full width of the bypass reach. A detection power analysis will differentiate those test fish that are attracted to the tailwater from those that continue upstream
Below Turners Falls Dam	122	Two Lotek SRX receivers with double yagi antennae will monitor the area below the dam, one on either side of the river bank such that approach to the dam can be differentiated from either the right or left sides of the River
Upstream of Gatehouse	122	An Orion receiver with yagi and dropper antennas will be used to monitor the area immediately upstream of Gatehouse
Upstream End of the Canal	122	An Orion with a yagi antenna will monitor the full width of the canal at a location downstream of the Gatehouse in the upper canal to monitor fish entering the canal from upstream
NMPS Gill Bank	126.5	A Lotek with double yagi antennae will monitor the full width of the impoundment
NMPS Intake	127	An Orion with double yagi antenna will monitor the intake area
NMPS Upper Reservoir	127	An Orion receiver with yagi and dropper antennas will be used to monitor the upper reservoir
Shearer Farms	127.5	A Lotek with a yagi antenna will monitor the full width of the impoundment

Table 3.3.3.1.2-5: Anadromous Fish Passage Recorded at the Turners Falls Fish Passage Facilities, Connecticut River, Massachusetts, 1980 to 2014

Year	Location	American Shad	Blueback Herring	Striped Bass	Sea Lamprey	Atlantic Salmon	Gizzard* Shad
1980	Cabot	687	0	11	187	0	
	Spillway	5	0	0	0	0	
	Gatehouse	298	0	1	66	1	
1981	Cabot	224	0	0	1,622	7	
	Spillway**						
	Gatehouse	200	0	0	935	8	
1982	Cabot						
	Spillway**						
	Gatehouse	11	4	0	210	0	
1983	Cabot	26,697	106	6	859	0	
	Spillway	263	1	1	649	0	
	Gatehouse	12,705	28	7	703	0	
1984	Cabot	1,831	4	0	334	1	
	Spillway	4,563	12	0	851	1	
	Gatehouse	4,333	21	0	683	1	
1985	Cabot	31,000	1,726	0	3,198	2	
	Spillway	843	243	0	3,185	3	
	Gatehouse	3,855	301	0	1,809	3	
1986	Cabot	22,144	7,091	0	1,424	5	
	Spillway	5,857	6,248	0	2,230	4	
	Gatehouse	17,858	9,578	0	1,961	10	
1987	Cabot	33,114	2,866	0	1,324	2	
	Spillway	3,679	2,841	0	2,921	3	
	Gatehouse	18,959	5,091	0	2,590	12	
1988	Cabot	28,546	349	0	335	2	
	Spillway	3,354	865	0	1,912	2	
	Gatehouse	15,787	1,079	0	1,175	7	
1989	Cabot	14,403	199	0	578	1	
	Spillway	1,494	279	0	947	0	
	Gatehouse	9,511	510	1	868	2	

Year	Location	American Shad	Blueback Herring	Striped Bass	Sea Lamprey	Atlantic Salmon	Gizzard* Shad
1990	Cabot	31,056	711	0	1,304	8	1
	Spillway	5,898	768	0	1,013	2	0
	Gatehouse	27,908	1,585	0	1,301	16	13
1991	Cabot	87,168	6,433	1	2,089	2	0
	Spillway	6,282	2,718	0	3,026	2	0
	Gatehouse	54,656	7,522	3	4,090	4	1
1992	Cabot	94,046	1,765	1	1,836	9	0
	Spillway	11,760	884	0	3,275	6	0
	Gatehouse	60,089	2,157	2	2,710	14	7
1993	Cabot	21,045	243	0	711	7	0
	Spillway	898	90	0	2,082	3	0
	Gatehouse	10,221	278	0	1,637	7	0
1994	Cabot**						
	Spillway	1,507	17	0	1,740	1	0
	Gatehouse	3,729	97	0	1,702	5	0
1995	Cabot	33,938	4,234	0	1,417	2	1
	Spillway	543	31	0	1,372	0	0
	Gatehouse	18,369	2,957	0	1,813	4	4
1996	Cabot**						
	Spillway	2,293	13	0	2,651	4	0
	Gatehouse	16,192	515	0	4,556	3	3
1997	Cabot	22,518	231	0	2,374	2	4
	Spillway	3,473	15	0	2,219	1	3
	Gatehouse	9,216	128	0	2,265	2	2
1998	Cabot	14,947	2	0	8,707	6	1
	Spillway	4,721	0	0	8,642	2	2
	Gatehouse	10,527	4	0	7,579	5	2
1999	Cabot	11,501	5	0	2,014	2	543
	Spillway	4,215	0	8	1,449	2	440
	Gatehouse	6,751	2	0	916	0	275
2000	Cabot	12,289	0	0	1,455	0	9

Year	Location	American Shad	Blueback Herring	Striped Bass	Sea Lamprey	Atlantic Salmon	Gizzard* Shad
	Spillway	2,240	0	0	1,962	4	358
	Gatehouse	2,590	0	0	1,350	5	199
2001	Cabot	20,933	0	0	3,678	0	0
	Spillway	2,344	0	0	5,280	0	0
	Gatehouse	1,540	0	0	2,144	0	0
2002	Cabot	7,922	0	0	14,709	0	0
	Spillway	5,372	0	0	12,367	4	7
	Gatehouse	2,870	0	0	10,160	4	2
2003**							
2004	Cabot	5,933	0	0	13,352	0	0
	Spillway	1,980	0	0	5,821	0	0
	Gatehouse	2,192	0	0	8,418	0	0
2005	Cabot	5,404	2	7	12,974	5	0
	Spillway	1,626	0	7	9,990	1	2
	Gatehouse	1,581	2	2	215,843	5	0
2006	Cabot	11,991	1	198	5,377	4	9
	Spillway	2,577	0	153	5,133	8	0
	Gatehouse	1,810	0	46	3,005	7	0
2007	Cabot	11,130	**	**	11,061	5	0
	Spillway	1,793	**	**	5,555	3	0
	Gatehouse	2,248	**	**	15,438	5	0
2008	Cabot	15,089	**	**	**	6	**
	Spillway	627	**	**	**	5	**
	Gatehouse	3,995	**	**	32,035	10	**
2009	Cabot	13,391	**	**	**	0	**
	Spillway	919	**	**	**	5	**
	Gatehouse	3,814	**	**	8,296	8	**
2010	Cabot	30,232	**	**	**	2	**
	Spillway	2,735	**	**	**	4	**
	Gatehouse	16, 768	**	**	6,352	8	**
2011	Cabot	27,077	**	**	**	2	**

Year	Location	American Shad	Blueback Herring	Striped Bass	Sea Lamprey	Atlantic Salmon	Gizzard* Shad
	Spillway	1,966	**	**	**	6	**
	Gatehouse	16,798	**	**	2,032	7	**
2012	Cabot	51,901	**	**	**	2	**
	Spillway	10,608	**	**	**	3	**
	Gatehouse	26,727	**	**	4,503	2	**
2013	Cabot	46,886	**	**	**	0	**
	Spillway	10,571	**	**	**	1	**
	Gatehouse	35,494	**	**	6,016	0	**
2014	Cabot	40,666	**	**	**	3	**
	Spillway	24,262	**	**	**	8	**
	Gatehouse	39,914	**	**	5,553	11	**

* Observations of Gizzard Shad using ladders was first reported in 1990.
** not monitored

(Slater, 2011; Robert Stira, per. comm.).

Table 3.3.3.1.2-6: American Shad Passage Recorded at the Holyoke Dam Fish Passage Facilities, Connecticut River, Massachusetts, 1981 to 2014 and the Passage Ratio for the Numbers Passed at Vernon Versus Turners Falls Gatehouse.

Year	Vernon	Passage Ratio
1981	260,000	0.00
1982	380,000	0.00
1983	380,000	0.02
1984	290,000	0.01
1985	530,000	0.01
1986	500,000	0.05
1987	480,000	0.07
1988	350,000	0.05
1989	270,000	0.03
1990	290,000	0.08
1991	350,000	0.11
1992	360,000	0.08
1993	520,000	0.03
1994	720,000	0.02
1995	340,000	0.10
1996	170,000	0.06
1997	190,000	0.03
1998	280,000	0.03
1999	300,000	0.04
2000	320,000	0.01
2001	190,000	0.01
2002	225,000	0.01
2003	270,000	*
2004	370,000	0.01
2005	280,000	0.01
2006	192,000	0.01
2007	116,511	0.01
2008	155,000	0.03
2009	158,807	0.02
2010	156,492	0.10
2011	160,649	0.07
2012	164,439	0.05
2013	244,177	0.09
2014	490,431	0.11

*Passage not monitored at Turners Falls.

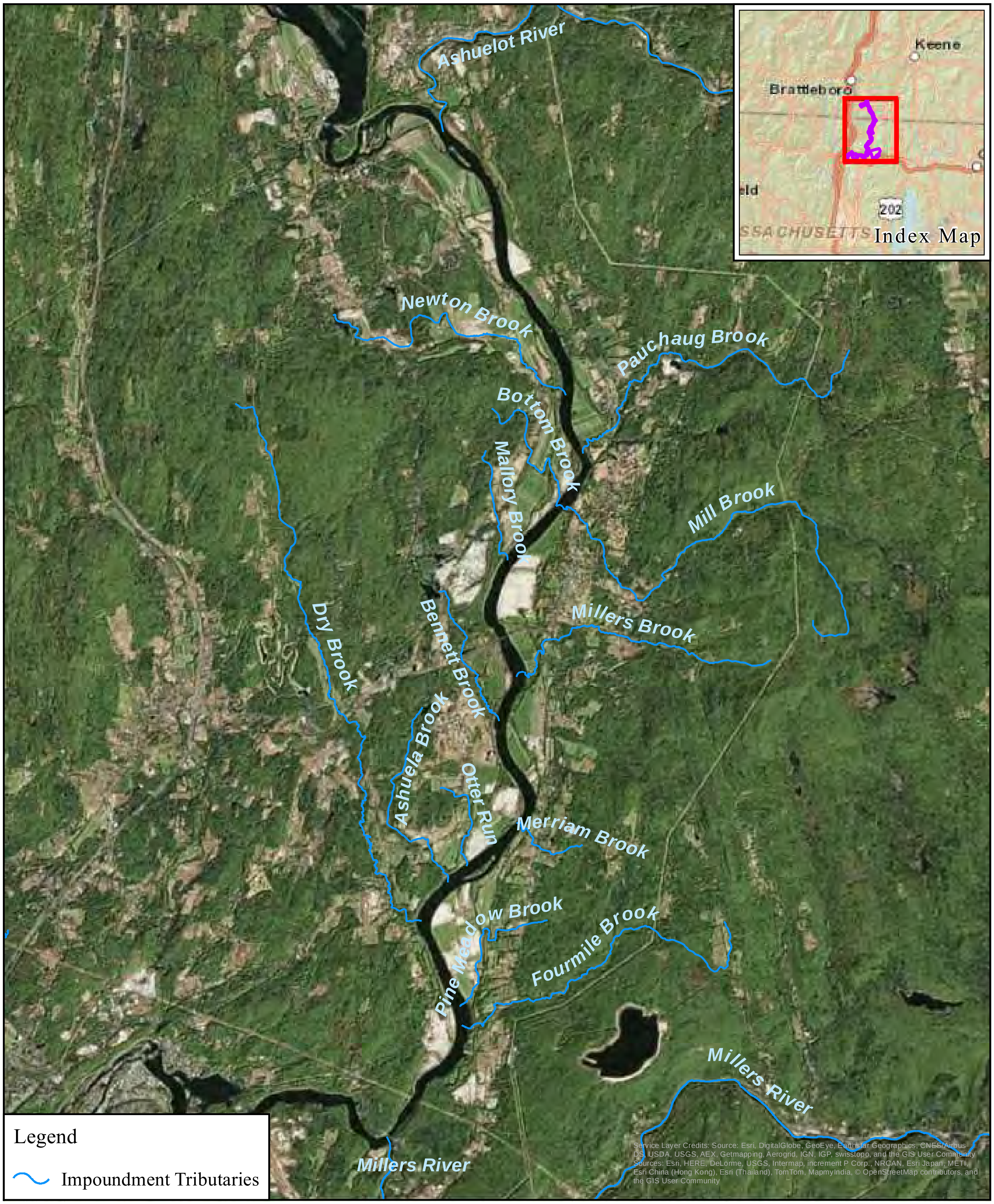
Table 3.3.3.1.2-7: American Shad Passage Recorded at the Vernon Dam Fish Passage Facilities, Connecticut River, Massachusetts, 1981 to 2014 and the Passage Ratio for the Numbers Passed at Vernon Versus Turners Falls Gatehouse.

Year	Vernon	Passage Ratio
1981	97	0.49
1982	9	0.90
1983	2,597	
1984	335	
1985	833	0.22
1986	982	0.05
1987	3,459	0.18
1988	1,370	0.09
1989	2,953	0.31
1990	10,894	0.39
1991	37,197	
1992	31,155	
1993	3,652	0.38
1994	2,681	0.81
1995	15,777	0.86
1996	18,844	1.16
1997	7,384	0.80
1998	7,289	0.69
1999	5,097	0.75
2000	1,548	0.60
2001	1,744	1.13**
2002	356	0.12
2003	268	*
2004	653	0.31
2005	167	0.11
2006	133	0.09
2007	65	0.03
2008	271	0.07
2009	16	0
2010	290	0.02
2011	46	0
2012	10,386	0.40
2013	18,220	0.51
2014	27,706	0.69

*Passage not monitored at Turners Falls.
** Counting error

Table 3.3.3.2.2-1: Location and Types of Telemetry Equipment Used to Evaluate Silver Eel Migration at the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Developments

Location	RM	Receiver Station
Montague Wastewater	119.5	A Lotek SRX receiver with double yagi antennae will monitor the full width of the River
Cabot Station Tailrace	120	A Lotek SRX with yagi antenna will monitor the full river width. An Orion receiver and double yagi antennae will monitor the tailrace immediately downstream of the station.
Cabot Station Forebay	120	Two radio receivers will monitor the forebay area: 1) An Orion with double yagi and dropper antennae will monitor the full width of the forebay area 2) An Orion with dipole antenna will monitor the entrance to the Cabot downstream bypass
Station 1 Forebay	121	An Orion with yagi and dropper antenna will monitor the full width of the forebay area
Station 1 Tailrace	121	A Lotek SRX with yagi antenna will monitor the tailrace area. Detection zone will monitor the full width of the bypass reach. A detection power analysis will differentiate those test fish that are attracted to the tailwater from those that continue upstream
Below Turners Falls Dam	122	Two Lotek SRX receivers with double yagi antennae will monitor the area below the dam, one on either side of the river bank such that approach to the dam can be differentiated from either the right or left sides of the River
Upstream of Gatehouse	122	An Orion receiver with yagi and dropper antennas will be used to monitor the area immediately upstream of Gatehouse
Upstream End of the Canal	122	An Orion with a yagi antenna will monitor the full width of the canal at a location downstream of the Gatehouse in the upper canal to monitor fish entering the canal from upstream
NMPS Gill Bank	126.5	A Lotek with double yagi antennae will monitor the full width of the impoundment
NMPS Intake	127	An Orion with double yagi antenna will monitor the intake area
NMPS Upper Reservoir	127	An Orion receiver with yagi and dropper antennas will be used to monitor the upper reservoir
Shearer Farms	127.5	A Lotek with a yagi antenna will monitor the full width of the impoundment



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0 0.75 1.5 3
Miles

Figure No. 3.3.3.1-1
Location of Target Tributaries in the Turners Falls Impoundment for FirstLight's Tributary and Backwater Access Study

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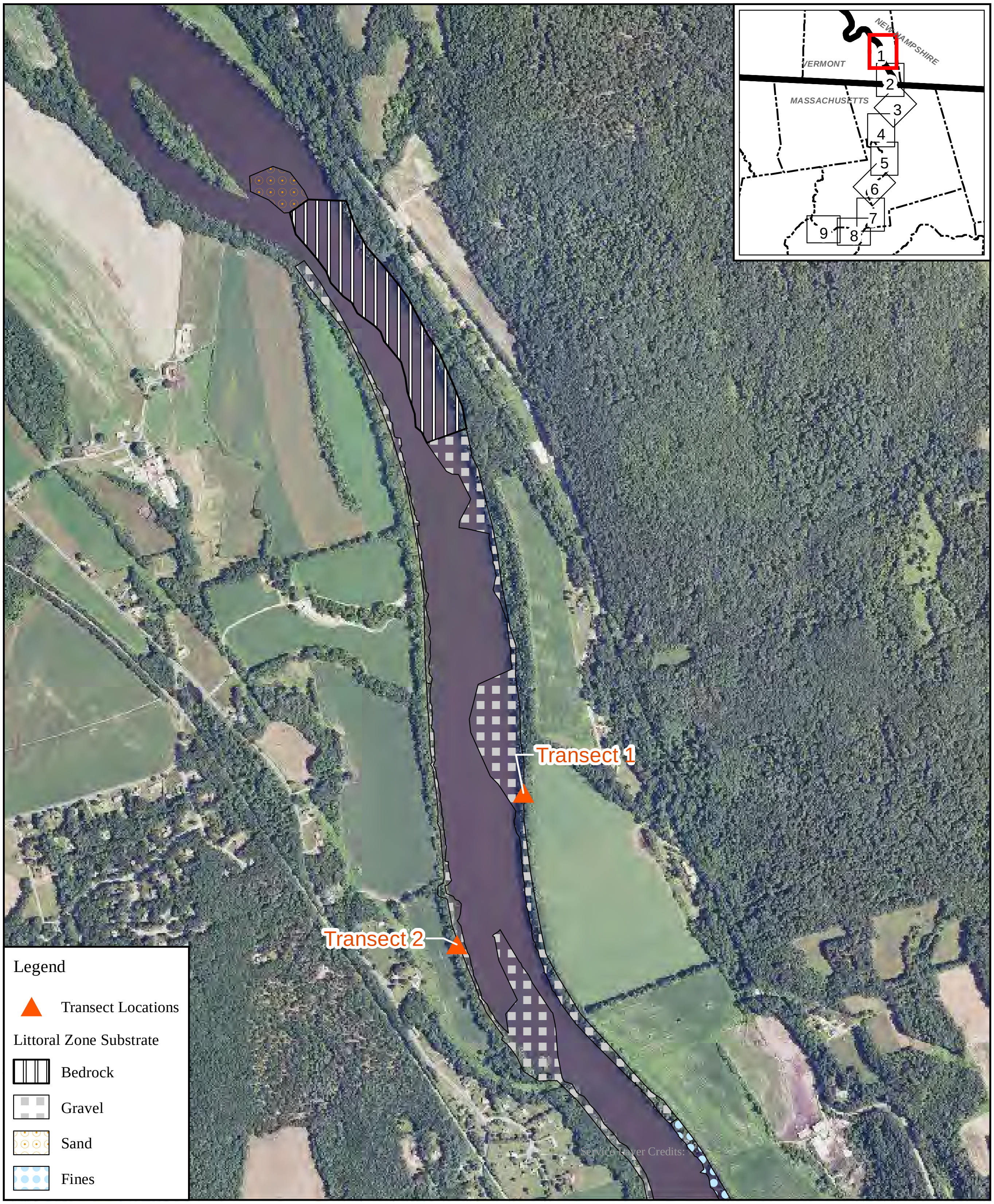

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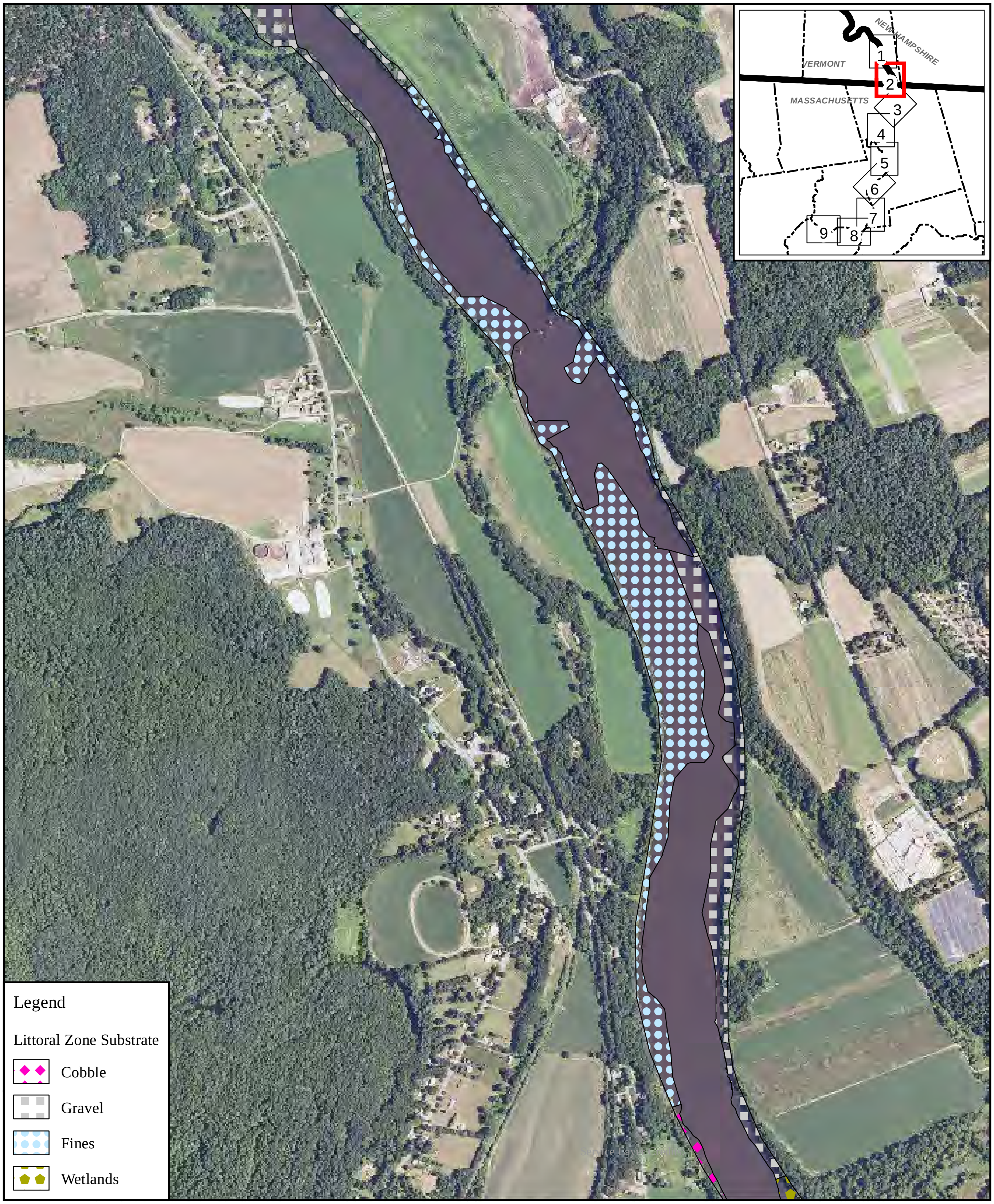
Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 1



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Feet

Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 2

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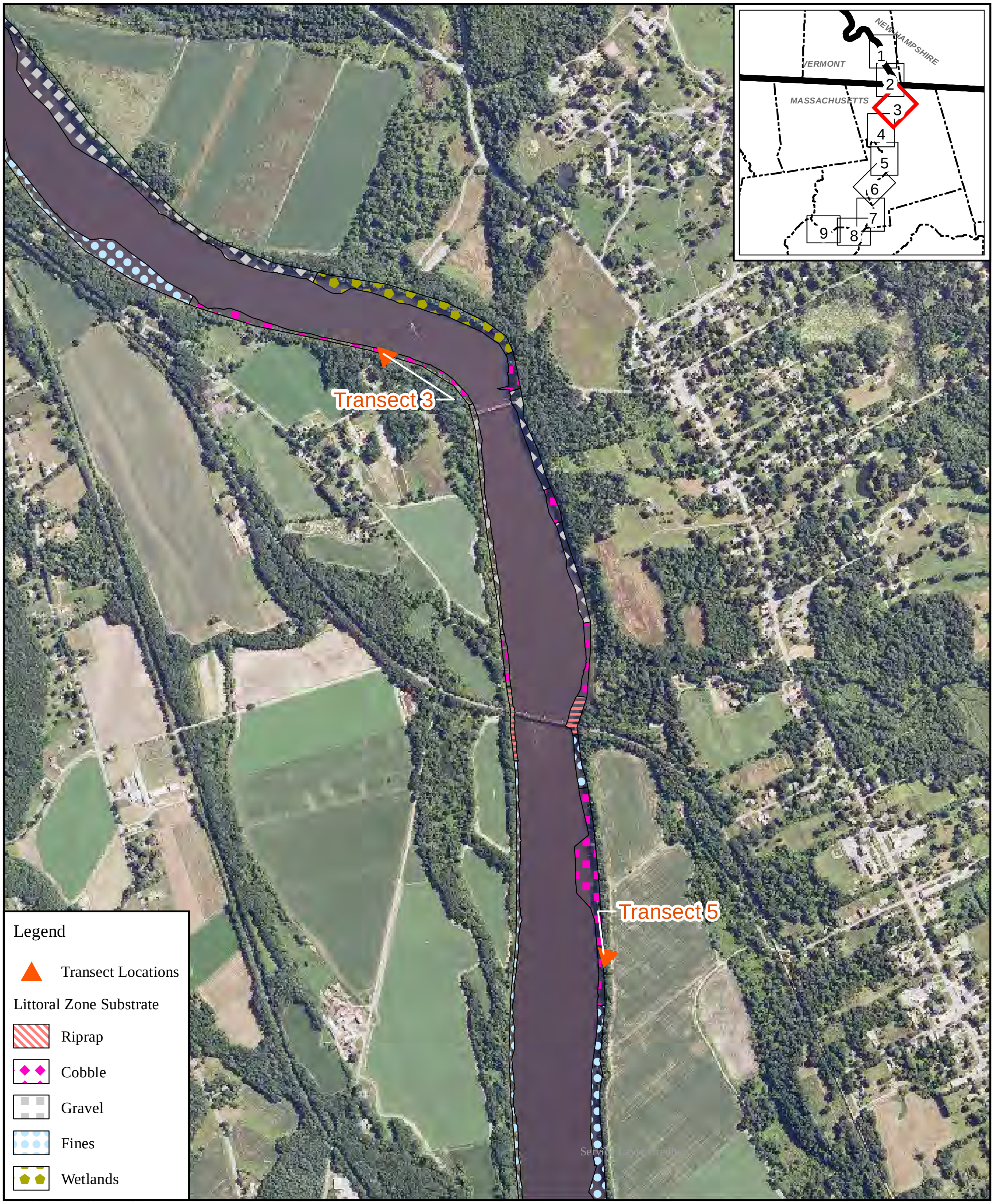

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Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 3

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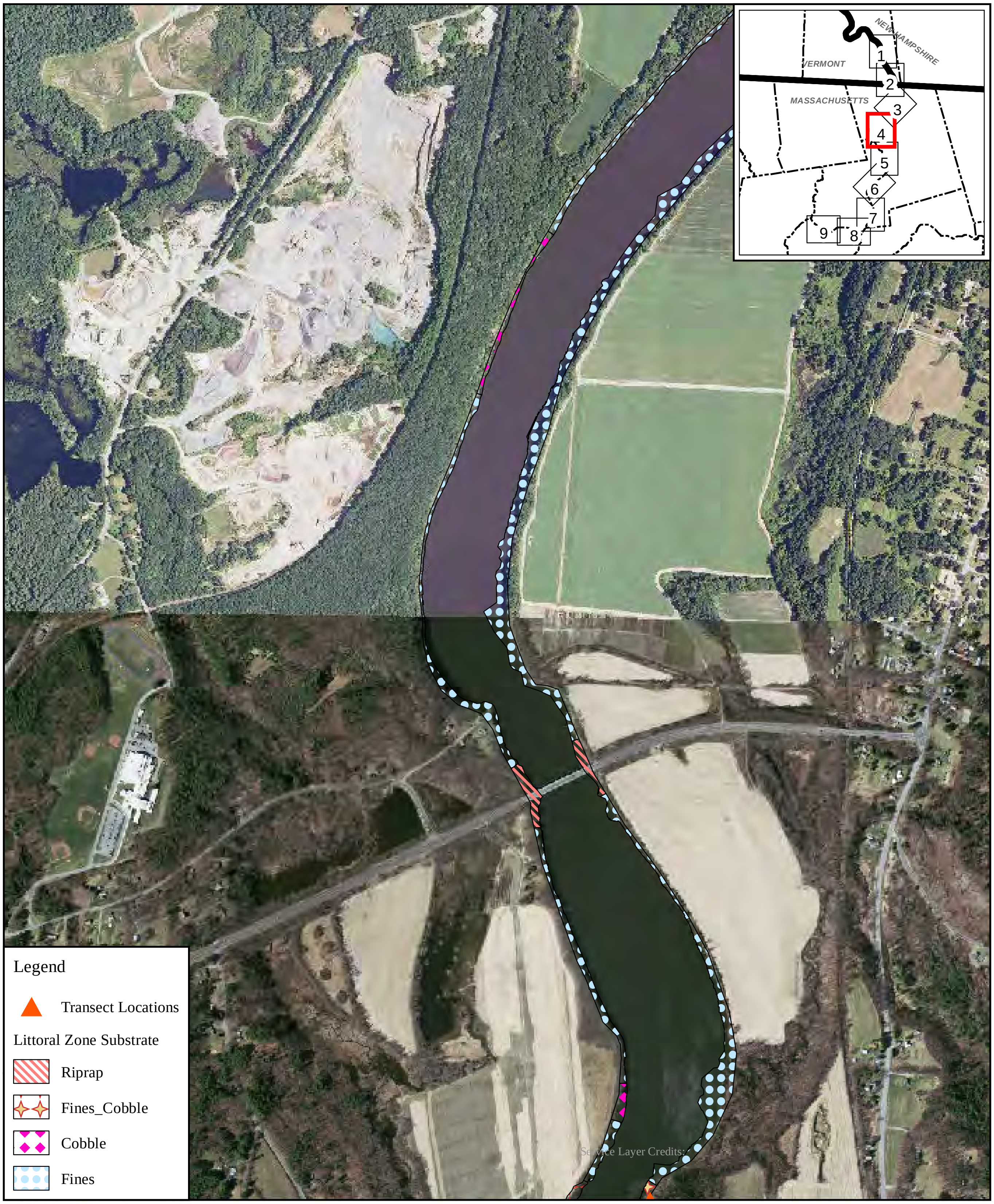

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Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 4

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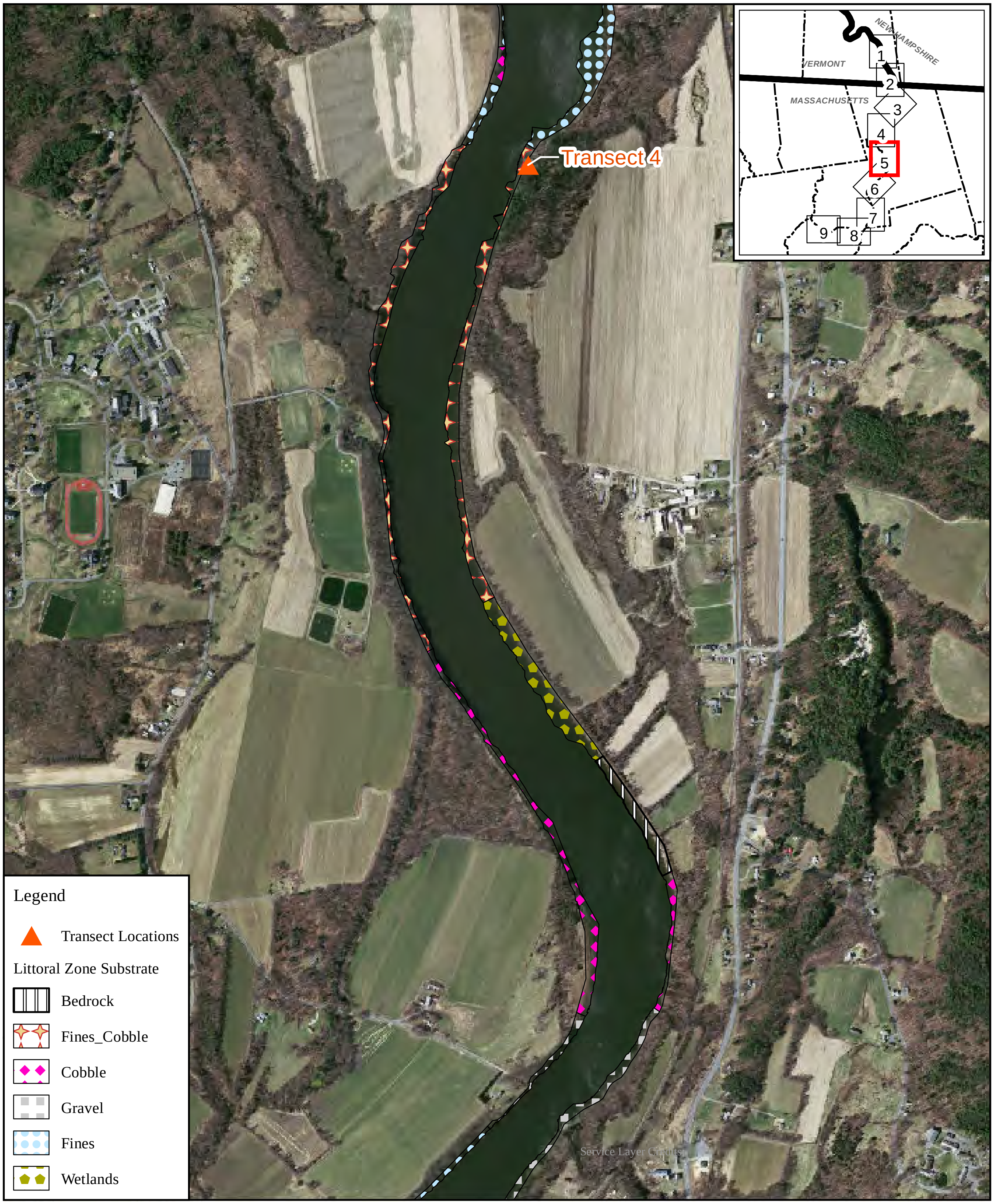

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Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 5

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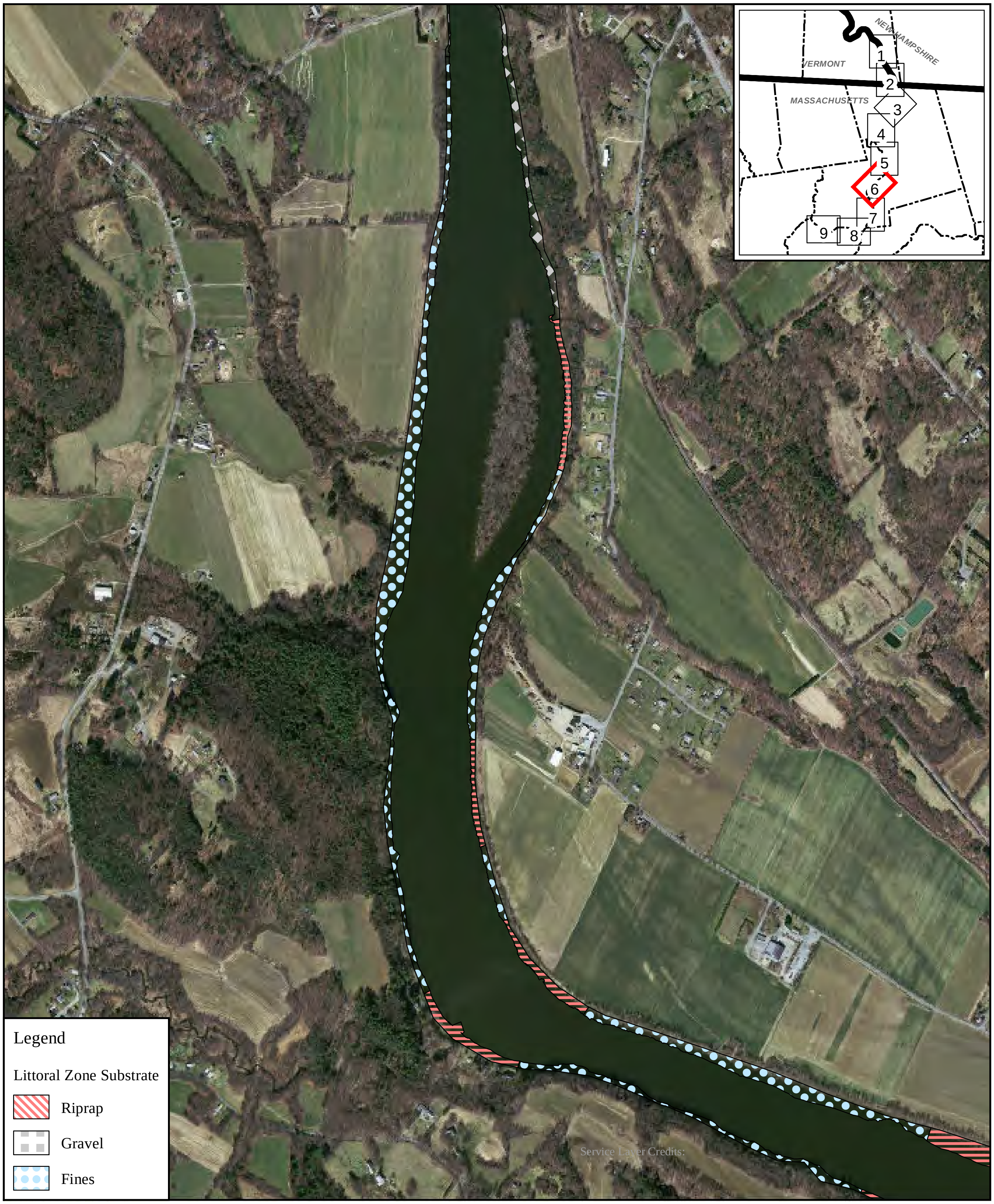

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Feet

Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 6

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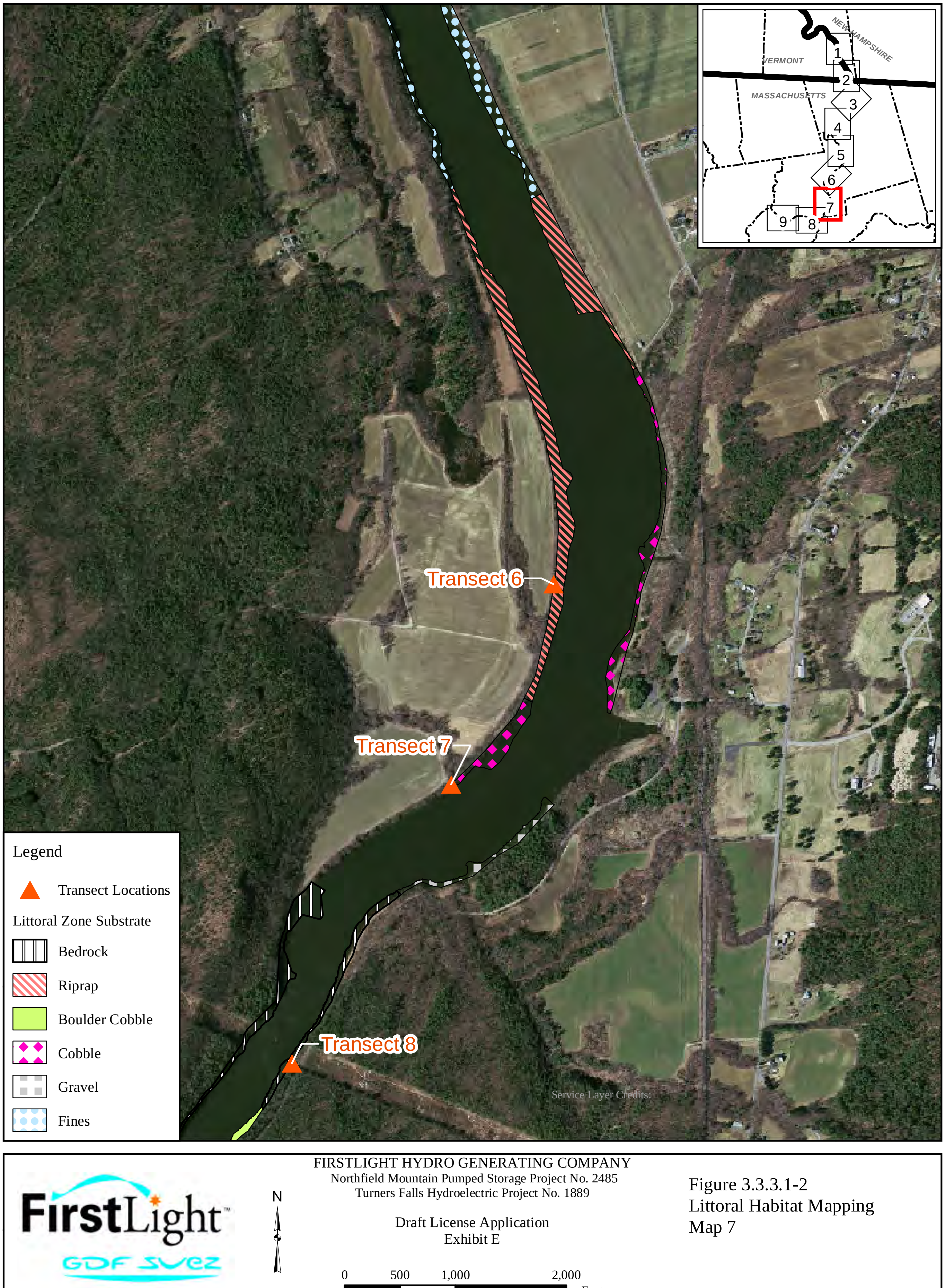

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Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 7

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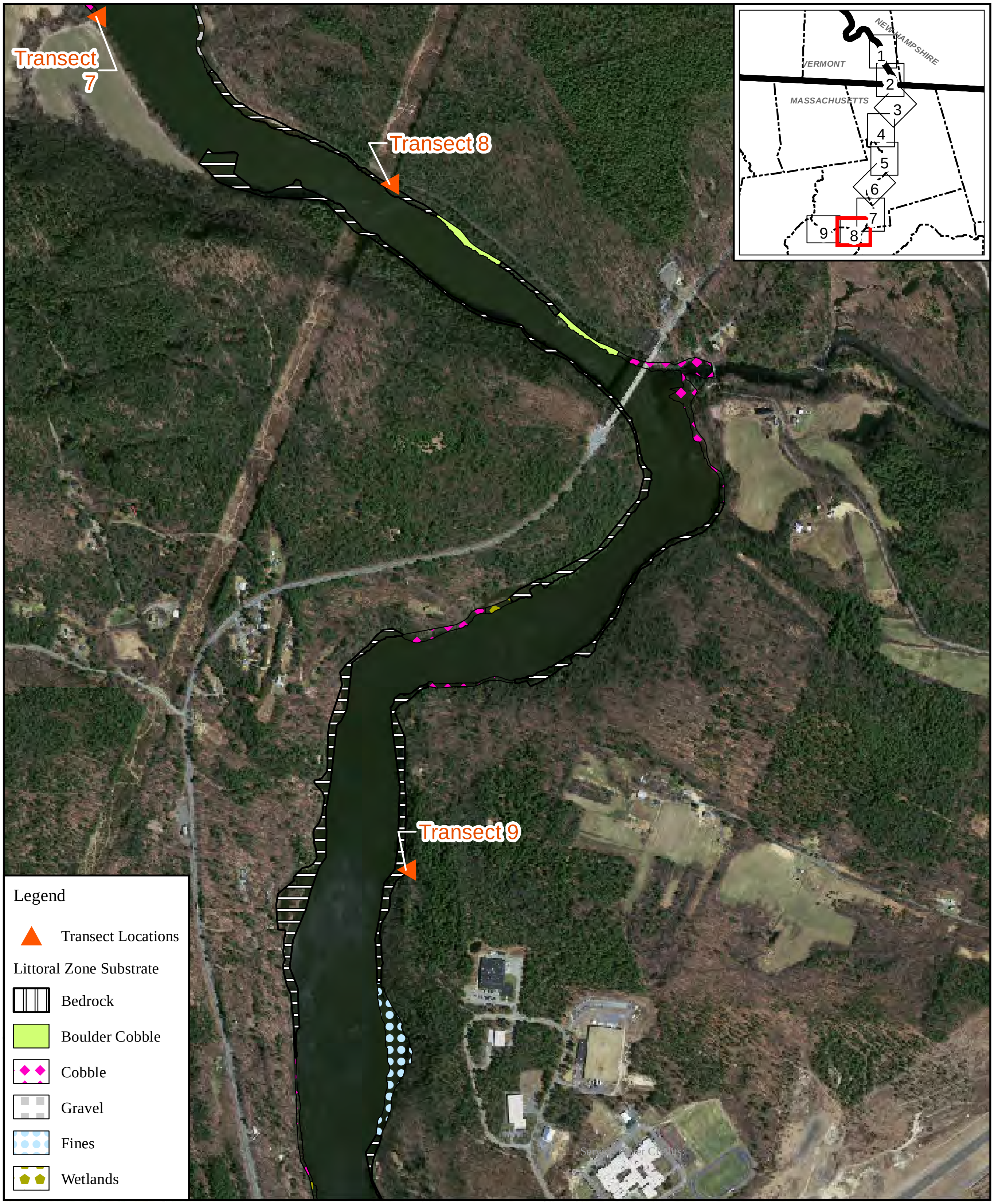

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Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 8

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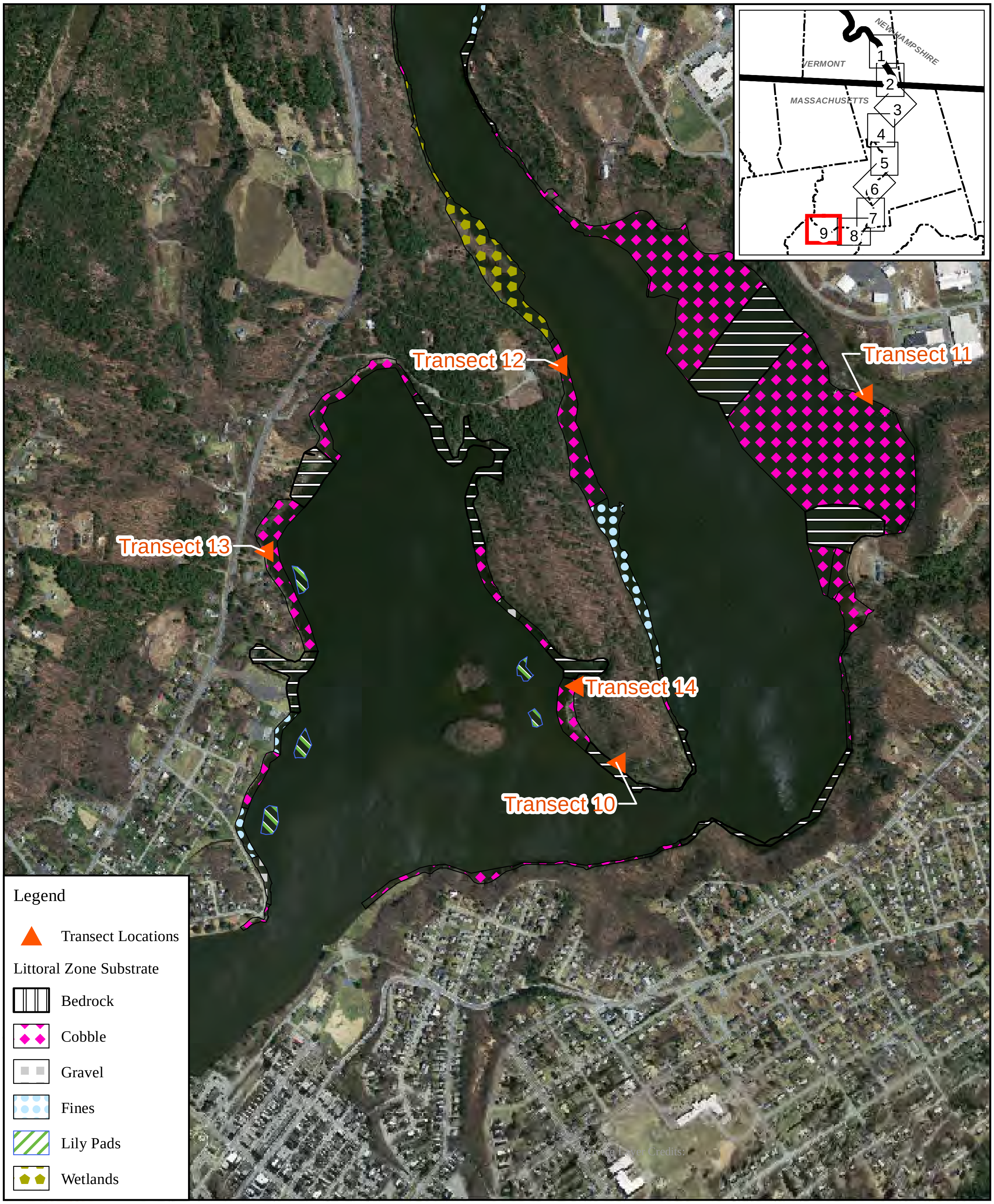

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Figure 3.3.3.1-2
Littoral Habitat Mapping
Map 9

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

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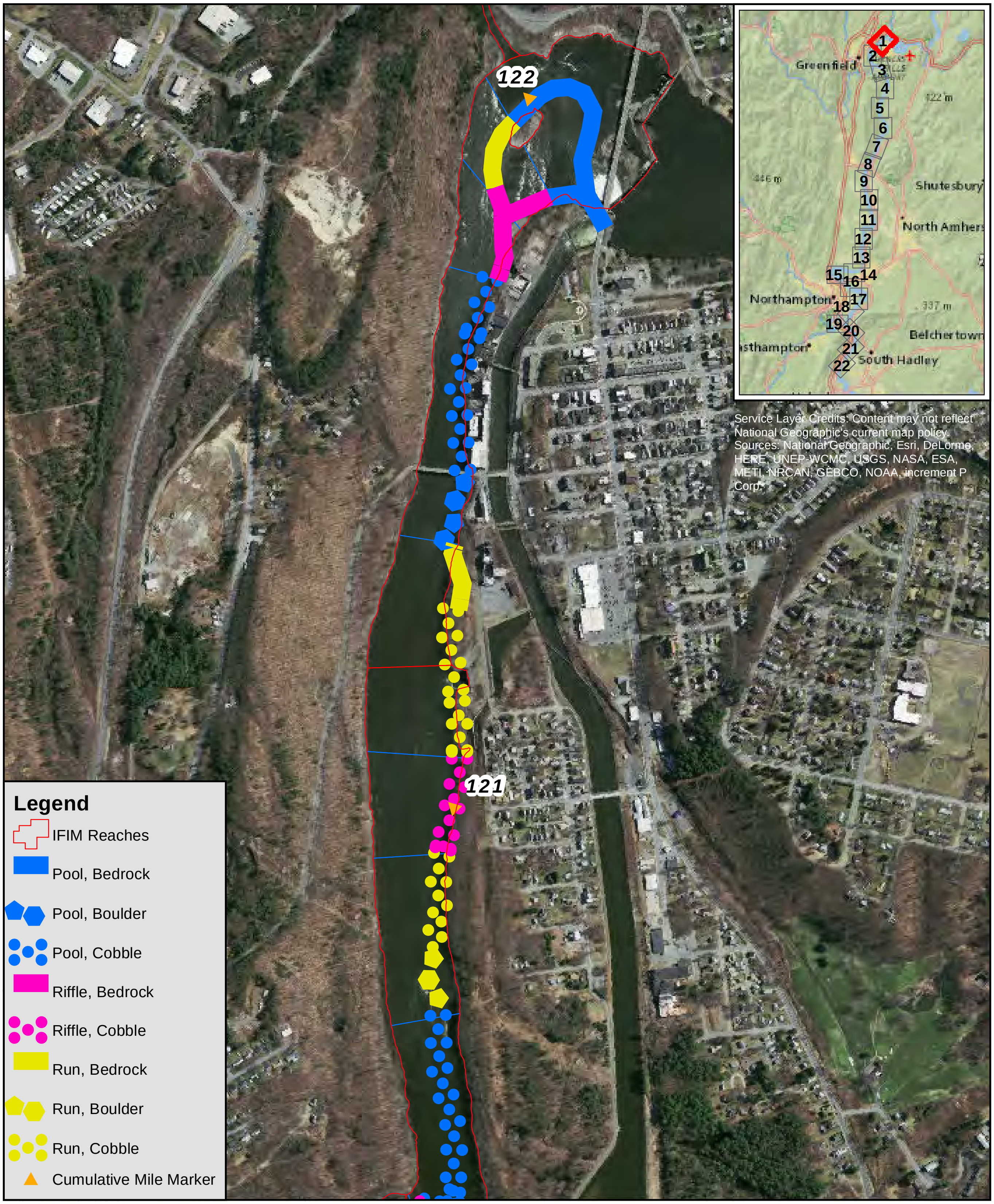

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 1

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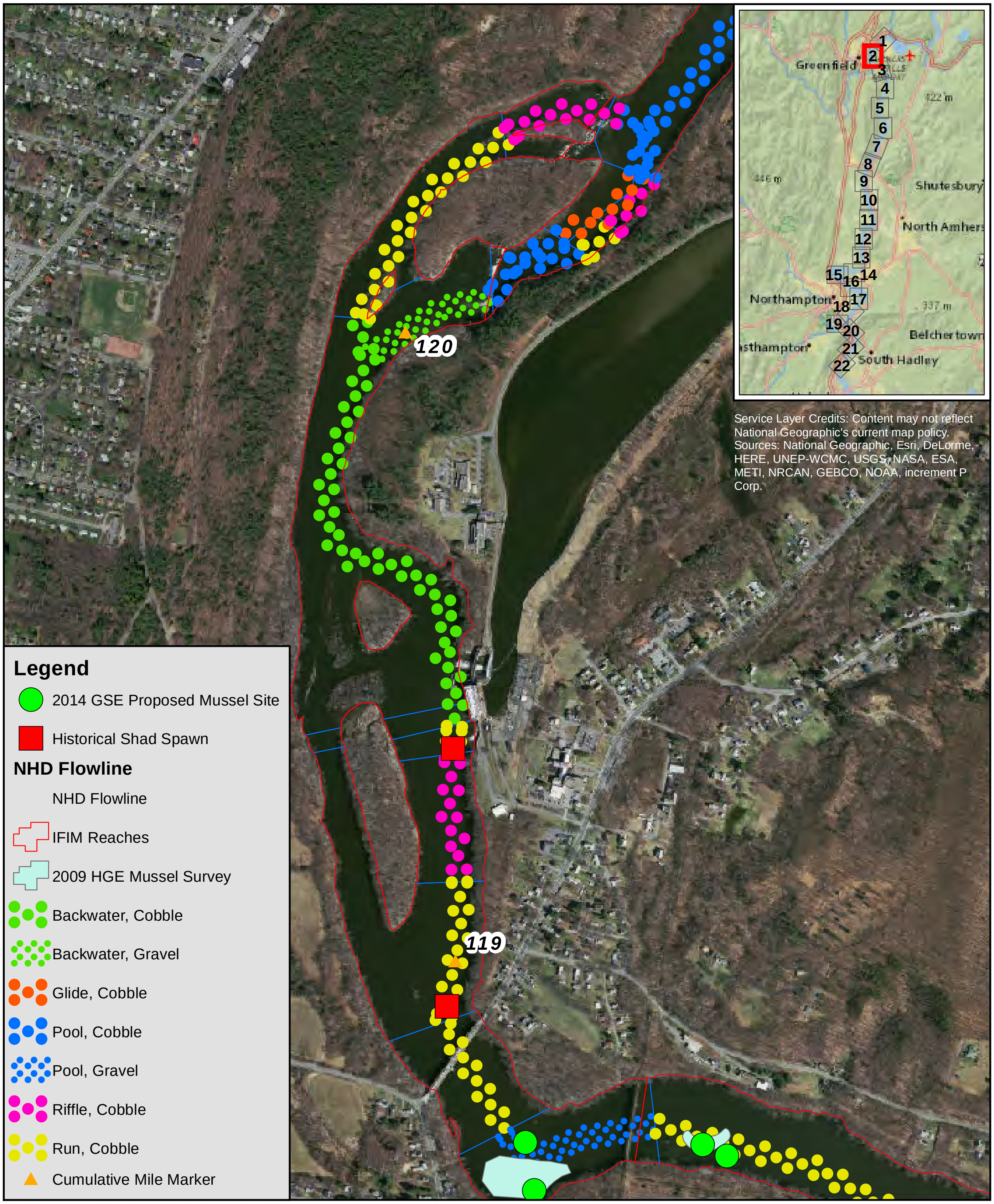

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 2

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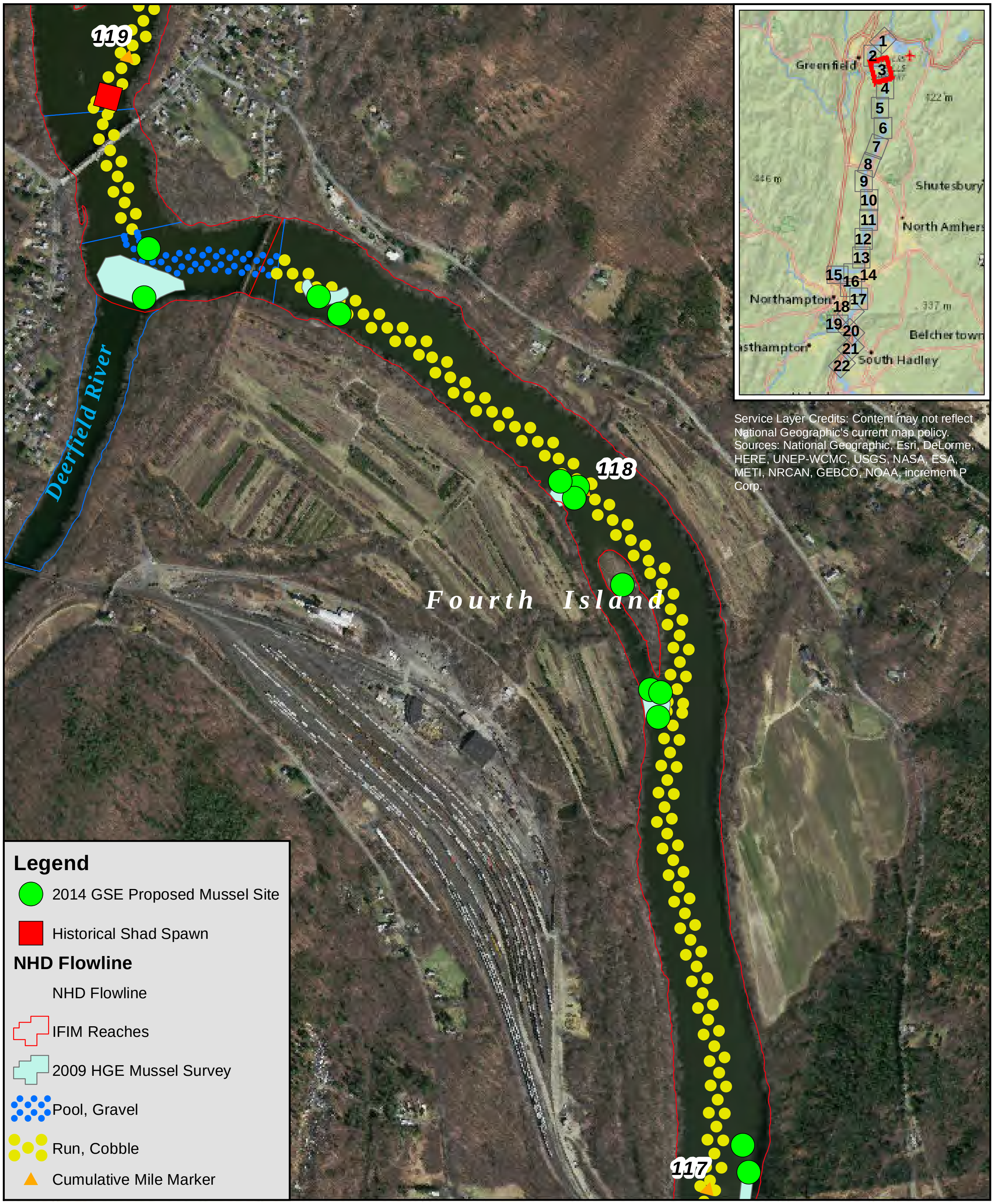

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 3

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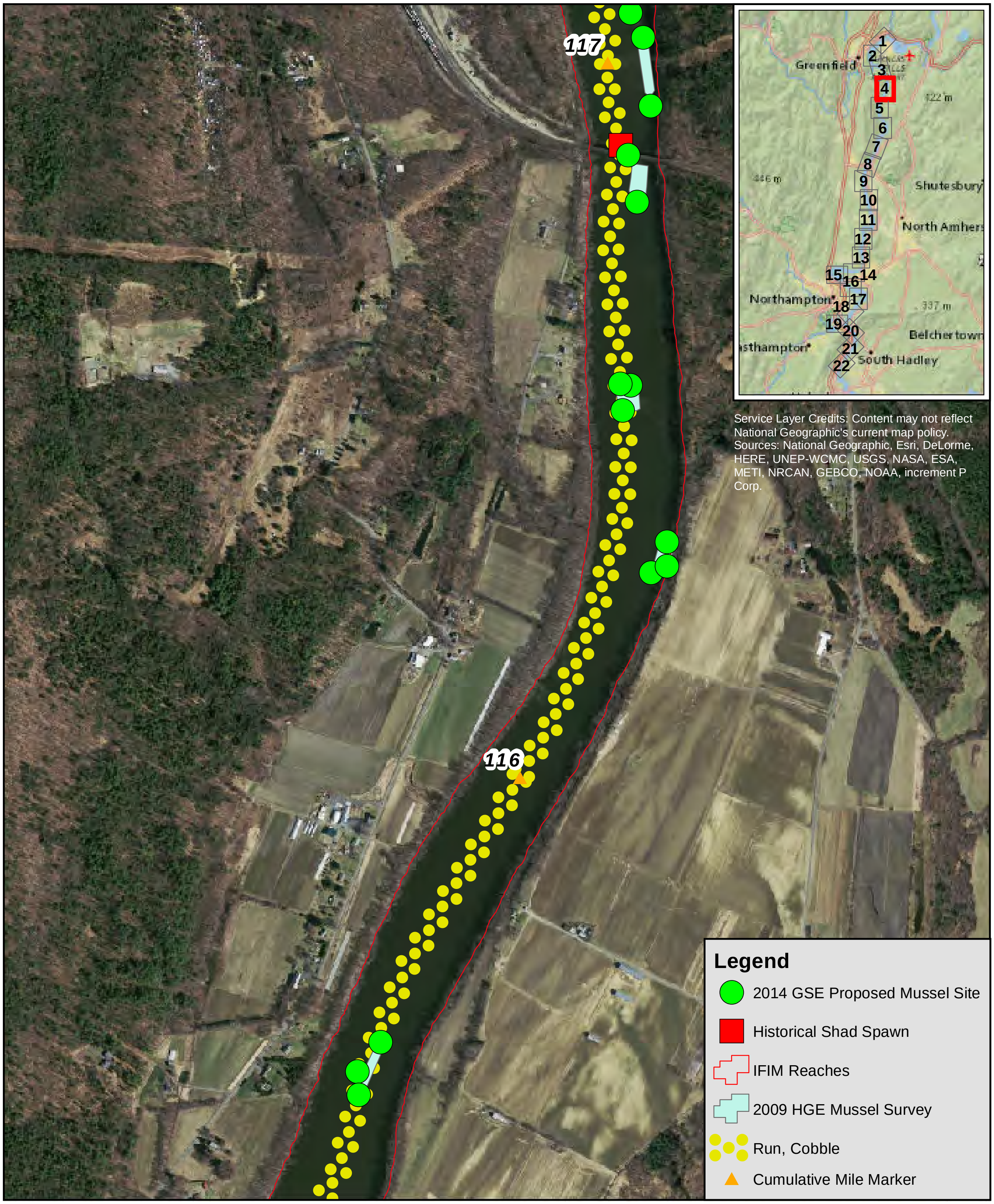

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 4

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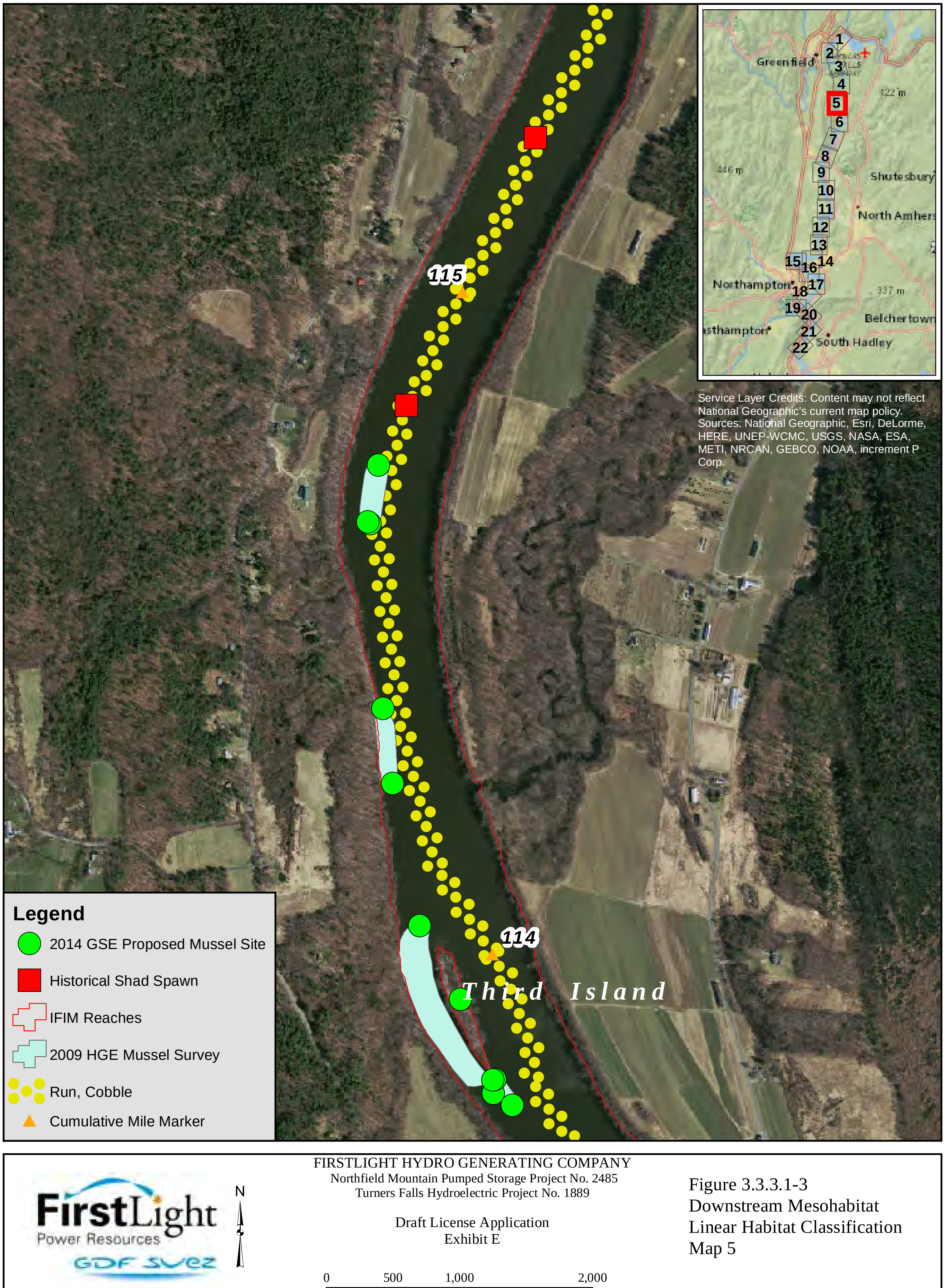

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 5

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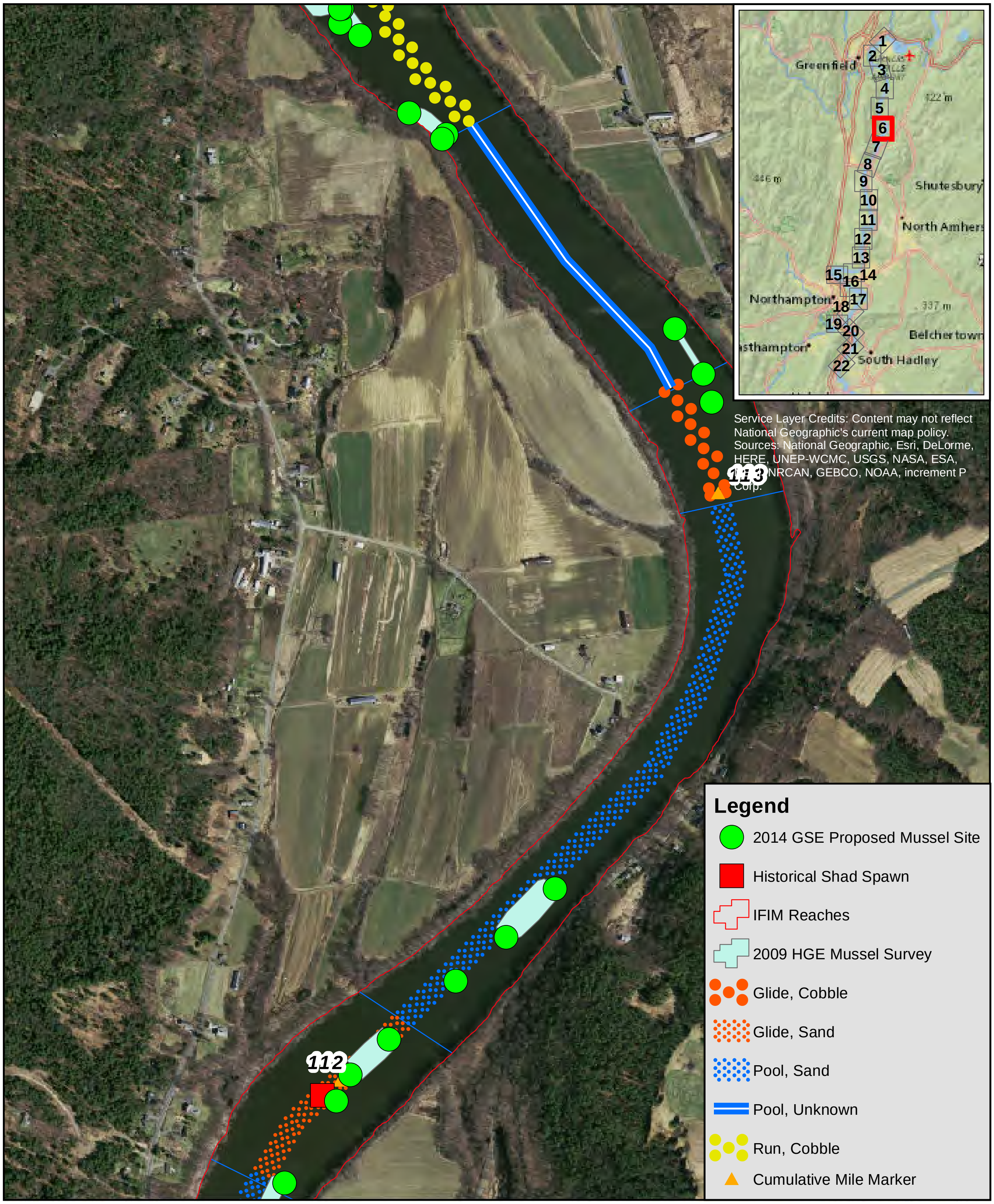

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 6

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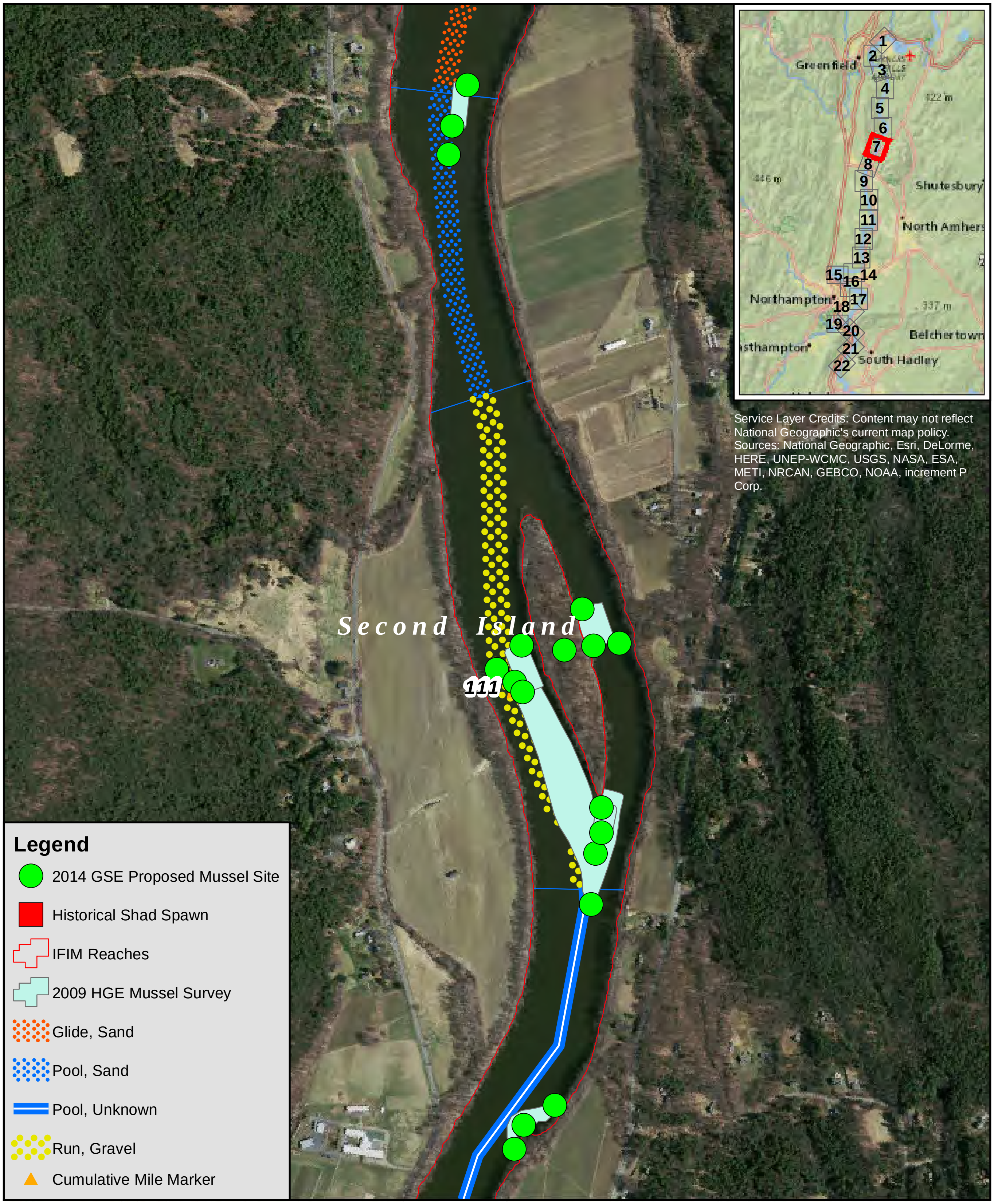

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 7

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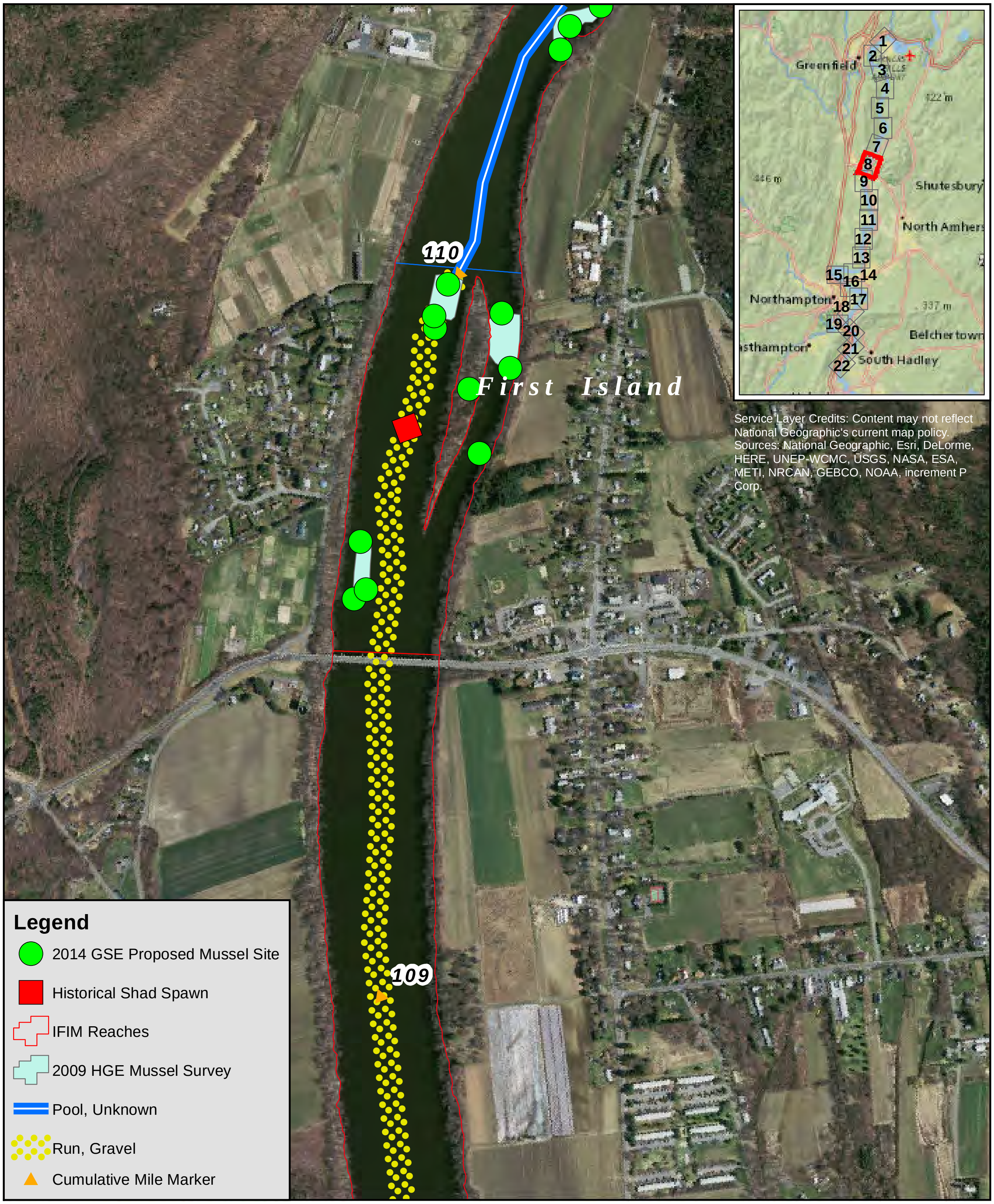

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 8

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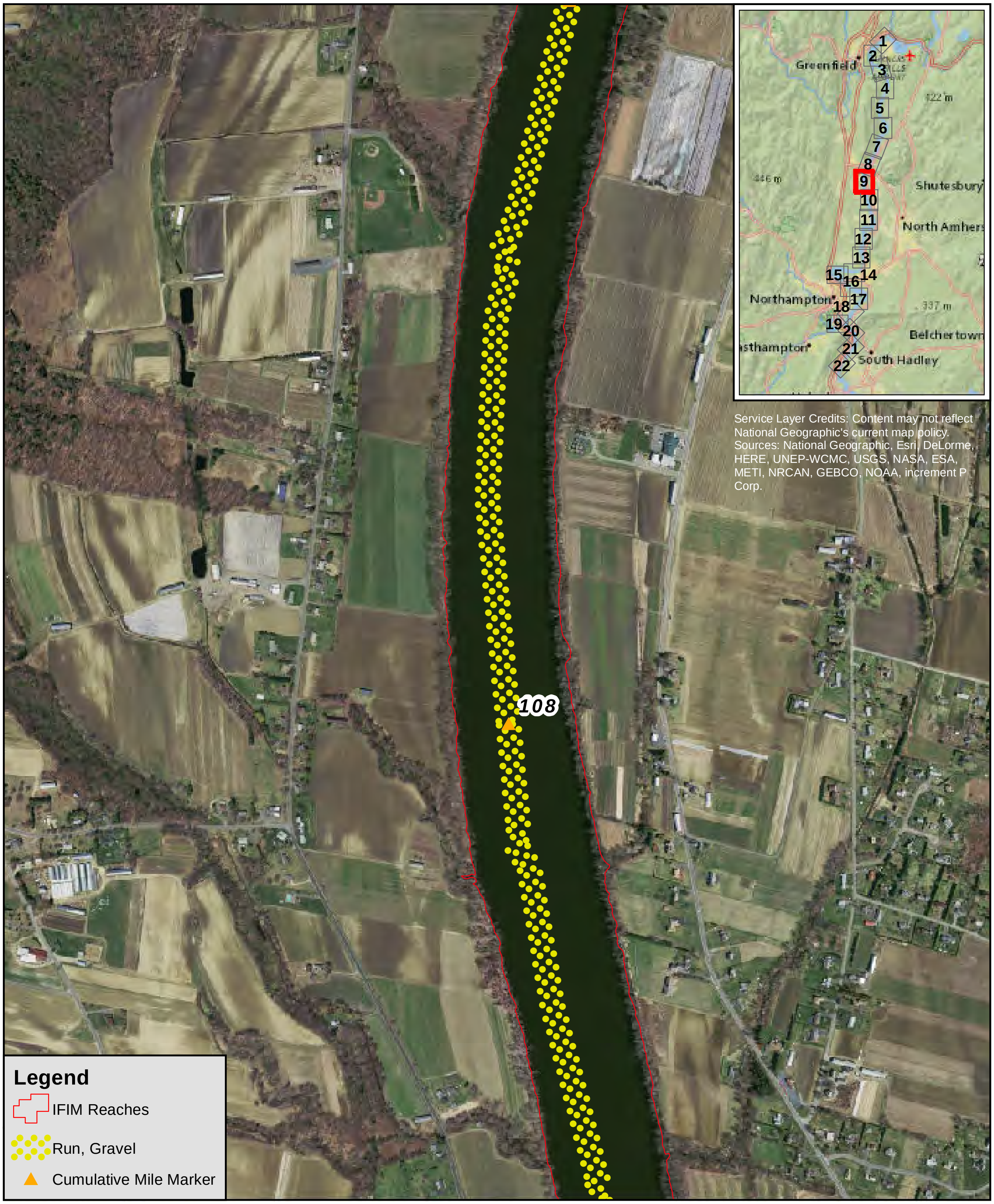

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 9

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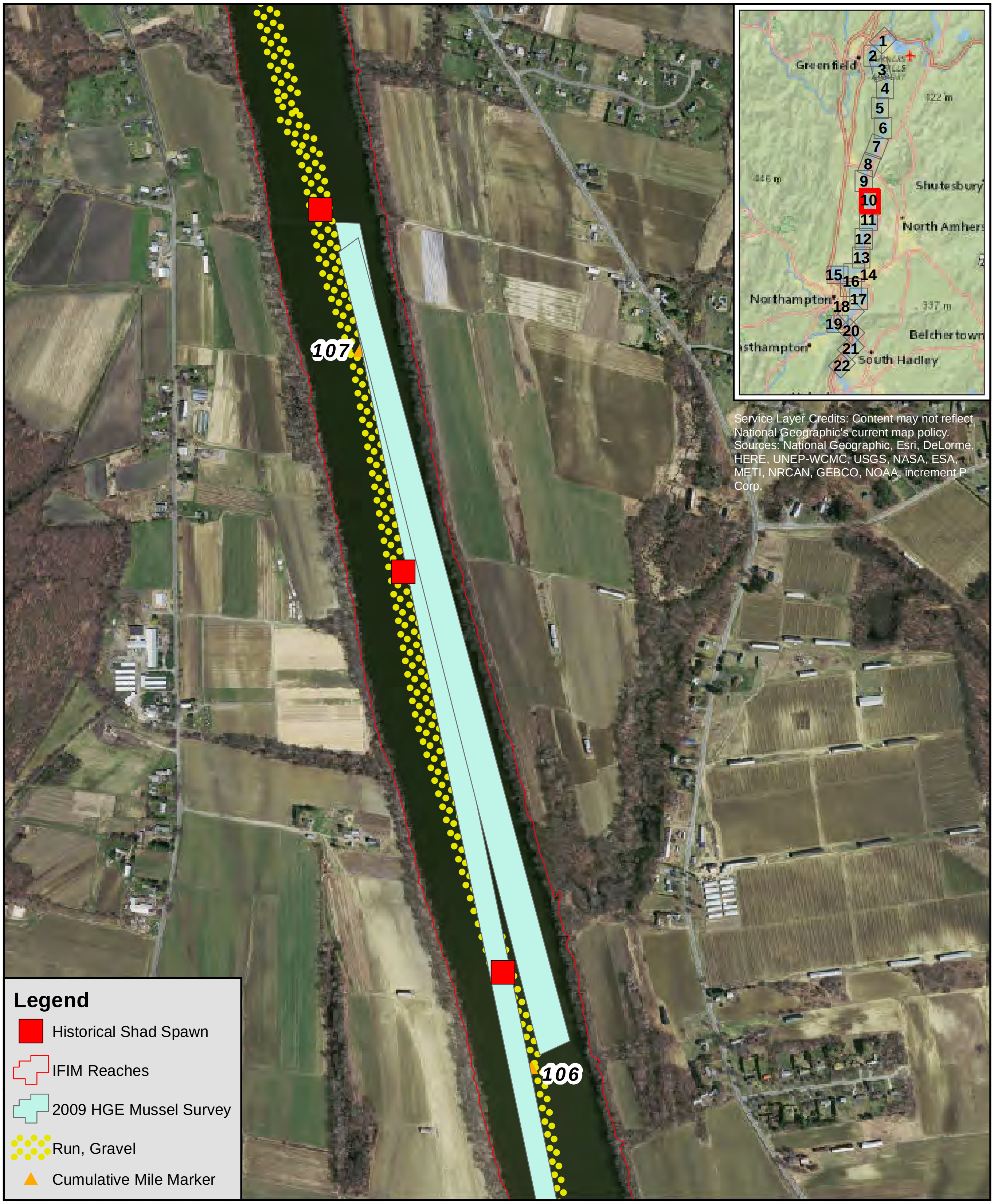

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 10

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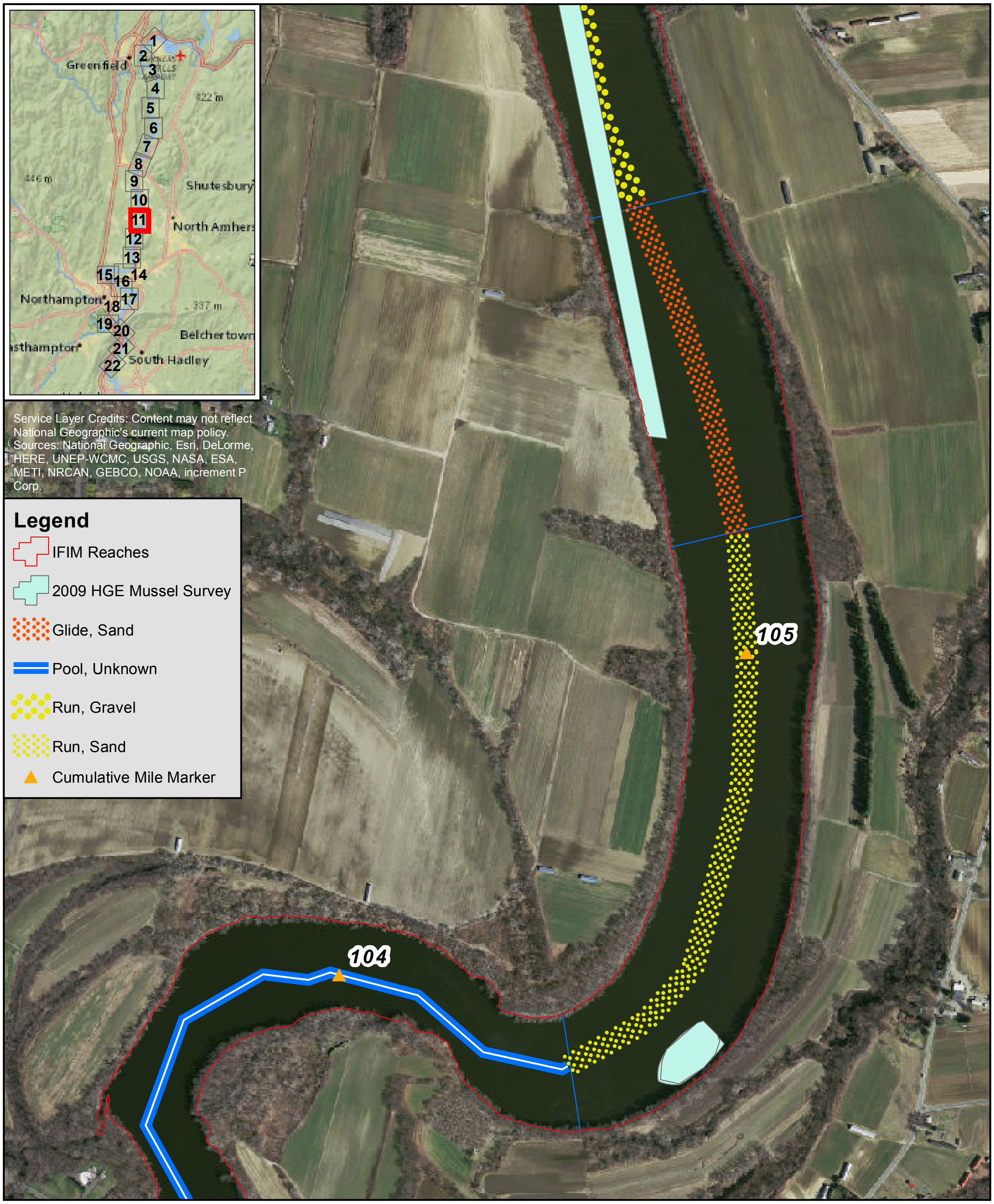

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 11

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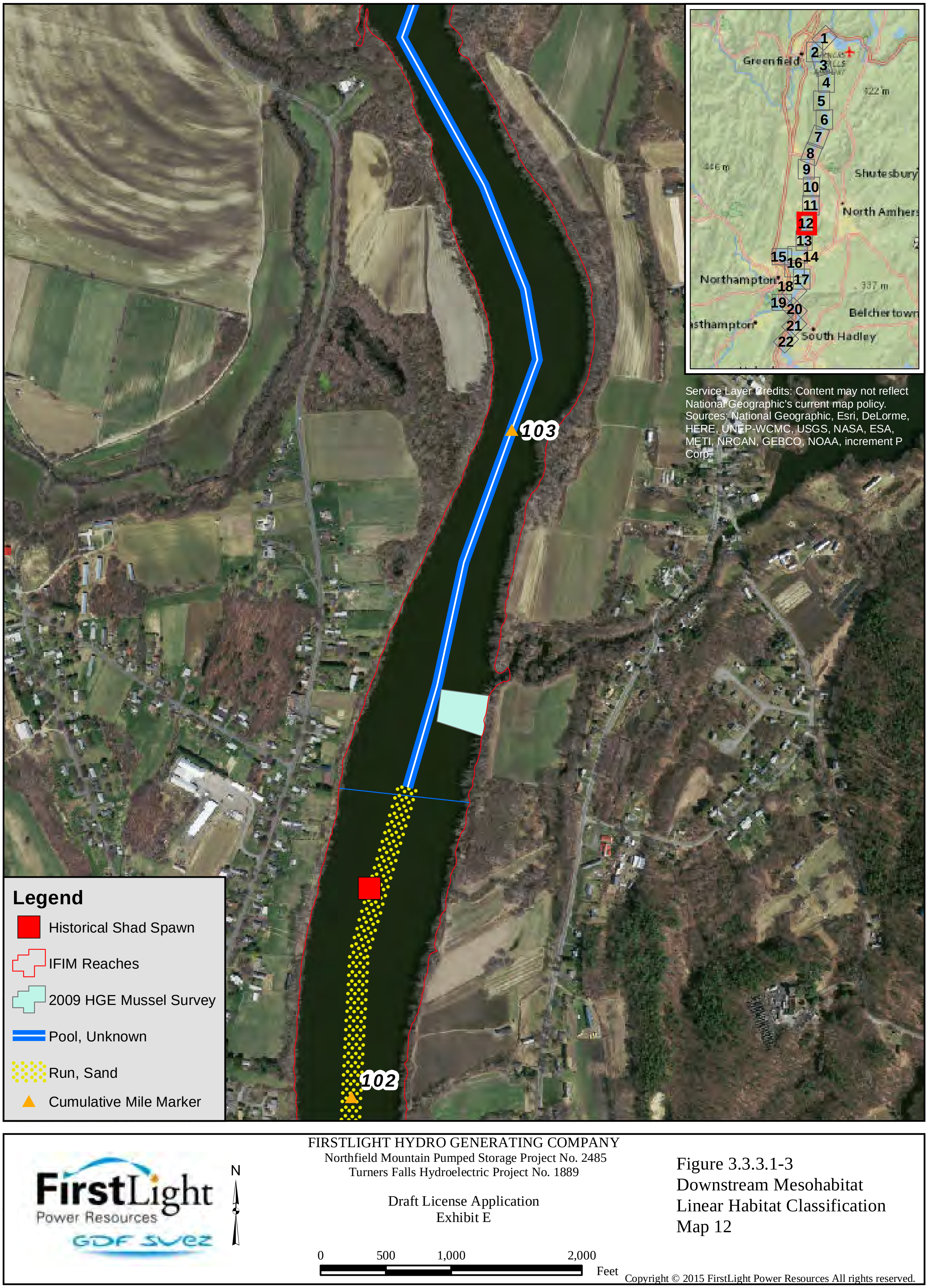

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 12

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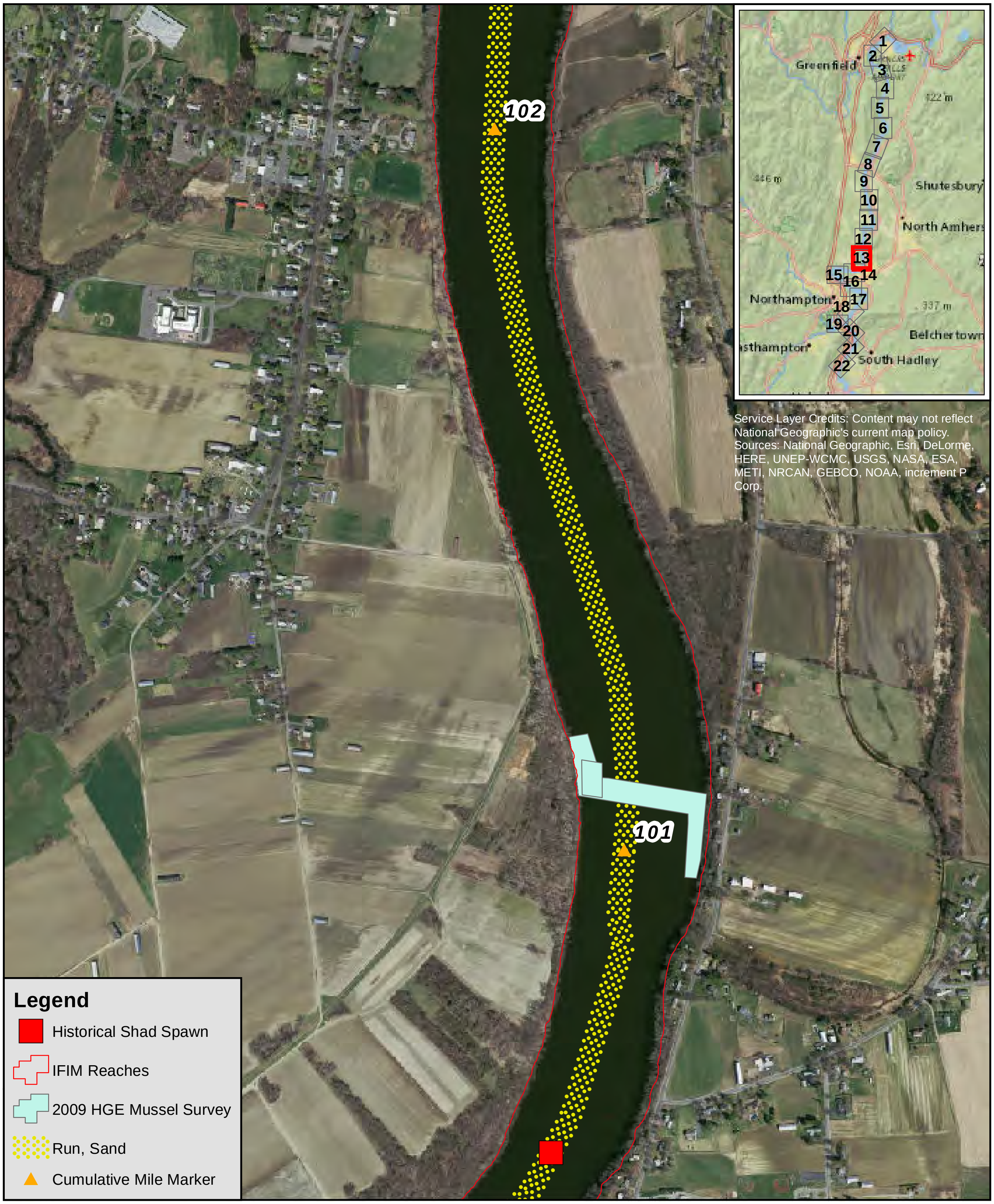

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 13

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0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

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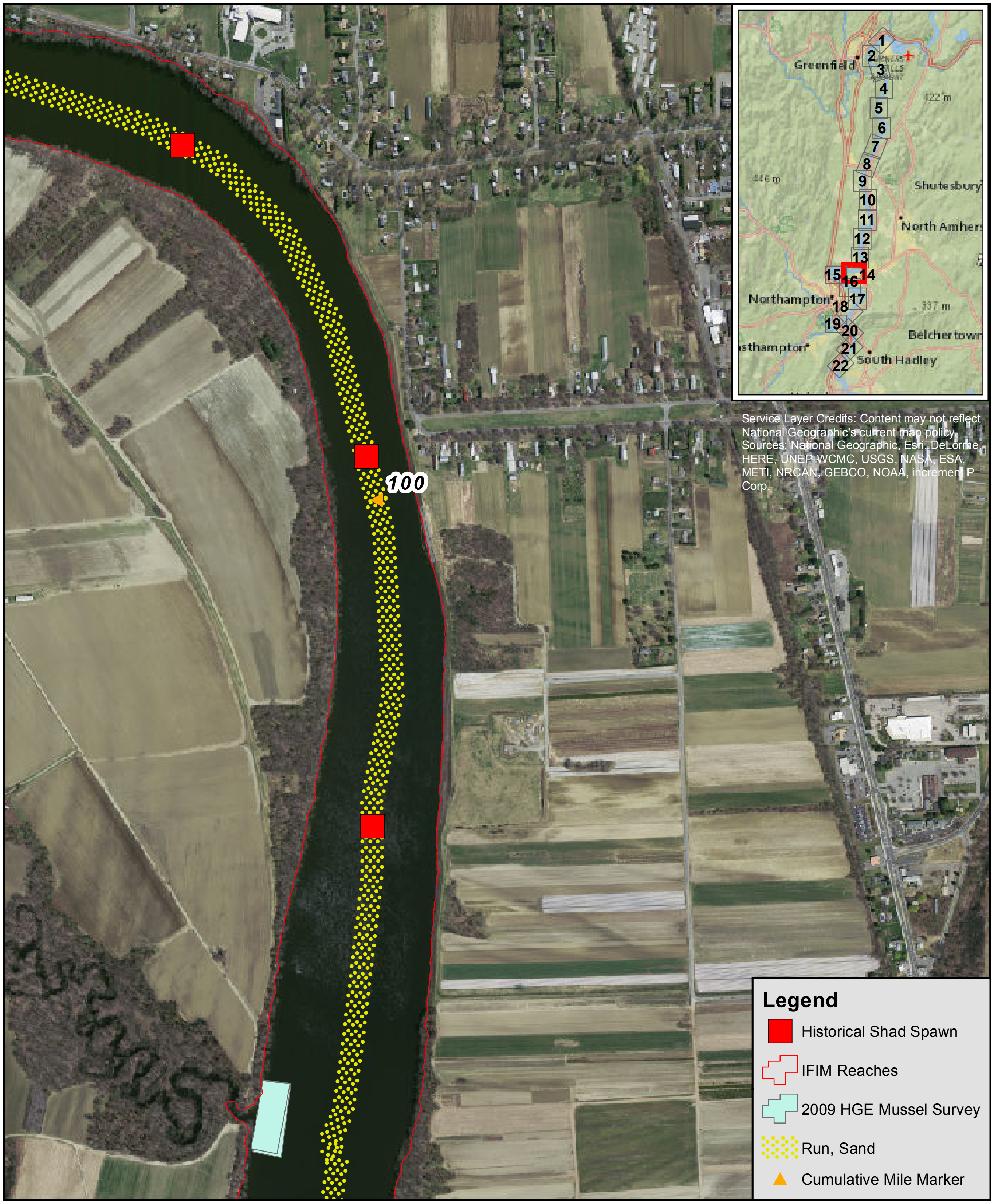

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 14

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0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

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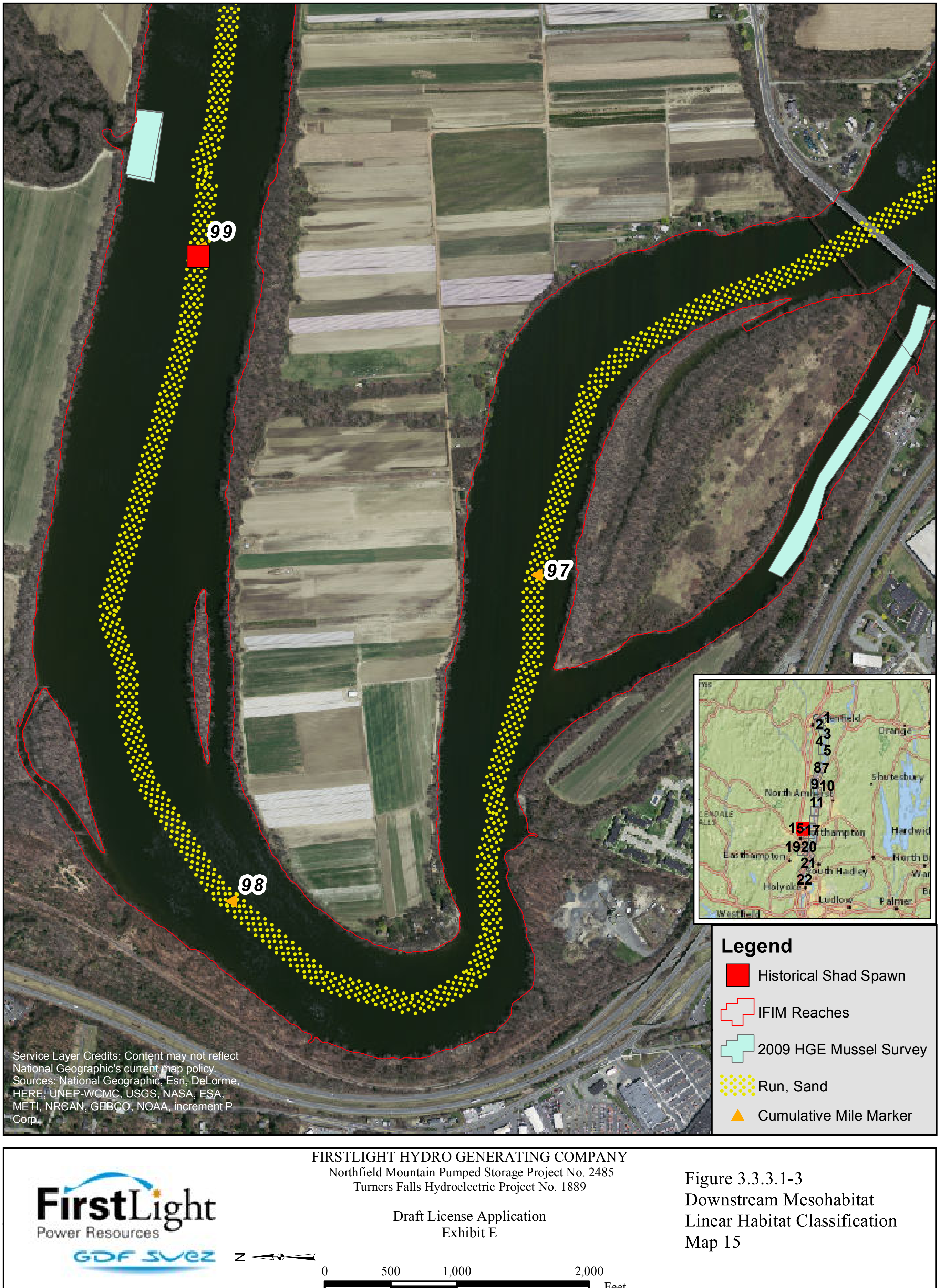

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 15

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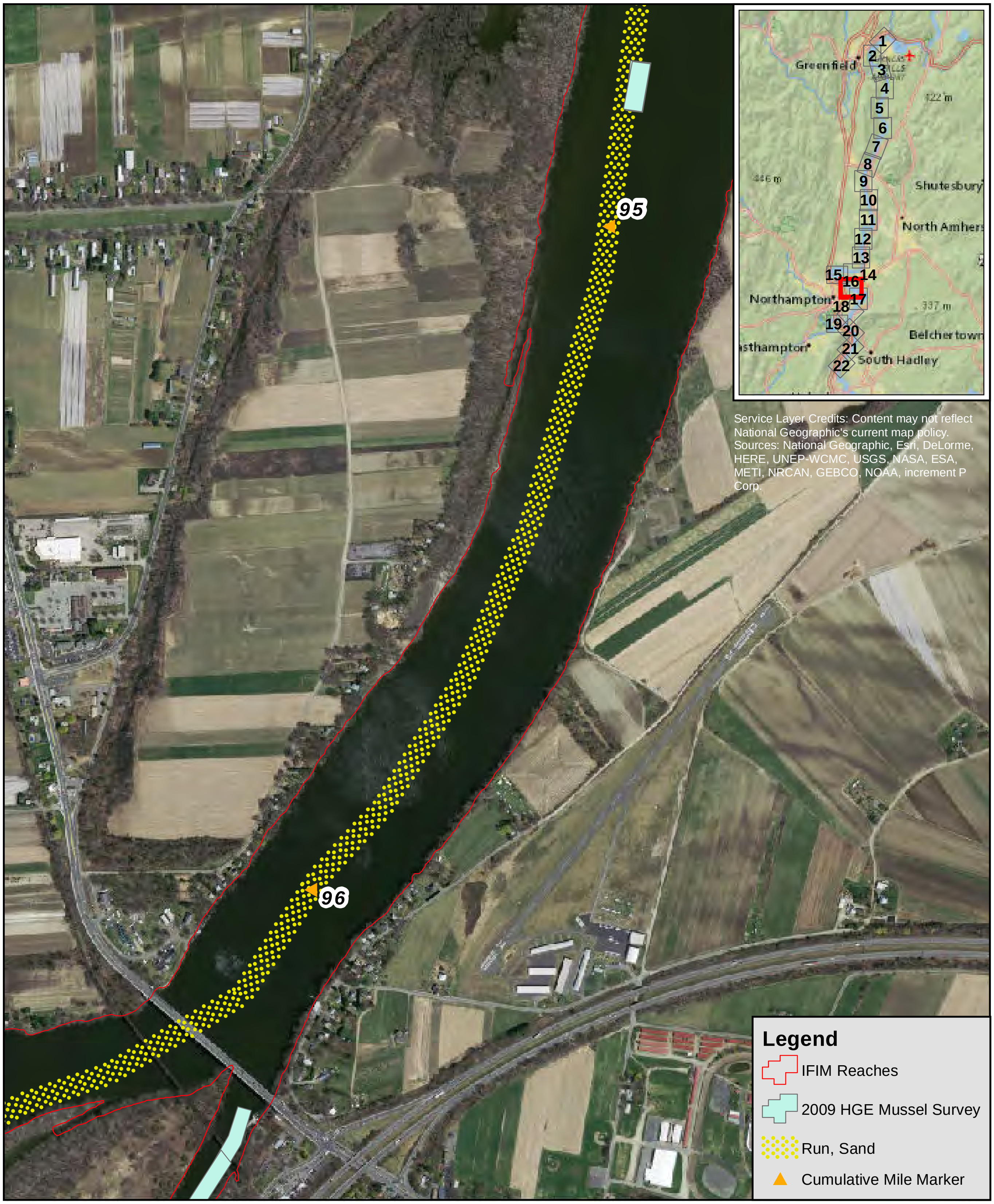

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 16

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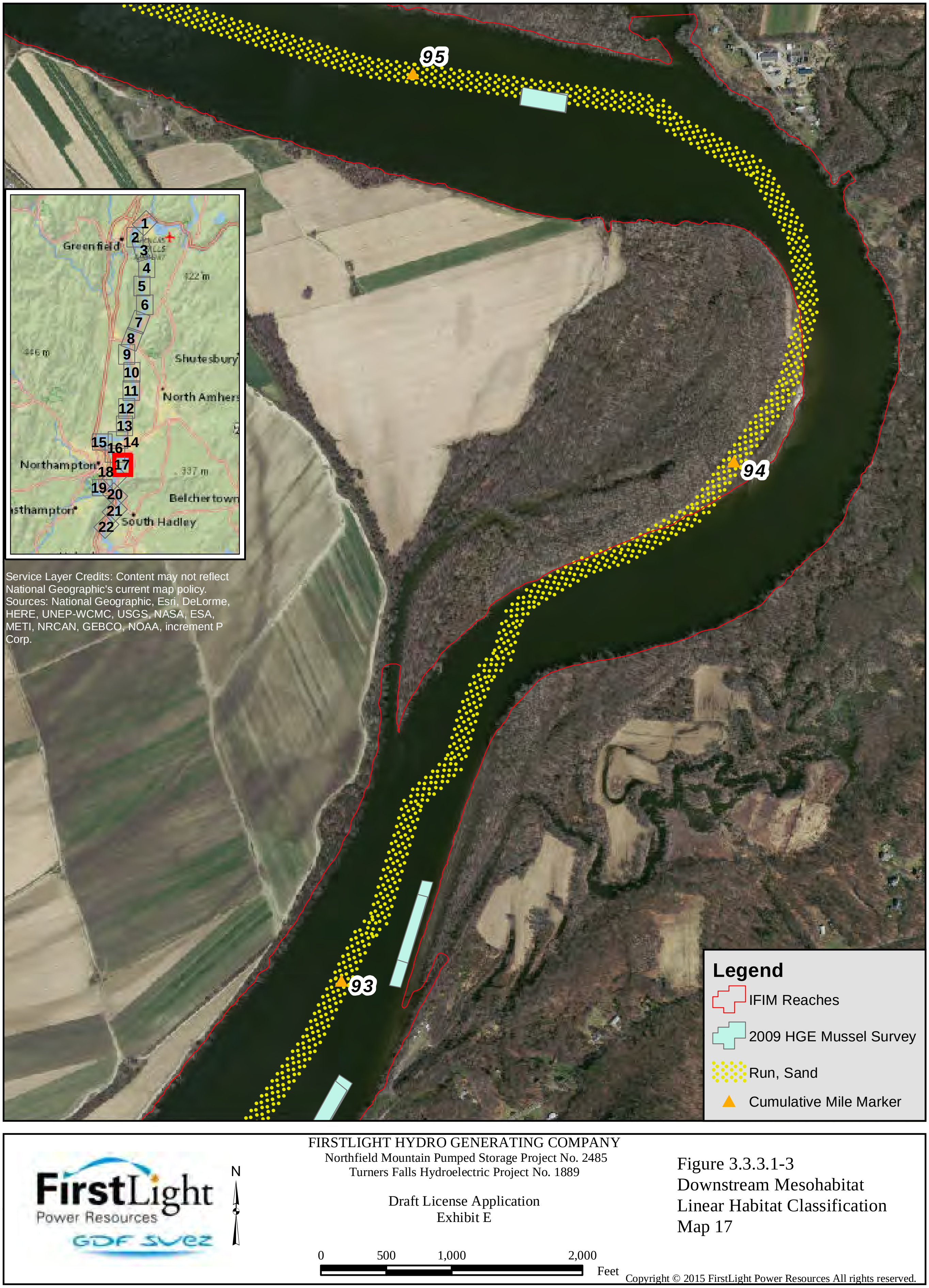

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 17

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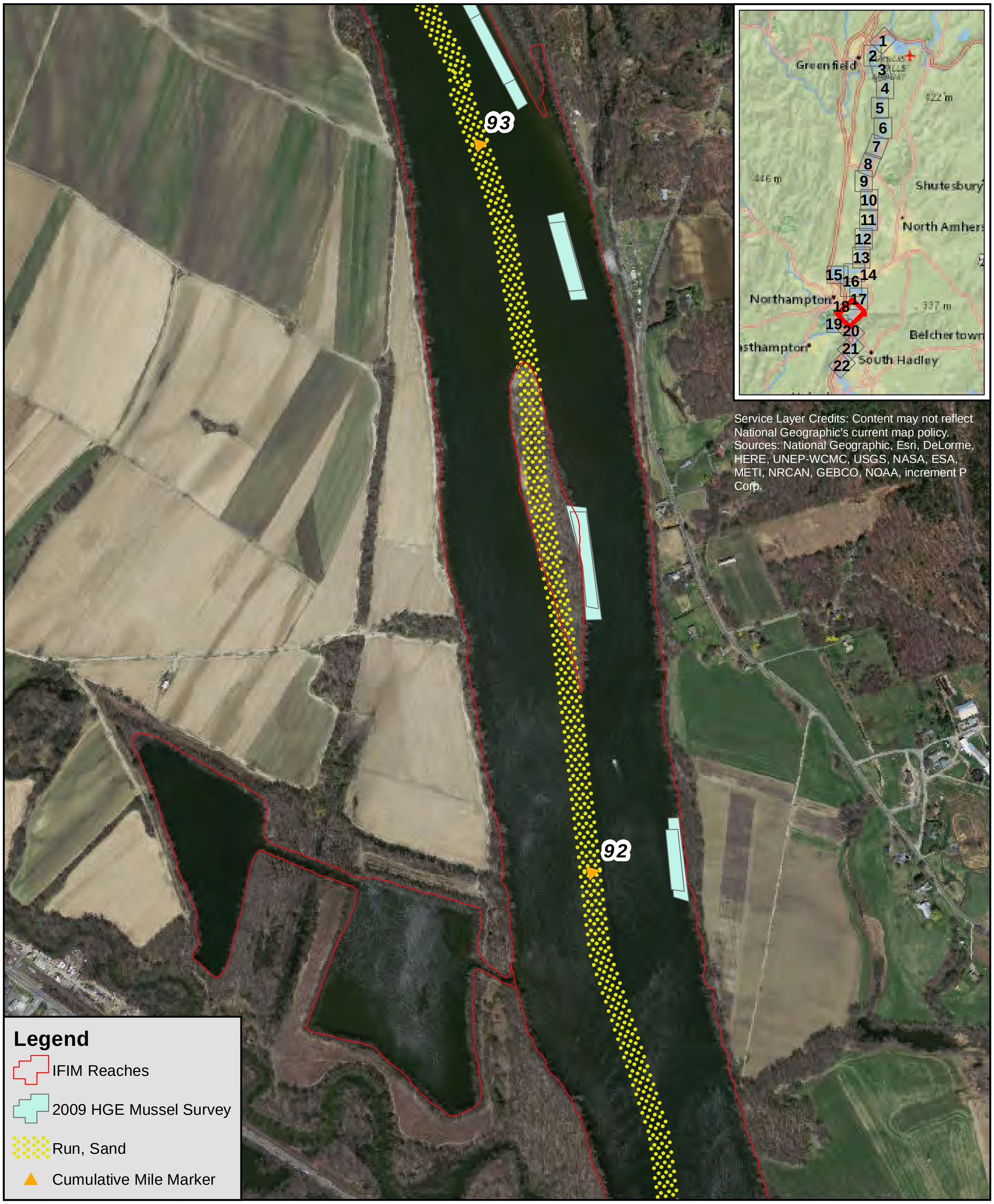

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 18

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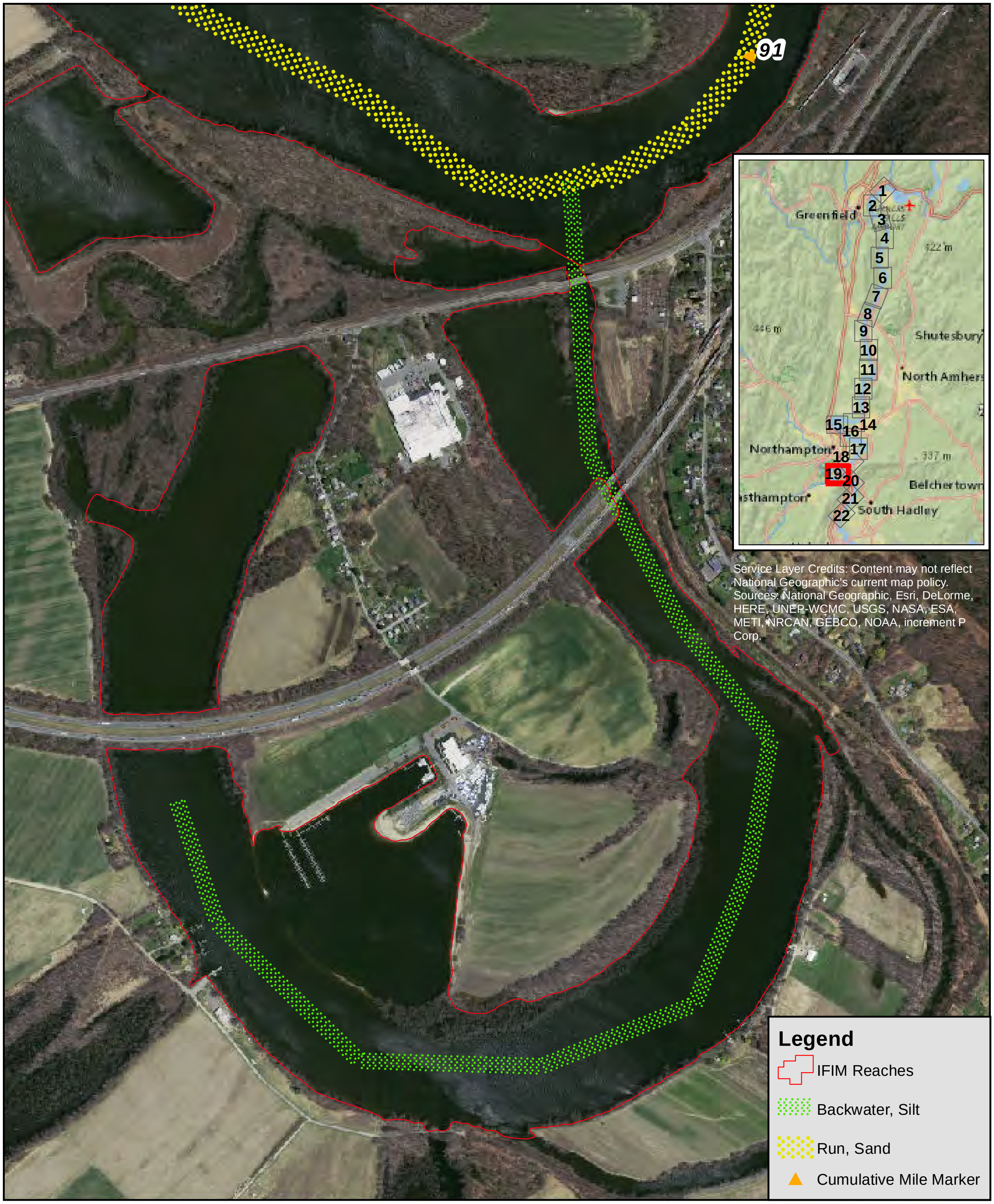

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Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 19

0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

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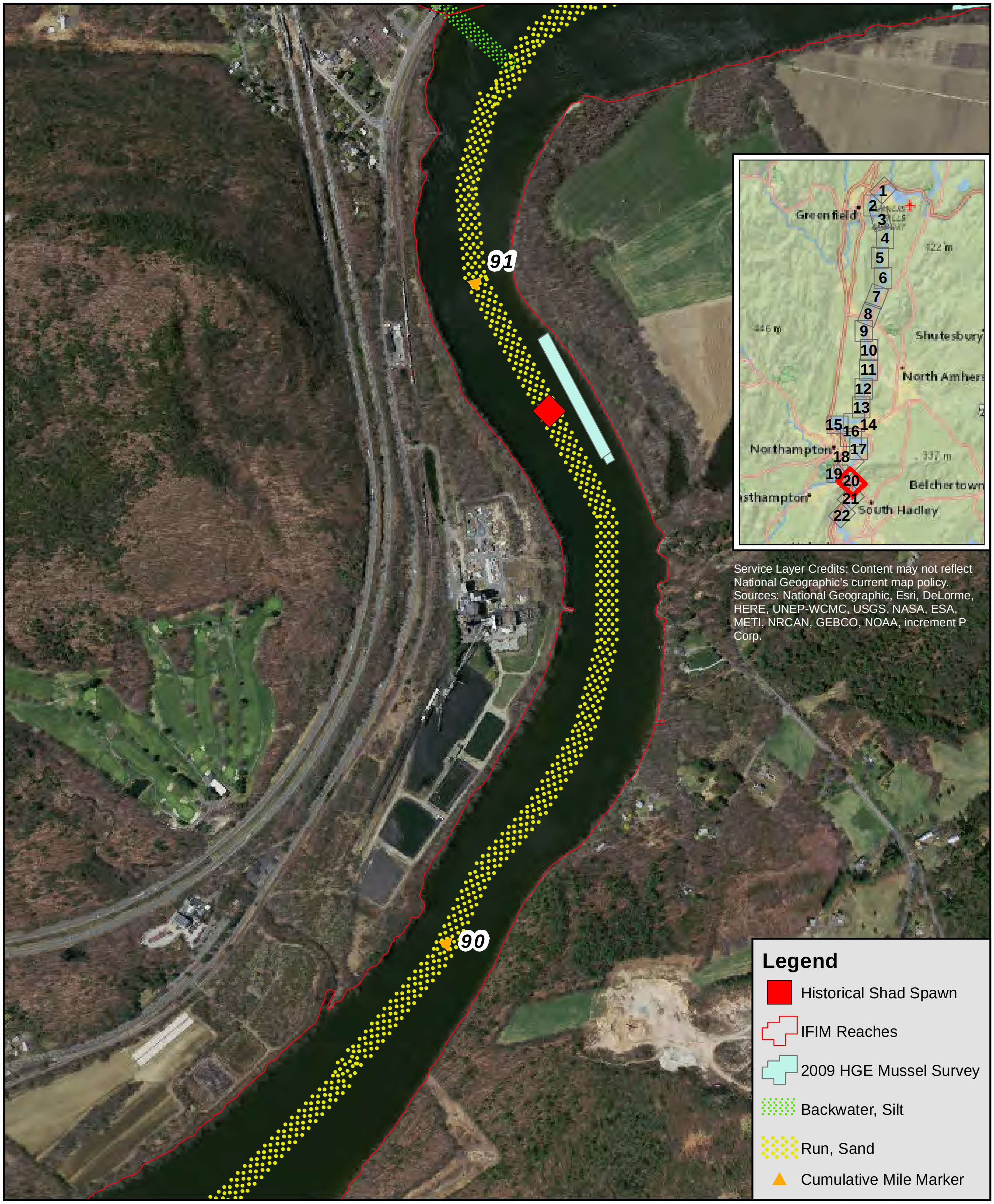

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N

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 20

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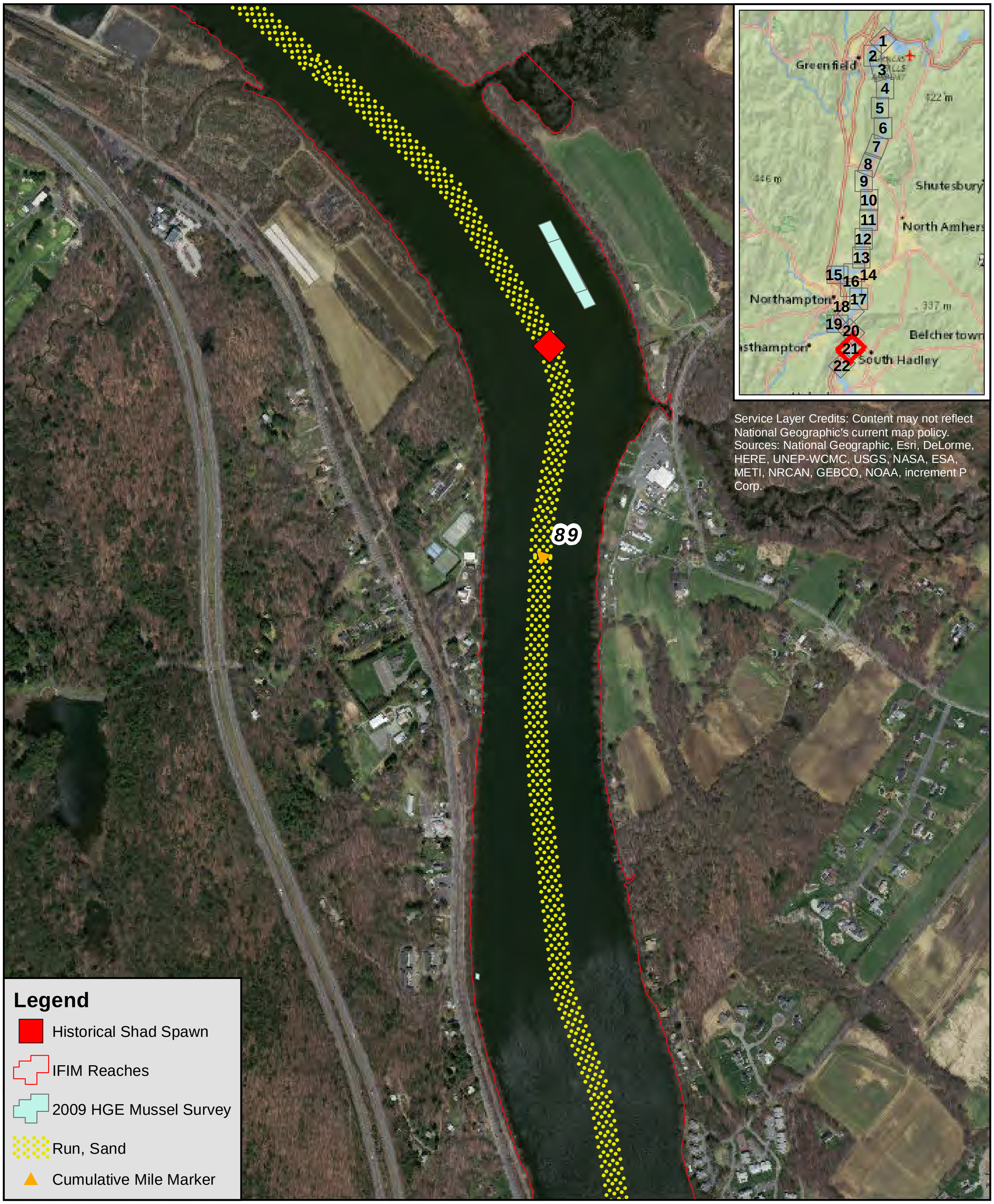

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0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 21

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0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

Figure 3.3.3.1-3
Downstream Mesohabitat
Linear Habitat Classification
Map 22

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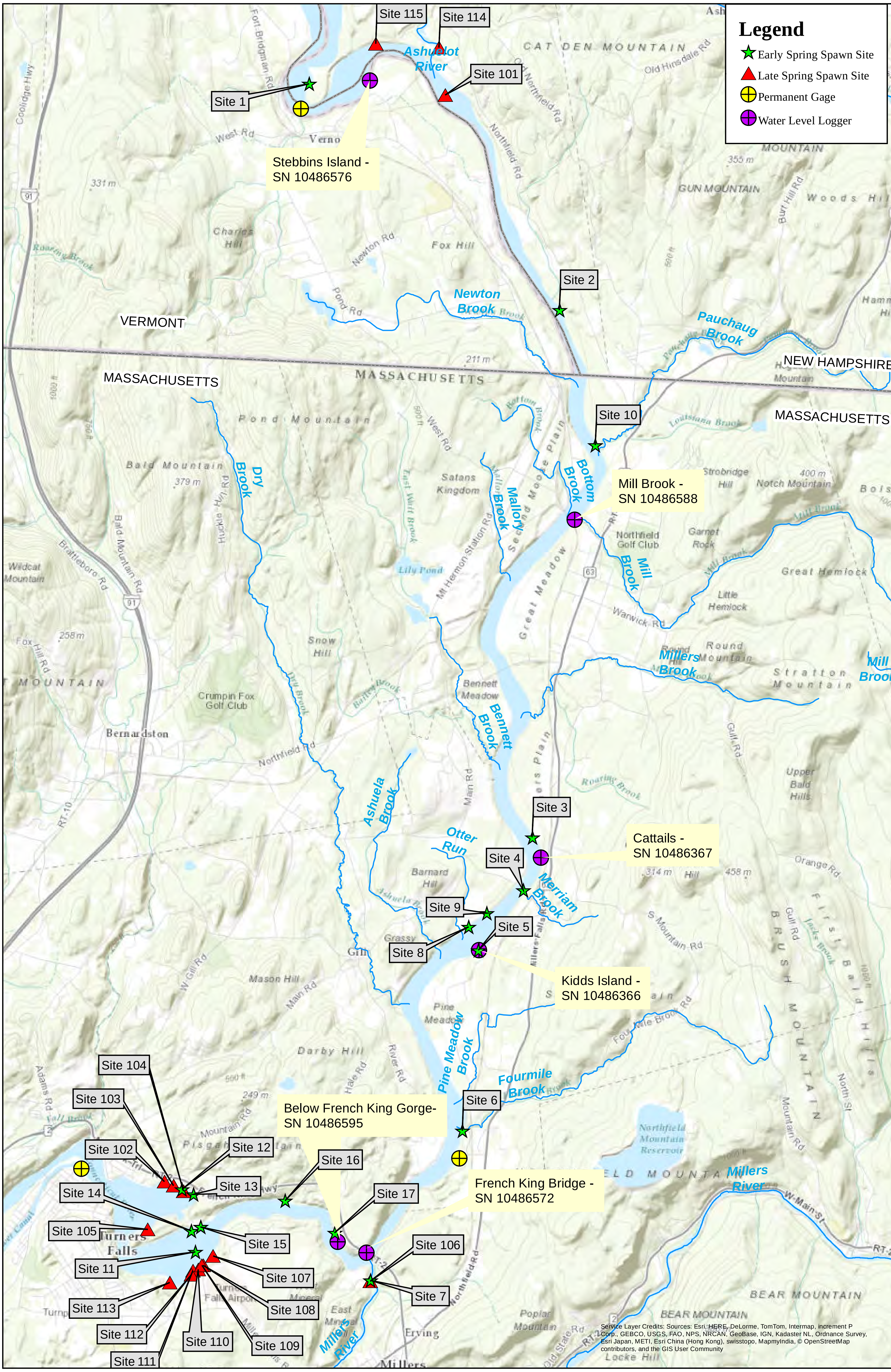

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Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

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0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Figure 3.3.3.1.2-1: Locations of Spawning Sites Identified During Early and Late Spring Littoral Zone Surveys

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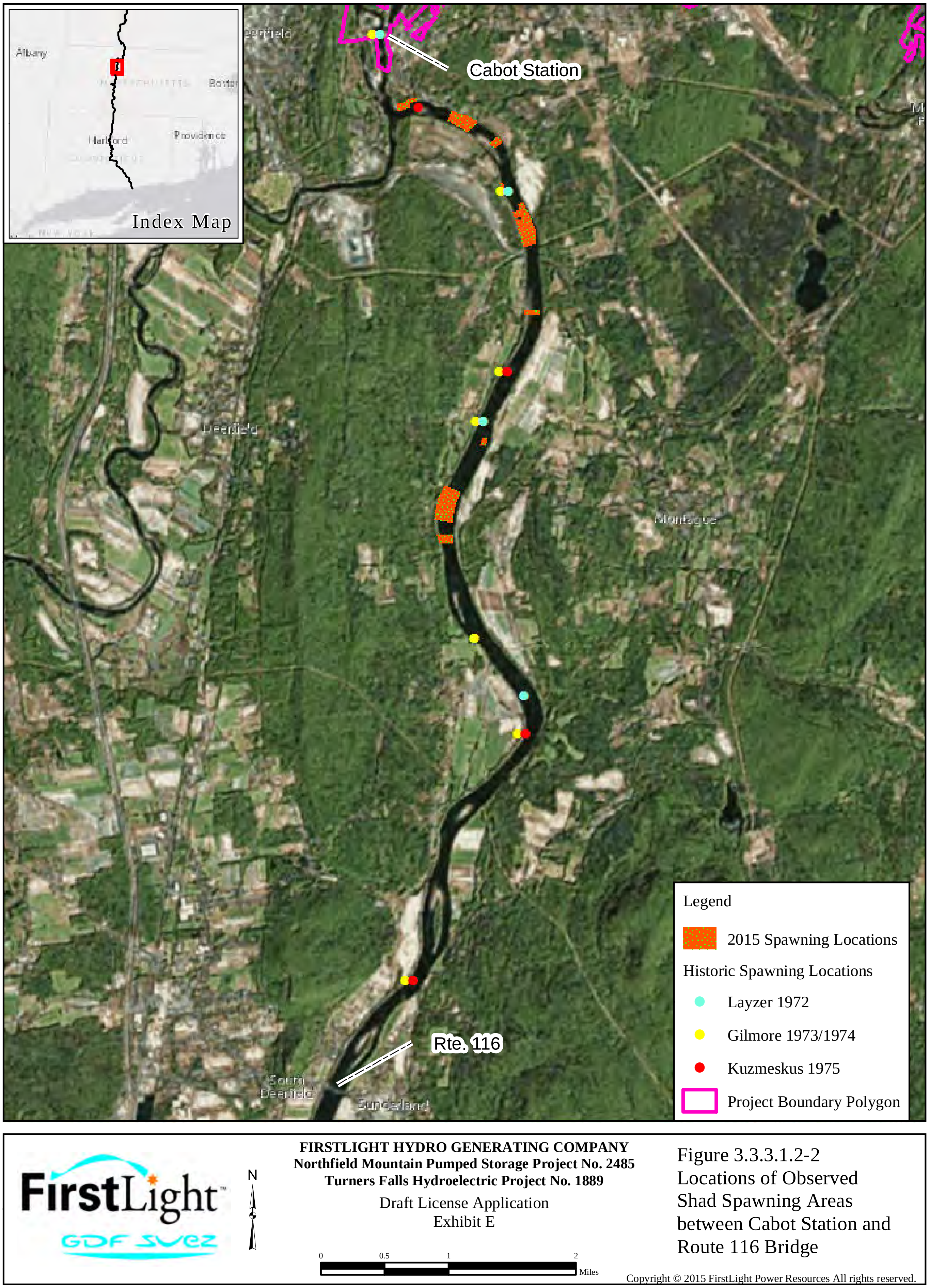

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Figure 3.3.3.1.2-2
Locations of Observed Shad Spawning Areas between Cabot Station and Route 116 Bridge

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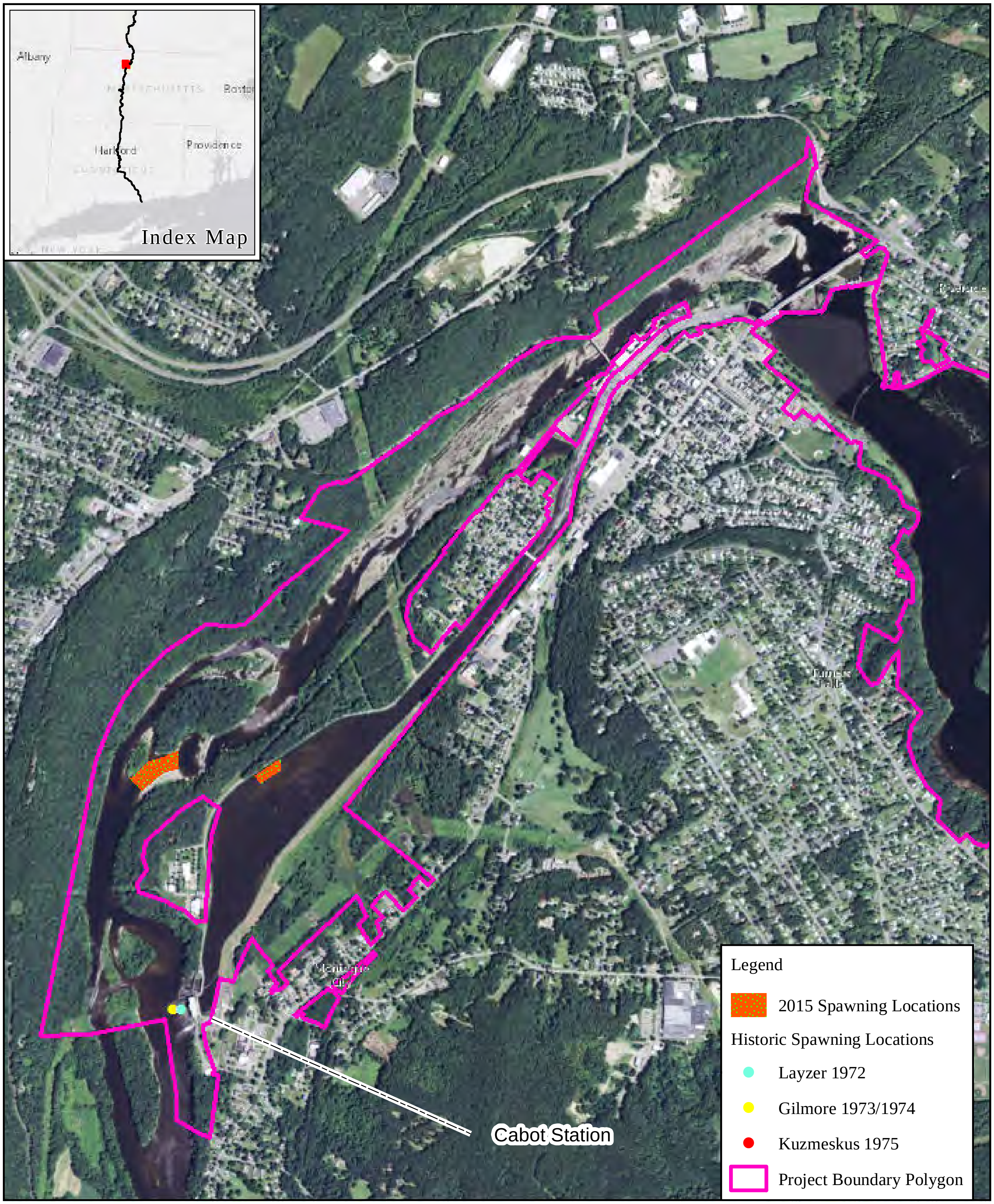

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Figure 3.3.3.1.2-3
Locations of Observed Shad Spawning Areas in Bypass Reach and Lower Turners Falls Canal

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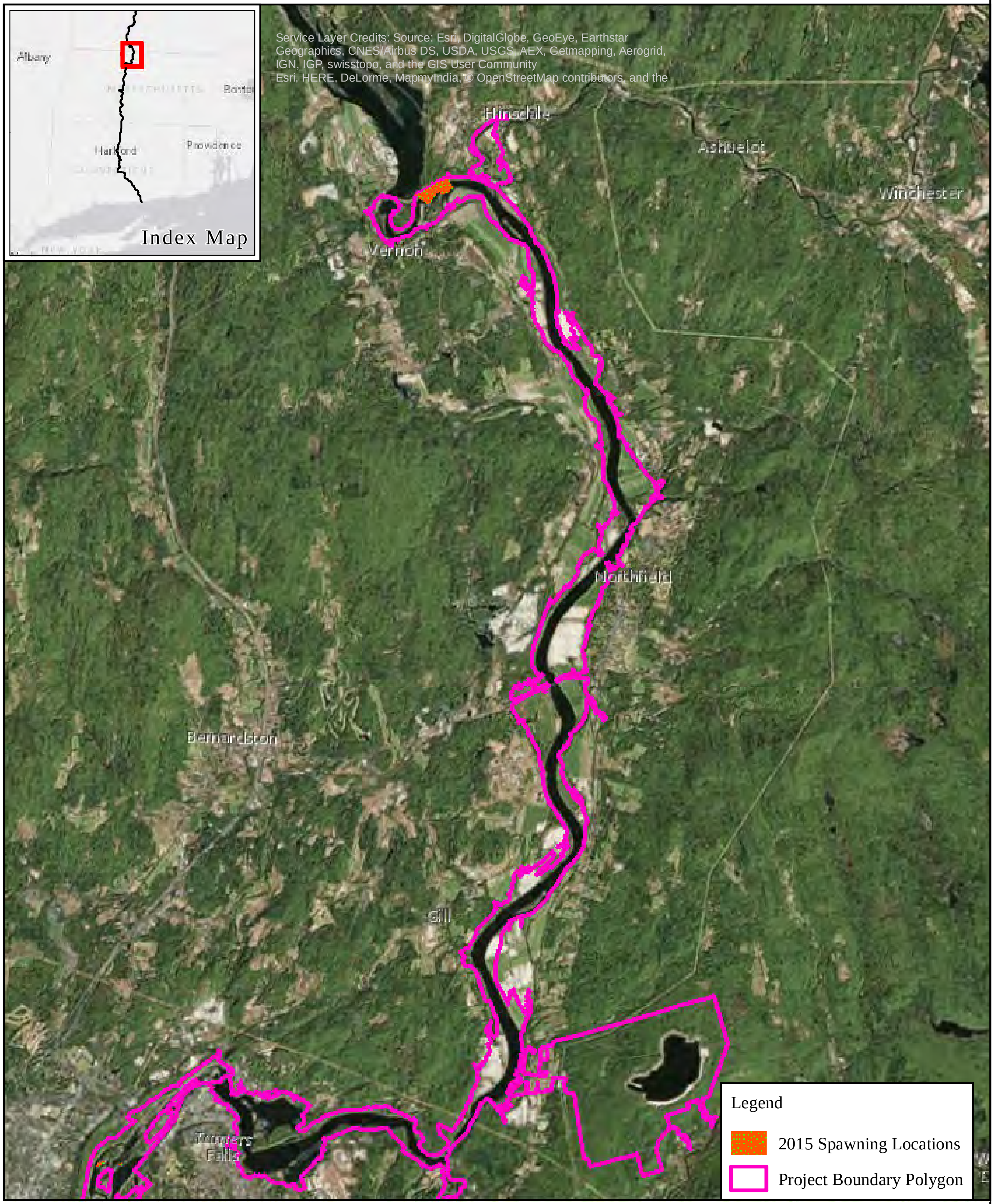

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N

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Figure 3.3.3.1.2-4
Locations of Observed Shad Spawning Areas in Impoundment.

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3.3.4 Terrestrial Resources

The Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development provide habitat for a variety of wildlife and botanical species. An understanding of the terrestrial resources in the Project area provides information on the type and quantity of habitat potentially affected by Project operations. Biologists collected information on the distribution of invasive species, characterized habitats, and developed a plant census in 2014 and 2015 to determine if Project operations affect existing wildlife and botanical resources. As part of the relicensing process, three studies were conducted relative to terrestrial resources as follows:

- Study No. 3.4.1 *Baseline Inventory of Terrestrial, Wildlife and Botanical Resources*
- Study No. 3.4.2 *Effects of Northfield Mountain Project-Related Land Management Practices and Recreation use on Terrestrial Habitats*
- Study No. 3.5.1 *Baseline Inventory of Wetland, Riparian and Littoral Habitat in the Turners Falls Impoundment and Assessment of Operation Impacts on Special-Status Species*

A report for Study No. 3.4.2 was filed with FERC on September 14, 2015. The field work for Study Nos. 3.4.1 and 3.5.1 is complete, but reports have not been finalized.

3.3.4.1 Affected Environment

Background

The physiographic settings of the Project, with its relatively large tracts of undisturbed terrestrial habitats, provide a wide variety of habitats for terrestrial wildlife. There are a considerable number of parks and conservation lands in and around the Project area. Notable areas include (but are not limited to); Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Westwood Wildlife Sanctuary, Rocky Mt. Park, King Phillips Hill, Brush Mt. Conservation area, Pauchaug Brook area, Bennett Meadow area, Cabot Woods, and the Northfield State Forest. FirstLight also manages recreational resources at the Project as part of their FERC license and agreement with the State of Massachusetts. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development has many recreational features (e.g., a trail system with over 26 miles of trails, observation area, picnic areas) that are inherently attractive. Public recreation sites can affect wildlife behavior (both attracting and displacing) and impact botanical resources (e.g., trampling vegetation, causing erosion along trails, and spreading invasive species).

The study area for the Turners Falls Development and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development covers the following areas:

- Upland areas along the TFI including areas within the Project Boundary and areas up to 200 feet from shore where the Project Boundary is along the shoreline;
- Upland areas adjacent to the bypass reach, defined as extending from the Turners Falls Dam to the Cabot Station tailrace;
- The Connecticut River from the Cabot Station tailrace to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland; and
- Approximately 2,011 acres of land of Northfield Mountain, of which approximately 405-407 acres is the Upper Reservoir.

FERC Relicensing Studies

As noted above, FirstLight has conducted several studies to gather information necessary to understand the potential effects of land management practices and recreational use on wildlife and botanical resources within the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and the TFI study area. The goal of these studies is to characterize and describe the terrestrial wildlife and botanical resources that use representative upland habitats within and adjacent to the Project Boundary. Specific objectives are:

- Survey and inventory overall upland wildlife habitats;
- Note the occurrence of wildlife sighting during the course of the surveys;
- Survey and inventory vegetation communities and land use; and
- Survey and inventory the nature and extent of upland invasive, exotic vegetation species.

Wildlife

Mammals

Table 3.3.4.1-1 provides a list of the 35 mammal species that were directly and indirectly observed in the Project area during 2014 field surveys, as well as species that are likely to exist in the study area. The list of mammals likely to occur is inferred from available habitat types documented in the study area cross referenced with life history of mammals that are known to occur within the region as referenced by DeGraaf and Yamasaki (2001). The diverse vegetated communities within the study area provide a range of habitat niches for species typical of the highlands of central to western Massachusetts and the Connecticut River valley. The majority of the species are habitat generalists with a known tolerance for habitat modifications and adaptations.

Some of the furbearing animals that are known to inhabit study area include beaver, red fox, gray fox, muskrat, Virginia opossum, and striped skunk. These wildlife species reside in many different habitat types such as woodland, wetland, scrub-shrub or early successional areas, and grassland areas. Use of these areas may shift during different life stages and/or times or year.

Reptiles and amphibians

Of the MADFW 45 inland native species of amphibians and reptiles that are known to occur in Massachusetts (Cardoza & Mirick, 2009), a total of 23 amphibians and reptiles were observed during 2014 field surveys or are likely to occur within the study area. Included are nine frogs and toads, four salamanders, three turtles, and seven snakes. These inland native species include terrestrial and semi-aquatic amphibians and reptiles. A list of reptiles and amphibians recorded or likely to occur in the study area is provided in Table 3.3.4.1-2.

Avian Species

The Connecticut River provides important habitat to a variety of bird species. During the spring and summer, many species (including those observed during this survey) breed and nest along the river. In spring and fall, the river is a major migratory flyway, and, generally, in the winter, it provides habitat for species of waterfowl that nest further north. Throughout the year the river is a source of food for foraging birds.

Sixty-four (64) species of birds were observed on or near the river (Table 3.3.4.1-3). Most species were found in the surrounding upland floodplain, rather than utilizing aquatic habitat. Species associated with the river include: Double-crested Cormorant, Canada Goose, Common Merganser, Mallard, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Bank Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Spotted Sandpiper, and Belted Kingfisher. Fifty-nine (59) species of birds were observed within the study area of Northfield Mountain (Table 3.3.4.1-3). The Northwest Slope had the greatest species richness, with 47 species, while the Northeast Slope had only 17 observed species. This is likely a reflection on the relative sizes of the various sections, rather than differing habitats. A few open habitat species occurred only in the mown areas and power line Right of Ways of the Northwest Slope, but the majority number of species were found in more than one slope section (e.g., Ovenbird).

Vegetative Communities

The region encompassing the study area is characterized by a diversity of terrestrial botanical resources that are influenced by geological features, soil type, hydrology, climate, and historic and current land use. Biologists documented 403 plant species within the study area in 2014 and 2015. An overall plant census list of all recorded plant species identified during the 2014 and 2015 field season is provided in Table 3.3.4.1-4. Field surveys were conducted in September 2015 to confirm vegetative communities. . One plant community, the calcareous rock cliff community, was identified during survey work, but this habitat was not mapped as the aerial signature and habitat size did not allow for identification using available aerial imagery. Four disturbed or mostly unvegetated cover types; agricultural, development, bypass reach, and transmission right of way, were mapped, but these are not described by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). Located in the Connecticut River valley, with adjacent high elevations of Northfield Mountain, the study area has characteristics of both Northeastern Highlands and Northeastern Coastal Zone ecoregions (Swain & Kersey, 2011).

The Connecticut River, during its course between Vernon Dam and Turners Falls Dam, regains the appearance of a river even though it is impounded. The wide and fertile plains on both sides of the Connecticut River are terminated by terraces rising to forest upland country to the east and west. Examples of geologic and geomorphic features influencing the area's botanical communities include:

- the Connecticut River valley and remnant floodplains;
- the confluence of the Connecticut River and major tributaries (e.g., Millers River);
- bedrock and alluvial islands within the Connecticut River; and
- the high elevations of Northfield Mountain.

The primary upland plant communities (Table 3.3.4.1-5) include:

- Remnant / transitional flood plain forest
- Northern hardwoods-hemlock-white pine forest
- Successional northern hardwood forest
- Hemlock ravine
- White pine - oak forest
- Calcareous rock cliff (not mapped)
- Circumneutral rock cliff (not mapped),
- Oak - hickory forest,
- Agricultural lands (not described by NHESP)
- Bypass Reach (not described by the NHESP)
- Development (not described by NHESP)
- Right of way (not described by NHESP)

Remnant/Transitional Floodplain Forests

Soils in this zone generally experience annual flooding and are either silt loams or very fine sandy loams, and soil mottling is generally preset within two feet of the soil surface. A surface organic layer is typically absent. Silver maple, sycamore, cottonwood, red maple, ash, American elm, and willow are the dominate tree species. A shrub layer is generally lacking; however, saplings of overstory trees are common. The herbaceous layer is typically an even mixture of wood-nettle, ostrich fern, sensitive fern and false nettle. Within the study area, these limited floodplain forests are the dominate forest type present along the main stem of the Connecticut River, islands, and its major tributaries (Figure 3.3.4.1-1).

Northern Hardwoods-Hemlock-White Pine Forest

Northern hardwoods - hemlock - white pine forest is the dominant vegetated community along the shoreline from Barton Cove upstream to the French King Bridge and on the northwestern and northeastern slopes of

Northfield Mountain. This forest type is associated with a closed canopy forest of a mixture of deciduous and evergreen trees, with sparse shrub and herbaceous layers (Figure 3.3.4.1-3). The forest is dominated by a mix of sugar maple, American beech, yellow birch, and red oak in variable proportions, with eastern hemlock and white pine intermingled throughout. American beech tend to dominate on drier location wetlands. Black cherry, white birch, red maple, and other early successional tree species are often scattered, with occurrences in the subcanopy with stripped maple, and sometimes ironwood. The shrub layer is usually open, with clumps of hobblebush, honeysuckle and Japanese barberry. The diverse but sparse herb layer includes Christmas fern, Canada mayflower, club mosses, asters, and false nettle.

Successional Northern Hardwoods

Successional northern hardwoods in the study area vary from forest communities with thick young sprouts and little diversity to mature, diversifying forests with undergrowth of more shade-tolerant trees. The canopy is seldom completely closed and undergrowth may be dense or open. Areas of successional forest are associated with past disturbance such as cutting or blow-down / storm damage. Aspen, white birch, black birch, red maple, and /or black cherry tend to be common throughout the community. The understory of more mature successional forests is comprised of young, more shade-tolerant trees (typically less than 10" at diameter at breast height). Shrubs and herbaceous species are variable, and includes species common to edge habitat and open areas such as sumac, goldenrod, Joe-pye weed and blackberry (Figure 3.3.4.1-2). Successional northern hardwood forests are found intermingled throughout the study area and are typical of transition areas and edge habitat around developed areas and agricultural lands.

Hemlock Ravine

Hemlock ravine communities are dominated by the dense overstory canopies of eastern hemlock trees. These cool moist habitats are located in topographic draws and drainage ways in the landscape. In the project area, this heavily shaded habitat is characterized by little growth in the understory. The forest floor typically has little vegetation and is covered by needles, twigs, and small branches of hemlocks. Occasionally deciduous trees that grow along with hemlock occur at very low percentages and include; a mixture of oak species, (red, white and black), yellow birch, and red maple. Generally, the shrub layer is sparse, with occasional individuals of the canopy species and small patches of mountain laurel. Hemlock ravines communities attract wildlife that depend on mature dense evergreen forests and typically host a variety of songbirds that nest high in the canopy. Several hemlock forested areas and ravines are found along hillsides and lowlands at Barton Cove campgrounds and throughout the northern and southern slopes of Northfield Mountain (Figure 3.3.4.1-4)

White Pine- Oak Forest

The white-pine oak forests within the study area are limited. The forest has a partial closed canopy with sporadic understory shrub coverage. The overstory is dominated by white pine and red oak with the shrub layer dominated by red maple, low bush blue berry, and mountain laurel. Herbaceous vegetation varies, but includes bracken fern, Canada mayflower, and wintergreen. This habitat is ideal for generalist species such as gray squirrels, short-tailed shrews, voles, and chipmunks. Common birds within this habitat may include Red-eyed Vireo, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrushes and Red Tailed Hawks. White pine – oak forests are found at lower elevations of the northwest and southern slope of Northfield Mountain (Figure 3.3.4.1-5).

Calcareous Rock Cliff Community

Rock Cliff Communities all occur on a more or less vertical bedrock cliff faces. They have extremely sparse scattered vascular plants on ledges and in crevices. Calcareous rock cliffs have vegetation that is more distinct and specific to the habitat. Purple cliff brake, maidenhair spleenwort, blunt-lobed cliff-fern, and columbine are characteristic of calcareous cliffs. Of these species, purple cliff brake and columbine were both seen within the project area. Surrounding vegetation tends to be northern hardwood forest. This is a more uncommon community found throughout Massachusetts and is host to several unusual plants. A Calcareous Rock Cliff community exists on the western bank of the TFI extending upstream and downstream of the French King Bridge (Figure 3.3.4.1-6).

Circumneutral Rock Cliff Community

This community type is found along the summit and higher elevations of the southeastern slope of Northfield Mountain. Rose ledge and the Farley ledges are notable examples where sparse, scattered vascular plants are found in ledges and small crevices within vertical cliff faces. Lichens are occasionally dense on cliff faces. These communities can be variable in moisture, but generally consist of areas of significant rock outcroppings that are well shaded by trees of the surrounding forest. Species of dry open areas, including pale corydalis, bearberry, plantain-leaved pussytoes, columbine, marginal wood-fern little bluestem grass, ebony spleenwort, Rusty cliff-fern, and mosses. In the area, chestnut oak, scrub oak, and witch hazel are sporadically observed. These cliff areas can provide nesting habitats for Ravens. Few to no mammals, reptiles or amphibians would be expected on these steep slope faces (Figure 3.3.4.1-7).

Oak – Hickory Forest

This community consists of hardwood forests dominated by a mixture of oaks, with hickories mixed in at a lower density. The canopy is dominated by one or several oak species including red oak, white oak, and black oak. Mixed in are lower densities of one or several hickory species. Other trees include ash, birch, sassafras, and red maple. The subcanopy commonly includes ironwood, flowering dogwood, shadbush, chestnut, and witch-hazel. Low shrubs are common and often diverse; blueberries, dogwoods, and viburnums are characteristically present. The herbaceous layer is also richer than in many oak forests. Plants typical of the herbaceous layer include hepatica, goldenrod, tick-trefoil, wild sarsaparilla, and false Solomon's seal. This variable forest community is found at higher elevations on the Northfield Mountain range, most notably in a strip of deciduous forest between the northwestern slope and southeast slope, and adjacent to the upper elevations to Rose ledge (Figure 3.3.4.1-8).

Agricultural Lands

Land use along the corridor of the Connecticut River is primarily rural and agricultural. In the study area, approximately 25% of the land use is classified as agricultural/open field habitat. These lands are managed and go through several vegetative changes within a growing season. The edge habitat of agricultural lands can be vulnerable to the introduction of invasive species. Invasive species also favor these edges as a result of abundant sunlight which promotes favorable growing conditions. Most agricultural land within the study area is a mosaic of various croplands, with few lands used for active livestock pasture. There were relatively few instances where agricultural fields were cleared to the river's edge. Typically, there exists a narrow buffer of forested land which offers erosion protection along the shoreline (Figure 3.3.4.1-9).

Bypass Reach

The bypass reach is approximately 2.7 miles long. Fall River, located near the head of the bypass channel, discharges into the bypass reach. Station No. 1 discharges into the bypass reach approximately 0.9 miles downstream of the Turners Falls Dam. The bypass is a unique habitat comprised of a mosaic of high energy shoreline and exposed bedrock. The eastern side of the bypass is occupied by historic industrial developments with numerous discharge locations that supported the historic industries that were built on the canal. The western side of the bypass is steeply sloping woodlands of Rocky Mountain Park. Rocky Mountain Park is part of the Pocumtuck Ridge, and is the northernmost subrange of the Metacomet Ridge mountain range of southern New England known for its continuous high cliffs, scenic vistas, and microclimate ecosystems containing species common to the northern hardwoods ecosystem types. Hemlock crowd narrow ravines, blocking sunlight and creating damp, cool growing conditions with associated cool climate plant species. Talus slopes are especially rich in nutrients and support several calcium-loving plants uncommon in the region. The Massachusetts Audubon Society considers the Rocky Mountain section of Pocumtuck Ridge exceptionally rich in its diversity of bird species, and an especially important area for migratory, breeding, and wintering birds (Figure 3.3.4.1-10).

Development

Portions of the upland habitat within the study area are dominated by maintained spaces (i.e., residential, commercial, or transportation corridors) and sporadic shrub or overstory vegetation, such as solitary white pines or other species. The primary vegetation in these areas is comprised of shrub and herbaceous layer vegetation. Herbaceous vegetation is dominated by mowed areas of Kentucky bluegrass. Shrub layer vegetation may include glossy buckthorn, Russian olive, and several species of northern hardwood saplings.

Right-of-Way

This community was identified within the portion of the study area that is crossed by electric transmission right-of-ways. These areas are maintained by periodic vegetation management which limits the growth of large woody vegetation. The dominant communities are shrub and herbaceous communities. Shrub layer vegetation is dominated by white pine saplings, glossy buckthorn, red cedar, and meadowsweet. The herbaceous community is extensive and includes several weedy species such as chicory, mullein, and pearly everlasting. Additional herbaceous vegetation includes bracken fern, sensitive fern, Joe pye weed, and milkweed. Portions of these areas include gravel access roads (Figure 3.3.4.1-11).

Wetlands

Biologists led by a Professional Wetland Scientist field-verified NWI mapped wetlands within the study area. These areas were not formally delineated, but the boundaries were refined to provide a better level of detail. Thirty (30) NWI mapped wetlands were field verified, and an additional 18 non-NWI mapped wetlands were also identified and mapped. Dominant wetland communities within the study area include:

- Hemlock swamp
- Red maple swamp
- Woodland vernal pool

Hemlock Swamp

Hemlock is a major or co-dominate canopy species in hemlock swamps within the study area. In some cases, hemlock forms dense stands, but more commonly hemlock is associated with a mixture of white pine, red maple and yellow birch. The understory tends to be sparse to moderately vegetated with highbush blueberry, winterberry, and mountain laurel. Ferns are common, especially cinnamon fern, along with a hummocky floor covered with sphagnum moss. Notable hemlock swamp habitat is found down gradient of the Farley ledges situated in a well -defined saddle in the landscape. These areas can provide year round habitat and breeding (i.e. vernal pools) for amphibian species (Figure 3.3.4.1-12).

Red Maple Swamp

Red maple is usually strongly dominate in the overstory of red maple swamps in the study area and can often provide up to 90% of the canopy cover. A variable mixture of subordinate tree species co-occurs with red maple, including yellow birch, black gum, white ash, white pine, elm, hemlock, pin oak, and swamp white oak. The shrub layer of red maple swamps is usually dense and well developed with greater than 50 percent cover, but it can be variable. Sweet pepperbush highbush blueberry, winterberry, spicebush, alder and viburnum species often dominant the shrub stratum. The herbaceous stratum can be variable, but ferns are unusually abundant. Cinnamon fern is common with other ferns including but not limited to; sensitive fern, royal fern and marsh fern. Gaminoides are common, mixed in with a variety of other herbaceous species commonly including; skunk cabbage, false hellebore, spotted touch-me-not, swamp dewberry, and marsh marigold (Figure 3.3.4.1-13).

Woodland Vernal Pool

Woodland vernal pools are typically small, shallow depressions that are isolated from other surface waters. They usually flood in spring and sometimes in fall, and generally hold water for a minimum of two months but are dry in summer. Because vernal pools are temporary bodies of water, they do not support fish populations. When dry, woodland vernal pools can be often be recognized by a layer of water-stained gray leaves covering the pool's basin and distinct waterline marks on the base of tree buttresses. These temporarily flooded areas provide important breeding habitat for amphibians. Due to prolonged standing water, woodland vernal pools often have sparse-to-little shrub and herbaceous vegetation within the pool basin. Red maple and hemlock, along with lesser quantities of various wetland tree species, are found in the canopy cover, similar to hemlock swamp and red maple swamp communities. Vernal pools are tracked as a separate community type because of the important habitat they provide for amphibians and invertebrates.

Biologists located and documented 13 woodland vernal pools in the Northfield Mountain study area (Figure 3.3.4.1-14) and one vernal pool along the Turner Falls impoundment (Table 3.3.4.1-6). Commonly observed egg masses of obligate vernal pool indicator species included spotted salamanders and wood frogs. Wood frogs and four local species of mole salamanders have evolved breeding strategies intolerant of fish predation on their eggs and larvae; the lack of fish populations is essential to the breeding success of these species. Other amphibian species use vernal pools but they do not depend on them including American toads, green frogs, and red-spotted newts. It should be noted that green frogs and red-spotted newts feed on obligate vernal pool species eggs and larval and can have negative effects on other amphibian population dynamics. Vernal pools also support a diverse invertebrate fauna, including obligate indicator species like fairy shrimp which complete their entire life cycle in vernal pools (Burne, 2001).

Invasive Species

Biologists identified 25 invasive plants in the Northfield Mountain and Turner Falls study area including; MIPAG listed non-native invasive plants, one MIPAG watch list species (coltsfoot), one USDA Forestry Service early detection species (Spotted knapweed), and, for consistency with other studies, European alder (see Table 3.3.4.1-7)). Locations of invasive species within the study area observed during 2014 field reconnaissance surveys are shown in Figure 3.3.4.1-15. This figure illustrates the relative abundance and distribution of invasive plants along the impoundment using estimated cover classes of <5%, 6-25%, 26-50%, > 50%. The following five (5) exotic and invasive plant species were found to be common within the study area during the 2014 field surveys:

- Oriental Bittersweet - found throughout the study area, particularly ubiquitous along the edge of the river where there is abundant sunlight. Highest concentrations were noted in the impoundment north of Pauchaug Brook where the impoundment transitions to a more dynamic riverine environment. In the upper reaches of the impoundment, Oriental bittersweet can be found covering at least 50% of the trees and shrubs along the shoreline.
- Japanese Knotweed - typically confined to discrete patches along the immediate shoreline and, in some instances, in small stands along the edge habitat of previously disturbed areas.
- Multiflora Rose - scattered throughout the study area, particularly along edges of field habitat and along shoreline/transition areas that abut agricultural lands.
- Japanese Barberry - throughout the study area, a common forest understory shrub that forms monoculture thickets. Particularly found in low lying lands and on upland islands within the river.

- Black Swallowwort – found throughout study area, particularly on the banks of the river and the impoundment

3.3.4.2 Environmental Effects

The occurrence and distribution of wildlife and botanical resources in the study area are generally unrelated to the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and/or Project operations. There is no evidence of any on-going adverse effects on upland wildlife and botanical resources. The majority of invasive species found at the Projects are upland species that occur outside the range of water level fluctuations that occur as part of day-to-day project operations. However, fluctuating water levels from project operations may cause disturbances allowing the establishment of invasives such as common reed and Japanese knotweed. Recreational activities at the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development do not appear to cause extensive harm on wildlife, but may include temporary displacement of some species. In some cases, wildlife which utilizes the shoreline may be temporarily impacted as water levels rise and fall, but generally these species are able to move freely. Wildlife as well as botanical resources within the study area may be negatively affected by vegetation management and maintenance of development lands around the TFI, the Northfield Mountain reservoir and the maintenance of development-related access ways. As such, there is some potential for ground disturbing activities (i.e., land clearing construction activities) which may result in the spread or propagation of invasive species as well as degradation of existing habitat. In addition, recreational facilities (i.e., boat launches) may allow for the movement or introduction of invasive vegetation (both terrestrial and aquatic). However, such effects would be minimized through vegetation management planning.

3.3.4.3 Cumulative Effects

Operation and maintenance of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and Turners Falls Development may, to a limited degree, have a cumulative effect on the spread of invasive species. Commercial, residential and agricultural development within and adjacent to the Project boundaries potentially introduce invasive species to terrestrial habitat within the Project boundaries. Other potential vectors for invasive species include a transmission line right-of-way maintained by Eversource in the western portion of the Northfield Mountain study area, the Northfield Mountain trail system, which includes over 25 miles of trail, and recreational activities (e.g. boating) within the impoundment that could disturb the shoreline or bring in aquatic invasives from other locations. Vegetation management and fluctuating water levels associated with the operation and maintenance of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and Turners Falls Development may supplement these non-Project related sources of invasive species.

3.3.4.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

Wildlife, as well as botanical resources, within the study area may be negatively affected by vegetation management and maintenance of development lands around the Turners Falls impoundment and the maintenance of development-related access ways. As such, there is some potential for ground disturbing activities (i.e., land clearing construction activities) that may result in the spread or propagation of invasive species. In addition, recreational facilities (i.e., boat launches) may allow for the movement or introduction of invasive vegetation (both terrestrial and aquatic). Such effects can be minimized through construction related vegetation management planning.

3.3.4.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Activities associated with vegetation management and maintenance of power canal associated support structures and development-related access ways have the potential to propagate or spread invasive botanical species. The vegetation management area around the Upper Reservoir on Northfield Mountain, which includes some mowed sections of land immediately outside of the Protected Fenced Zone, is maintained for safety and surveillance as part of Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development Dam Safety Surveillance and Monitoring Program. Generally, this vegetation management area provides lower quality wildlife habitat compared to the undeveloped portions of the study area. It is around these managed zones and edge habitats of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development that invasive species are more prevalent, and there is less diversity in the habitat.

Table 3.3.4.1-1: List of Mammals Observed or Likely to Occur in Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name
Beaver*	*Castor canadensis*
Black bear**	*Ursus americanus*
Bobcat	*Felix rufus*
Coyote**	*Canis latrans*
Deer mouse	*Peromyscus maniculatus*
Eastern chipmunk*	*Tamias striatus*
Eastern mole	*Scalopus aquaticus*
Fisher	*Martes pennanti*
Gray fox	*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*
Gray squirrel*	*Sciurus carolinensis*
Hairy-tailed mole	*Parascalops breweri*
Hoary bat	*Lasiurus cinereus*
House mouse	*Mus musculus*
Long-tailed shrew	*Sorex dispar*
Masked shrew	*Sorex cinereus*
Meadow jumping mouse	*Zapus hudsonius*
Meadow vole	*Microtus pennsylvanicus*
Muskrat*	*Ondatra zibethicus*
New England cottontail	*Sylvilagus transitionalis*
Northern short-tailed shrew	*Blarina brevicauda*
Norway rat	*Rattus norvegicus*
Porcupine**	*Erethizon dorsatum*
Raccoon*	*Procyon lotor*
Red bat	*Lasiurus borealis*
Red fox**	*Vulpes*
Red squirrel*	*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*
Silver-haired bat	*Lasionycteris noctivagans*
Star-nosed mole	*Condylura cristata*
Striped skunk	*Mephitis*
Virginia oppossum*	*Didelphis virginiana*
White-footed mouse	*Peromyscus leucopus*
White-tailed deer*	*Odocoileus virginianus*
Woodchuck	*Marmota monax*
Woodland jumping mouse	*Napaeozapus insignis*
Woodland vole	*Microtus pinetorum*

* Denotes Direct Observation

**Denotes Indirect Observation

Table 3.3.4.1-2: List of Reptiles and Amphibians Observed or Likely to Occur in Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name
Frogs & Toads	
American bullfrog*	*Lithobates catesbeiana*
American toad*	*Anaxyrus americanus*
Fowler's toad	*Bufo fowleri*
Gray treefrog	*Hyla versicolor*
Green frog*	*Lithobates clamitans*
Northern leopard frog	*Lithobates pipiens*
Pickerel frog*	*Lithobates palustris*
Spring peeper*	*Pseudacris crucifer*
Wood frog*	*Lithobates sylvatica*
Salamanders	
Eastern-red-backed salamander*	*Plethodon cinereus*
Northern dusky salamander*	*Desmognathus fuscus*
Red-spotted newt*	*Notophthalmus viridescens*
Spotted salamander*	*Ambystoma maculatum*
Snakes	
Common ribbon snake	*Thamnophis sauritus*
Eastern garter snake*	*Thamnophis sirtalis*
Eastern ratsnake	*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*
Northern black racer	*Coluber constrictor*
Northern red-bellied snake	*Storeria occipitomaculata*
Northern ring-necked snake	*Diadophis punctatus edwardsii*
Northern watersnake*	*Nerodia sipedon*
Turtles	
Painted turtle*	*Chrysemys picta*
Snapping turtle*	*Chelydra serpentina*
Spotted turtle*	*Clemmys guttata*

*Denotes direct observation

Table 3.3.4.1-3: Avian Species Found in the Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	TF[1]	Northfield Mountain					
			Total area	NW Slope	NE Slope	SE Slope	SW Slope	Reservoir
American Crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*	X	X	X		X		X
American Goldfinch	*Carduelis tristis*	X	X	X		X		
American Redstart	*Setophaga ruticilla*	X	X	X		X		
American Robin	*Turdus migratorius*	X	X	X		X		X
Bald Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	X	X					X
Baltimore Oriole	*Icterus galbula*	X						
Bank Swallow	*Riparia*	X	X					X
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	X						
Belted Kingfisher	*Megaceryle alcyon*	X						
Black and White Warbler	*Mniotilta varia*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Black-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*	X	X	X				
Blackburnian Warbler	*Setophaga fusca*		X	X	X	X		
Blacked-capped Chickadee	*Poecile atricapillus*	X	X	X		X	X	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	*Setophaga caerulescens*		X	X	X	X	X	
Black-throated Green Warbler	*Setophaga virens*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blue Jay	*Cyanocitta cristata*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blue-headed Vireo	*Vireo solitarius*		X	X		X	X	
Blue-winged Warbler	*Vermivora cyanoptera*	X						
Broad-winged Hawk	*Buteo platypterus*	X						
Brown Creeper	*Certhia americana*		X	X		X		
Brown-headed Cowbird	*Molothrus ater*	X						
Canada Goose	*Branta canadensis*	X						
Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*	X	X	X	X		X	X
Chestnut-sided Warbler	*Setophaga pensylvanica*	X	X	X				

Common Name	Scientific Name	TF[1]	Northfield Mountain					
			Total area	NW Slope	NE Slope	SE Slope	SW Slope	Reservoir
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*	X						
Chipping Sparrow	*Spizella passerina*		X	X		X	X	X
Common Grackle	*Quiscalus quiscula*	X						
Common Merganser	*Mergus merganser*	X						
Common Raven	*Corvus corax*	X	X			X		
Common Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*	X	X	X				X
Coopers Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*	X						
Double-crested Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax auritus*	X						
Downy Woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*	X	X	X				
Easten Wood-Pewee	*Contopus virens*		X	X	X	X	X	
Eastern Bluebird	*Sialia sialis*		X					X
Eastern Kingbird	*Tyrannus tyrannus*	X						
Eastern Phoebe	*Sayornis phoebe*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Eastern Towhee	*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*		X	X				
European Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*		X	X				
Field Sparrow	*Spizella pusilla*		X					X
Gray Catbird	*Dumetella carolinensis*	X	X	X				
Great Blue Heron	*Ardea herodias*	X						
Great Crested Flycatcher	*Myiarchus crinitus*	X	X	X		X	X	
Greater Yellowlegs	*Tringa melanoleuca*	X						
Green Heron	*Butorides virescens*	X						
Hairy Woodpecker	*Leuconotopicus villosus*		X	X		X	X	
Hermit Thrush	*Catharus guttatus*		X	X		X	X	
Indigo Bunting	*Passerina cyanea*	X	X	X	X	X		X

Common Name	Scientific Name	TF[1]	Northfield Mountain					
			Total area	NW Slope	NE Slope	SE Slope	SW Slope	Reservoir
Killdeer	*Charadrius vociferus*	X	X					X
Least Flycatcher	*Empidonax minimus*	X						
Louisiana Waterthrush	*Parkesia motacilla*	X						
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	X						
Mute Swan	*Cygnus olor*	X						
Northern Cardinal	*Cardinalis cardinalis*	X	X	X				
Northern Mockingbird	*Mimus polyglottos*		X	X				
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*	X						
Nothern Flicker	*Colaptes auratus*		X				X	X
Orchard Oriole	*Icterus spurius*	X						
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	X						
Oven Bird	*Seiurus aurocapilla*		X	X	X	X	X	
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*		X			X		
Pileated Woodpecker	*Hylatomus pileatus*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pine Warbler	*Setophaga pinus*		X	X		X	X	
Prairie Warbler	*Setophaga discolor*		X	X				
Red-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta canadensis*		X	X		X		
Red-eyed Vireo	*Vireo olivaceus*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*	X	X		X	X		
Red-winged Blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*	X						
Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	X						
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	*Pheucticus ludovicianus*		X	X		X		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	*Archilochus colubris*		X	X			X	
Scarlet Tanager	*Piranga olivacea*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Song Sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*	X	X	X				X

Common Name	Scientific Name	TF[1]	Northfield Mountain					
			Total area	NW Slope	NE Slope	SE Slope	SW Slope	Reservoir
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularius*	X	X					X
Tree Swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*	X	X					X
Tufted Titmouse	*Baeolophus bicolor*	X	X	X		X	X	
Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*	X	X	X				X
Veery	*Catharus fuscescens*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Warbling Vireo	*Vireo gilvus*	X						
White-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta carolinensis*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Wild Turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo*		X	X		X	X	X
Winter Wren	*Troglodytes hiemalis*		X	X		X		
Wood Duck	*Aix sponsa*	X						
Wood Thrush	*Hylocichla mustelina*	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Yellow Warbler	*Setophaga petechia*	X						
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus varius*	X	X			X	X	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	X						
Yellow-throated Vireo	*Vireo flavifrons*		X	X				
Total Number Observed		**64**	**59**	**47**	**17**	**36**	**26**	**18**

[1]TF= Turners Falls Impoundment (Includes the shoreline of TFI, the Bypass Reach, and below Cabot Station to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland)

Table 3.3.4.1-4: Botanical Species Found in the Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
alternate-leaved dogwood	*Cornus alternifolia*		X
American basswood	*Tilia americana*		X
American beech	*Fagus grandifolia*	X	X
American bulrush	*Scirpus pungens*		X
American chestnut	*Castanea dentata*	X	
American elm	*Ulmus americana*		X
American hazelnut	*Corylus americana*	X	
American hornbeam	*Carpinus caroliniana*	X	X
American pokeweed	*Phytolacca americana*	X	
American speedwell	*Veronica americana*		X
American witch-hazel	*Hamamelis virginiana*	X	X
anise-scented goldenrod	*Solidago odora*		X
arrow arum	*Peltandra virginica*		X
arrow-leaved tearthumb	*Polygonum sagittatum*		X
arrowwood	*Viburnum dentatum*		X
Asian bush honeysuckle	*Lonicera sp.*	X	
Asiatic cayflower	*Commelina communis*		X
asparagus	*Asparagus officinalis*		X
autumn olive	*Elaeagnus umbellata***	X	X
balsam fir	*Abies balsamea*	X	
barberpole sedge	*Scirpus microcarpus*	X	
bearberry	*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*	X	
bedstraw	*Gallium spp.*		X
bee balm	*Monarda didyma*		X
big bluestem	*Andropogon gerardii*		X
big-star sedge	*Carex rosea*		X
bigtooth aspen	*Populus grandidentata*	X	
bird's-foot trefoil	*Lotus corniculatus*	X	
bitter dock	*Rumex dotusifolis*		X
bittersweet nightshade	*Solanum dulcamara*	X	X
black birch	*Betula lenta*	X	X
black cherry	*Prunus serotina*		X
black chokeberry	*Aronia melanocarpa*		X
black chokeberry	*Pyrus melanocarpa*		X
black gum	*Nyssa sylvatica*		X
black locust	*Robinia pseudoacacia***		X
black oak	*Quercus velutina*	X	X
black swallow-wort	*Cynanchum louiseae***		X
black-eyed Susan	*Rudbeckia hirta*	X	X
bladder campion	*Silene sp.*	X	

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
bladder sedge	*Carex intumescens*	X	
bloodroot	*Sanguinaria canadensis*		X
blue flag iris	*Iris versicolor*	X	X
blue vervain	*Verbena hastata*		X
blue-eyed grass	*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*	X	
bluejoint grass	*Calamagrostis canadensis*		X
blue-stemmed goldenrod	*Solidago caesia*		X
bluets	*Houstonia sp.*		X
blunt spikerush	*Elocharis obtusa*		X
blunt-lobed cliff-fern	*Woodsia obtusa*		X
boneset	*Eupatorium perfoliatum*	X	X
box elder	*Acer negundo*	X	
bracken fern	*Pteridium aquilinum*	X	X
broad-leaved cattail	*Typha latifolia*		X
broad-leaved dock	*Rumex obtusifolius*		X
broom sedge	*Carex scoparia*	X	
burning bush	*Euonymus alatus***	X	X
burred	*Sparganium americanum*		X
bush honeysuckle	*Diervilla lonicera*	X	X
butter-and-eggs	*Linaria vulgaris*	X	X
buttonbush	*Cephalanthus occidentalis*		X
calico aster	*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*		X
Canada mayflower	*Maianthemum canadense*	X	X
Canada rush	*Juncus canadensis*		X
Canada St. John's wort	*Hypericum canadense*	X	
Canada thistle	*Cirsium arvense*		X
Canada yew	*Taxus canadensis*		X
cardinal flower	*Lobelia cardinalis*		X
carrion flower	*Smilax herbacea*		X
chestnut oak	*Quercus prinus*	X	
chickweed	*Stellaria media*		X
chokecherry	*Prunus virginiana*	X	
christmas fern	*Polystichum acrostichoides*	X	X
cinnamon fern	*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*	X	X
clammy everlasting	*Gnaphalium macounii*		X
clasping dogbane	*Apocynun cannabinum*		X
clearweed	*Pilea pumila*		X
climbling bittersweet	*Celastrus scandens*		X
club moss	*Huperzia sp.*	X	
coltsfoot	*Tussilago farfara****	X	X
common blackberry	*Rubus allegheniensis*		X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
common buckthorn	*Rhamnus cathartica***		X
common burdock	*Arctium minus*	X	X
common chicory	*Cichorium intybus*	X	X
common cinquefoil	*Potentilla simplex*	X	X
common cocklebur	*Xanthium chinense*		X
common cow-wheat	*Melampyrum pratense*	X	
common dewberry	*Rubus flagellaris*	X	X
common evening primrose	*Oenothera biennis*		X
common greenbrier	*Smilax rotundifolia*		X
common jewelweed	*Impatiens capensis*	X	X
common milkweed	*Asclepias syriaca*	X	X
common mugwort	*Artemisia vulgaris*		X
common mullein	*Verbascum thapsus*	X	X
common plantain	*Plantago major*	X	
common ragweed	*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*	X	X
common reed	*Phragmites australis***	X	X
common shadbush	*Amelanchier arborea*		X
common spikerush	*Elocharis palustris*		X
common water plantain	*Alisma subcordatum*		X
common woodsorrell	*Oxalis montata*		X
cow vetch	*Vicia cracca*	X	X
creeping jenny	*Lysimachia nummularia***		X
creeping speawort	*Ranunculus reptans*		X
curled dock	*Rumex crispus*	X	
dandelion	*Taraxacum officinale*		X
daylily	*Hemerocallis sp.*	X	
deer berry	*Vaccinium staminium*		X
deer-tongue grass	*Dichanthelium clandestinum*	X	X
deptford pink	*Dianthus armeria*	X	
devil's begger-ticks	*Bidens frondosa*	X	X
Dewey's sedge	*Carex deweyana*		X
downy rattlesnake plantain	*Goodyera pubescens*	X	X
early lowbush blueberry	*Vaccinium vacillans*	X	
eastern cottonwood	*Populus deltoides*	X	X
eastern hemlock	*Tsuga canadensis*	X	X
eastern serviceberry	*Amelanchier canadensis*	X	X
eastern teaberry	*Gaultheria procumbens*	X	X
eastern white pine	*Pinus strobus*	X	X
ebony spleenwort	*Asplenium platyneuron*	X	X
elderberry	*Sambucus canadensis*		X
enchanter's nightshade	*Circaea lutetiana*	X	X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
European alder	*Alnus glutinosa***	X	
false baby's breath	*Galium mollugo*		X
false dragonhead	*Physostegia virginiana*		X
false hellebore	*Veratrum viride*	X	X
false indigo	*Amorpha fruticosa*		
false nettle	*Boehmeria cylindrical*		X
false Solomon's seal	*Maianthemum racemosum*	X	X
field penny-cress	*Thlaspi arvense*	X	
field pepperweed	*Lepidium campestre*	X	
flattened oatgrass	*Danthonia compressa*		X
flat-top goldentop	*Euthamia graminifolia*	X	
flat-top white aster	*Doellingeria umbellata*		X
fleabane	*Erigeron spp.*	X	X
flowering dogwood	*Cornus florida*		X
foam flower	*Tiarella cordifolia*	X	X
forget-me-not	*Myostis scorpiodes*		X
fox grape	*Vitis labrusca*		X
fringe loosestrife	*Lysimachia ciliata*		X
fringed sedge	*Carex crinita*	X	
garlic mustard	*Alliaria petiolate***		X
gaywings	*Polygala paucifolia*		X
giant goldenrod	*Solidago gigantica*		X
glossy buckthorn	*Frangula alnus***	X	X
golden Alexander's	*Zizua ayrea*		X
golden club	*Orontium aquaticum*		X
golden ragwort	*Senecio aureus*		X
goldenrod	*Solidago spp.*	X	X
goldthread	*Coptis trifolia*	X	X
gray birch	*Betula populifolia*	X	
gray goldenrod	*Solidago nemoralis*		X
great blue lobelia	*Lobelia siphilitca**		X
great Solomon's seal	*Polygonatum canaliculatum*		X
green ash	*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*	X	X
green bulrush	*Scirpus atrovirens*	X	
green milkweed	*Asclepias viridiflora*		X
ground ivy	*Glechoma hederacea*	X	X
groundnut	*Apios americana*		X
ground pine	*Lycopodium obscurum*	X	X
hair-cap moss	*Polytrichum juniperinum*		X
hairy bush clover	*Lespedeza hirta*	X	
hairy Solomon's seal	*Polygonatum pubescens*		X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
harebell	*Campanula rotundifolia*		X
hawkweed	*Hieracium caespitosum*	X	
hawthorn	*Crataegus sp.*		X
hay-scented fern	*Dennstaendtia punctilobula*	X	
heart-leaved aster	*Aster cordifolius*		X
hepatica	*Hepatica nobilis*	X	
highbush blueberry	*Vaccinium corymbosum*	X	X
hispid buttercup	*Ranunculus hispidus*		X
hoary vervain	*Verbena stricta*		X
hobblebush	*Viburnum lantanoides*	X	X
hog peanut	*Amphicarpaea bracteata*	X	X
hop hornbeam	*Ostrya virginiana*		X
hop trefoil	*Trifolium campestre*	X	
Indian cucumber	*Medeola virginiana*	X	X
Indian grass	*Sorghastrum nutans*		X
Indian pipe	*Monotropa uniflora*	X	X
Indian tobacco	*Lobelia inflata*		X
intermediate spike-sedge	*Eleocharis intermedia**		X
interrupted fern	*Osmunda claytoniana*	X	X
Jack in the pulpit	*Arisaema triphyllum*		X
Japanese barberry	*Berberis thunbergii***	X	X
Japanese honeysuckle	*Lonicera japonica***		X
Japanese knotweed	*Fallopia japonica***	X	X
Japanese privet	*Ligustrum obtusifolium*		X
Japanese stiltgrass	*Microstegium vimineum****		X
Jerusalum artichoke	*Helianthus tuberosus*		X
joe-pye weed	*Eupatorium purpureum*	X	X
jump seed	*Tovara virginiana*		X
Kalm's lovelia	*Lobelia kalmii*		X
large cocklebur	*Xanthium strumarium*		X
larger bur marigold	*Bidens laevis*		X
leafy spurge	*Euphorbia esula***		X
lesser celandine	*Ranunculus ficaria***		X
lily-of-the-valley	*Convallaria majalis*		X
little bluestem grass	*Schizachyrium scoparium*	X	
long-bracted orchis	*Habernaria viridis*		X
lowbush blueberry	*Vaccinium angustifolium*	X	X
mad dog skullcap	*Scutellaria lateriflora*		X
maiden-hair fern	*Adiantum pedatum*		X
maidenhair spleenwort	*Asplenium trichomanes*		X
mannagrass	*Glyceria sp.*	X	

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
maple-leaf viburnum	*Viburnum acerifolium*	X	
marginal wood-fern	*Dryopteris marginalis*	X	
marsh fern	*Thelypteris palustris*	X	X
marsh grass of Parnassus	*Parnassia alustris*		X
marsh horsetail	*Equisetum palustre*	X	
marsh marigold	*Caltha palustris*	X	X
marsh speedwell	*Veronica scutellata*		X
marshpepper knotweed	*Polygonum hydropiper*		X
mayapple	*Podophyllum peltatum*		X
mint	*Mentha arvensis*		X
monkey flower	*Mimulus guttatus*		X
morning glory	*Ipomoea purpurea*		X
Morrow's honeysuckle	*Lonicera morrowii***		X
mountain alder	*Alnus virdis ssp. crispa**		X
mountain laurel	*Kalmia latifolia*	X	X
mouse-ear-chickweed	*Cerastium vulgatum*		X
multiflora rose	*Rosa multiflora***	X	X
naked-flowered tick trefoil	*Desmondium nudiflorum*		X
nannyberry	*Viburnum lentago*		X
narrowleaf cattail	*Typha angustifolia*	X	
New England aster	*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*		X
New England sedge	*Carex novae-angliae*		X
New York aster	*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*		X
New York fern	*Thelypteris noveboracensis*	X	
nodding smartweed	*Polygonum lapathifolium*		X
northern bayberry	*Myrica pensylvanica*		X
northern bugleweed	*Lycopus uniflorus*	X	X
northern catalpa	*Catalpa speciosa*		X
northern red oak	*Quercus rubra*	X	X
Norway maple	*Acer platanoides***		X
Norwegian cinquefoil	*Potentilla norvgica*		X
Olney's three-square bulrush	*Schoenoplectus americanus*	X	
orangegrass	*Hypericum gentianoides*	X	
Oriental bittersweet	*Celastrus orbiculatus***	X	X
ostrich fern	*Matteuccia struthiopteris*	X	X
oxeye daisy	*Leucanthemum vulgare*	X	
pale corydalis	*Corydalis sempervirens*	X	
panicled aster	*Symphyotrichum simplex*		X
partridge berry	*Mitchella repens*	X	X
path rush	*Juncus tenuis*		X
pearly everlasting	*Anaphalis margaritacea*		X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM¹	TF²
pickerelweed	*Pontederia cordata*		X
pin cushion moss	*Leucobryum albidum*		X
pin oak	*Quercus palustris*	X	
pinkweed	*Polygonum pensylvanicum*		X
pippsissewa	*Chimaphila umbellata*		X
plae dogwood	*Cornus obliqua*		X
plantain-leaved pussytoes	*Antennaria plantaginifolia*	X	
plantain-leaved sedge	*Carex plantaginea*		X
poison ivy	*Toxicodendron radicans*	X	X
purple chokeberry	*Pyrus floribunda*		X
purple cliff brake	*Pellaea atropurpurea*		X
purple leaved willow herb	*Epilobium ciliatum*		X
purple loosestrife	*Lythrum salicaria***	X	X
purple osier willow	*Salix pupurea*		X
purple virgin’s bower	*Clematis verticillaris*		X
purple-flowering raspberry	*Rubus odoratus*		X
quaking aspen	*Populus tremuloides*	X	
Queen Anne's lace	*Daucus carota*	X	X
quillwort	*Isotes spp.*		X
rabbit-foot clover	*Trifolium arvense*		X
red cedar	*Juniperus virginiana*	X	
red chokeberry	*Pyrus arbutifolia*		X
red clover	*Trifolium pratense*	X	X
red fescue	*Festuca rubra*		X
red maple	*Acer rubrum*	X	X
red mullberry	*Morus rubra*		X
red pine	*Pinus resinosa*		X
red trillium	*Trillium erectum*	X	
red-osier dogwood	*Cornus stolonifera*		X
reed canary grass	*Phalaris arundinacea***		X
Rhododendron	*Rhododendron sp.*	X	
rice cutgrass	*Leersia oryzoides*		X
river bank grape	*Vitis riparia*	X	X
river birch	*Betula nigra*		X
rock polypody	*Polypodium virginianum*	X	X
rough bedstraw	*Galium asprellum*	X	
rough-fruited cinquefoil	*Potentilla recta*	X	
rough-leaved goldenrod	*Solidago patula*		X
round-leaved dogwood	*Cornus rugosa*		X
rough-stemmed goldenrod	*Solidago rugosa*		X
round-lobed hepatica	*Hepatica americana*		X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
royal fern	*Osmunda regalis*	X	X
Russian olive	*Elagnus angustifloia*		X
Rusty cliff-fern	*Woodsia ilvensis*	X	
sand violet	*Viola adunca*		X
sandbar cherry	*Prunus pumila var. depressa**		X
sandbar willow	*Salix exigua**		X
sassafras	*Sassafras albidum*	X	X
saxifrage	*Saxifraga spp.*		X
scouring rush	*Equisetum hyemale*	X	
scrub oak	*Quercus ilicifolia*		X
scrub- oak	*Quercus ilicifolia*	X	
seedbox	*Ludwigia alternifloria*		X
self-heal	*Prunella vulgaris*	X	X
sensitive fern	*Onoclea sensibilis*	X	X
shagbark hickory	*Carya ovata*	X	
shallow sedge	*Carex lurida*	X	
shaved sedge	*Carex tonsa*		X
sheep laurel	*Kalmia angustifolia*	X	
silky dogwood	*Cornus amomum*	X	X
silver maple	*Acer saccharinum*		X
silver rod	*Solidago bicolor*		X
silver vein	*Parthenocissus henryana*		X
skunk cabbage	*Symplocarpus foetidus*		X
slender gerardia	*Agalinis tenuifolia*		X
slender-leaved goldenrod	*Solidago tenuifolia*		X
smartweed	*Polygonum sp.*	X	X
Smith's club sedge	*Schoenoplectus smithii*		X
smooth alder	*Alnus serrulata*		X
smooth sumac	*Rhus glabra*	X	
soft rush	*Juncus effusus*	X	X
soft-stem bulrush	*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*		X
speckled alder	*Alnus incana*	X	X
sphagnum	*Sphagnum sp.*	X	
spinulose woodfern	*Dryopteris carthusiana*	X	
spotted joe-pyeweed	*Eupatorium maculatum*		X
spotted knapweed	*Centaurea maculosa***	X	
spreading dogbane	*Apocynum androsaemifolium*	X	X
squashberry	*Viburnum edule*	X	
St. John's wort	*Hypericum perforatum*		X
staghorn sumac	*Rhus typhina*	X	X
starflower	*Trientalis borealis*	X	X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
steeplebush	*Spiraea tomentosa*	X	X
stiff aster	*Ionactis linariifolius*		X
stinging nettle	*Urtica dioica*		X
striped maple	*Acer pensylvanicum*	X	X
striped wintergreen	*Chimaphila maculata*	X	X
sugar maple	*Acer saccharum*		X
swamp azalea	*Rhodoendron viscosum*		X
swamp candles	*Lysimachia terrestris*		X
swamp dewberry	*Rubus hispidus*	X	X
swamp honeysuckle	*Lonicera oblongifolia*	X	
swamp rose	*Rosa palustris*	X	
swamp white oak	*Quercus bicolor*	X	
sweet fern	*Comptonia peregrina*	X	X
sweet flag	*Acorus calamus*	X	X
sweetgale	*Myrica gale*		X
switchgrass	*Panicum vigatum*		X
sycamore	*Platanus occidentalis*		X
tall blue lettuce	*Lactuca biennis*		X
tall meadow rue	*Thalictrum puescens*		X
tall rattlesnake root	*Prenanthes altissima*		X
Tartarian honeysuckle	*Lonicera tatarica****		X
thimbleberry	*Rubus parviflorus*		X
three seed mercury	*Acalypha rhomboidea*		X
three-way sedge	*Dulichium arundinaceum*		X
tick-trefoil	*Desmondium glutinosum*	X	
tiger lily	*Lilum tigrinum*		
tower mustard	*Arabis glabra*	X	
Tradescant's aster	*Symphyotrichum tradescantii*		X
trillium	*Trillium sp.*	X	
turtle head	*Chelone glabra*		X
tussock sedge	*Carex stricta*		X
twig rush	*Cladium sp.*		X
twisted stalk	*Streptopus amplexifolis*	X	
tyme-leaved speedwell	*Veronica serphyllifolia*		X
upland white aster	*Oligoneuron album**		X
violet	*Viola sp.*	X	X
viper's bugloss	*Echium vulgare*	X	
Virginia creeper	*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*	X	X
virgin's bower	*Clematis virginiana*	X	X
water hemlock	*Cicuta maculata*		X
water horehound	*Lycopus americanus*	X	X

Common Name	Scientific Name	NFM[1]	TF[2]
water horsetail	*Equisetum fluviatile*		X
water parsnip	*Sium suave*	X	X
water pennywort	*Hydrocotyle sp.*	X	
water-chestnut	*Trapa natans*		X
watercress	*Nasturtium officinale*		X
white ash	*Fraxinus americana*		X
white avens	*Geum canadense*		X
white birch	*Betula papyrifera*	X	X
white clover	*Trifolium repens*	X	
white meadowsweet	*Spiraea alba var. latifolia*	X	X
white oak	*Quercus alba*	X	
white ricegrass	*Leersia virginica*		X
white snakeroot	*Ageratina altissima*		X
white sweet clover	*Melilotus albus*	X	X
white wood aster	*Aster divaricatus*		X
whorled loosestrife	*Lysimachia quadrifolia*	X	X
whorled wood aster	*Oclemena acuminata*		X
wild columbine	*Aquilegia canadinsis*	X	X
wild lettuce	*Lactuca virosa*		X
wild madder	*Rubia peregrina*	X	
wild oats	*Avena fatua*		X
wild oats	*Uvularia sessilifolia*		X
wild raisin	*Viburnum cassinoides*		X
wild sarsaparilla	*Aralia nudicaulis*	X	X
wild stonecrop	*Sedum ternatum*		X
wild strawberry	*Fragaria virginiana*	X	
winterberry	*Ilex verticillata*	X	X
wood nettle	*Laportea canadensis*		X
woodfern	*Dryopteris sp.*		X
woolgrass	*Scirpus cyperinus*		X
yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*	X	X
yellow birch	*Betula alleghaniensis*	X	X
yellow iris	*Iris pseudacorus***	X	
yellow nutsedge	*Cyperus esculentus*		X
yellow woodsorrell	*Oxalis stricta*	X	

[1]NFM= Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development Area

[2]TF= Turners Falls Impoundment Study Area(Includes the shoreline of TFI, the Bypass Reach, and below Cabot Station to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland)
* Denotes RTE

**Denotes Invasive according to MIPAG

***Denotes Likely Invasive according to MIPAG

Table 3.3.4.1-5: Mapped Habitats, Dominant Vegetation, and Percent Occurrence within the Study Area

Habitat Type	Dominant Overstory[1]	Dominant Shrub[1]	Dominant Herbaceous[1]	NFM[2]		TF[2]	
				Acres	% of Area	Acres	% of Area
Transitional Floodplain Forest	Silver maple (51-75%), sycamore (10-15%), cottonwood (10-15%), red maple (10-15%), ash (5-10%), American elm (5-10%), and willow (5-10%)	Silver maple (trace), sycamore (trace), cottonwood (trace), red maple (trace), ash (trace), American elm (trace), and willow (trace)	wood-nettle (5-10%), ostrich fern (6-25%), sensitive fern (5-10%) and false nettle (5-10%)	0	0	146.4	1.99
Northern hardwoods-hemlock-white pine forest	hemlock (75-100%), yellow birch (10-15%), American beech (5-10%)	hemlock (trace), hobblebush (trace), striped maple (trace)	sarsaparilla (trace), Canada mayflower (trace), wood fern (trace)	127.8	6.4	1468.2	19.95
Successional Northern Hardwood Forest	red maple, American beech, white birch, quaking aspen (51-75%)	striped maple (6-25%) witch hazel (6-25%)	sarsaparilla (6-25%), twisted stalk (6-25%), starflower (6-25%)	666.8	33.2	106.2	1.44
Hemlock Ravine	eastern hemlock (76-100%)	mountain laurel (6-25%)	starflower (trace), wintergreen (trace)	621.5	30.9	40.5	0.55
White Pine - Oak Forest	white pine (75-100%), red oak (6-25%), overcup oak (6-25%)	red maple (25%), low bush blueberry (10%), white oak (10%)	Canada mayflower (6-25%), partridge berry (6-25%)	70.1	3.5	0	0
Agricultural Lands	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	1926.2	26.18
Development	white pine (trace)	N/A	Kentucky bluegrass (76-100%)	284.8	14.2	283.9	3.86

Habitat Type	Dominant Overstory[1]	Dominant Shrub[1]	Dominant Herbaceous[1]	NFM[2]		TF[2]	
				Acres	% of Area	Acres	% of Area
Right of Way	N/A	white pine (6-25%), glossy buckthorn (6-25%)	goldenrod spp. (6-25%), interrupted fern (6-25%), sweetfern (6-25%), bracken fern (6-25%), mullein (6-25%)	14.3	0.7	4.3	0.06
Wetlands	See section X	See section X	See section X	N/A	N/A	108.5	1.47
Water	N/A	N/A	N/A	225.5	11.1	3274.2	44.5
Total				**2010.8**	**100**	**7358.4**	**100**

[1]Percent cover will be updated in December 2015 pending results of 2015 field survey
[2]NFM=Northfield Mountain, TF=Turner Falls (Includes the shoreline of Turner Falls Impoundment, the Bypass Reach, and below Cabot Station to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland

Table 3.3.4.1-6: Vernal Pool Field Notes

Pool ID	Egg Masses		Pool Dimensions (Feet)	Water Depth (Feet)	Comments
	Spotted Salamander	Wood Frog			
VP-1	0	0	80x30	1.0	Only VP found in TF project area.
VP-2	0	0	200x50	3.0	Spotted salamander (Ambystoma maculatum) spermatophores man-made rock-quarry
VP-3	>66	40	45x72	1.5	
VP-4	25	0	120x30	2.0	
VP-5	50	25	100x40	1.0	
VP-6	32	0	100x45	1.0	
VP-7	25	0	125x75	2.0	
VP-8	18	6	75x40	2.0	
VP-9	12	2	20x20	2.0	
VP-10	12	0	-	3.0	
VP-11	52	18	45x25	2.0	
VP-12	15	>30	-	-	red spotted newts (Notophthalmus viridescens) feeding on egg masses
VP-13	25	>500	250x50	4.0	red spotted newts (Notophthalmus viridescens) feeding on egg masses
VP-14	5	6	120x45	2	

Table 3.3.4.1-7: Invasive species found in the Study Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Lifeform Type	NFM	TF	Notes
Acer platanoides	Norway maple	Tree		X	Common in woodlands with colluvial soils, grows full sun to full shade dispersed by water, wind and vehicles
Alliaria petiolate	Garlic mustard	Biennial Herb		X	Widespread, grows full sun to full shade, spreads by seed, especially in wooded areas
*Alnus glutinosa****	European alder	Shrub	X		Rapidly growing shrub that establishes monspecific stands displacing natives
Berberis thunbergii	Japanese barberry	Shrub	X	X	Wooded uplands and wetlands, grows in full sun to full shade, spread by birds, forms dense stands
Celastrus orbiculatus	Oriental bittersweet	Perennial vine	X	X	Grows in full sun to partial shade, berries spread by birds and humans
*Centaurea maculosa***	Spotted knapweed	Perennial herb	X	X	Occurs in full sun, spreads rapidly in artificial corridors, agricultural fields, and margins.
Cynanchum louiseae	Black swallow-wort	Perennial vine		X	Grows in full sun to partial shade, forms dense stands, deadly to Monarch butterfly larvae
Elaeagnus umbellata	Autumn olive	Shrub	X	X	Grows in full sun, berries spread by birds, aggressive in open areas
Euonymus alatus	Burning bush	Shrub	X	X	Capable of germinating in full sun to full shade. Escapes from cultivation and can form dense thickets and dominate the understory
Euphorbia esula	Leafy spurge	Perennial herb		X	Aggressive, grows in full sun, occurs in grasslands
Fallopia Japonica	Japanese knotweed	Perennial Herb-subshrub	X	X	Widespread, grows in full sun to full shade, spreads vegetatively and by seed, forms dense thickets
Frangula alnus	Glossy buckthorn	Shrub-tree	X		Occurs in uplands and wetlands, grows in full sun to full shade, forms thickets
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow iris	Perennial herb	X		Occurs in wetland habitat, grows in full sun to partial shade, out-competes native plant communities.
Lonicera japonica	Japanese honeysuckle	Perennial vine	X	X	Widespread, grows full sun to full shade, climbs vegetation, seeds dispersed by birds

Scientific Name	Common Name	Lifeform Type	NFM	TF	Notes
Lonicera morrowii	Morrow's honeysuckle	Shrub		X	Widespread, grows full sun to full shade, dispersed by birds, can hybridize with other honeysuckle species
Lysimachia nummularia	Creeping jenny	Perennial herb		X	Occurs in uplands and wetlands, grows in full sun to full shade, forms dense mats
Lythrum salicaria	Purple loosestrife	Perennial herb	X	X	Occurs in uplands and wetlands, grows in full sun to partial shade, high seed production, overtakes wetlands
Phalaris arundinacea	Reed canary grass	Perennial grass		X	Occurs in uplands and wetlands, grows full sun to partial shade, can form large colonies, common in agricultural settings
Phragmities australis	Common reed	Perennial grass	X	X	Grows in uplands and wetlands, full sun to full shade, forms dense stands, flourishes in disturbed areas
Ranunculus ficaria	Lesser celandine	Perennial herb		X	Occurs in lowland and upland woods, grows in full sun to full shade, spreads vegetatively and by seed, forms dense stands
Rhamnus cathartica	Common buckthorn	Shrub-tree		X	Occurs in uplands and wetlands, grows in full sun to full shade.
Robinia pseudoacacia	Black locust	Tree		X	Occurs in uplands, grows full sun to full shade, aggressive in areas with sandy soils
Rosa multiflora	Multiflora rose	Shrub	X	X	Widespread, grows in full sun to full shade, forms thorny thickets, dispersed by birds.
*Tussilago farfara**	Coltsfoot	Perennial herb	X		Occurs in lowland and upland woods, grows in full sun to full shade, spreads vegetatively and by seed, forms dense stands
Trapa natans	Water-chestnut	Annual herb		X	Occurs in aquatic habitats, forms dense floating mats on water.

NFM=Northfield Mountain, TF=Turner Falls (Includes the shoreline of Turner Falls Impoundment, the Bypass Reach, and below Cabot Station to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland)

*MIPAG watch list species
** USDA Forestry Service early detection species (not on MIPAG list)
*** Not on MIPAG list, but noted for consistency with other studies

Figure 3.3.4.1-1: Example of Remnant Floodplain Forest Along Shoreline Downstream of Cabot

Figure 3.3.4.1-2: Example of Successional Northern Hardwoods

Figure 3.3.4.1-3: Example of Northern Hardwoods-Hemlock-White Pine Forest on Northwest Slope of Northfield Mountain

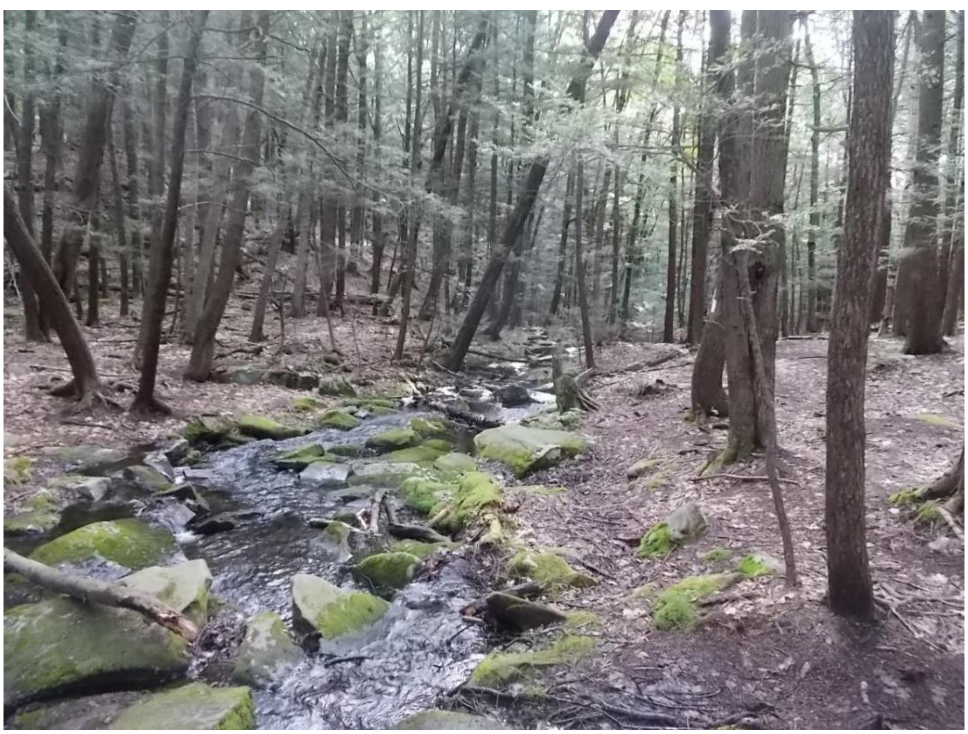


Figure 3.3.4.1-4: Example of Hemlock Ravine Community

Figure 3.3.4.1-5: View through the interior of the white pine-oak forest

Figure 3.3.4.1-6: Calcareous Cliff Habitat

Figure 3.3.4.1-7: Circumneutral Rock Cliff Community- Farley Ledges (formed from granitic gneiss)

Figure 3.3.4.1-8: Example of Oak - Hickory Forest

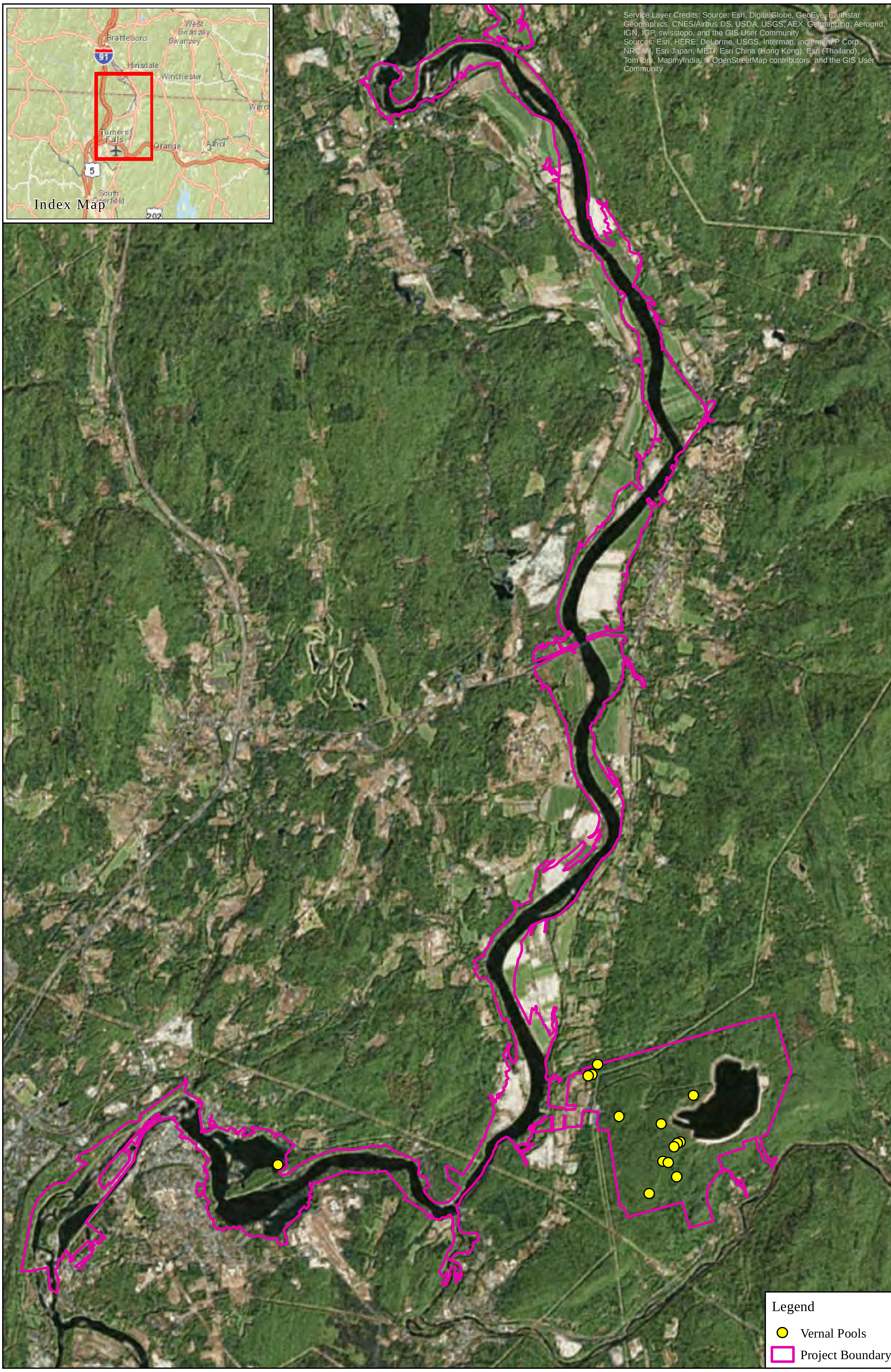
Figure 3.3.4.1-9: Example of Agricultural Land in the Study Area

Figure 3.3.4.1-10: Typical Habitat of Bypass During Low-Flow in Late Summer

Figure 3.3.4.1-11: Representative View of the Right-of-Way Community.

Figure 3.3.4.1-12: Example of Hemlock Swamp Near the Base of the Farley Ledges

Figure 3.3.4.1-13: Example of Red Maple Swamp on Southeast Slope of Northfield Mountain



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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

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Miles

Figure 3.3.4-1-14
Locations of Identified
Vernal Pools

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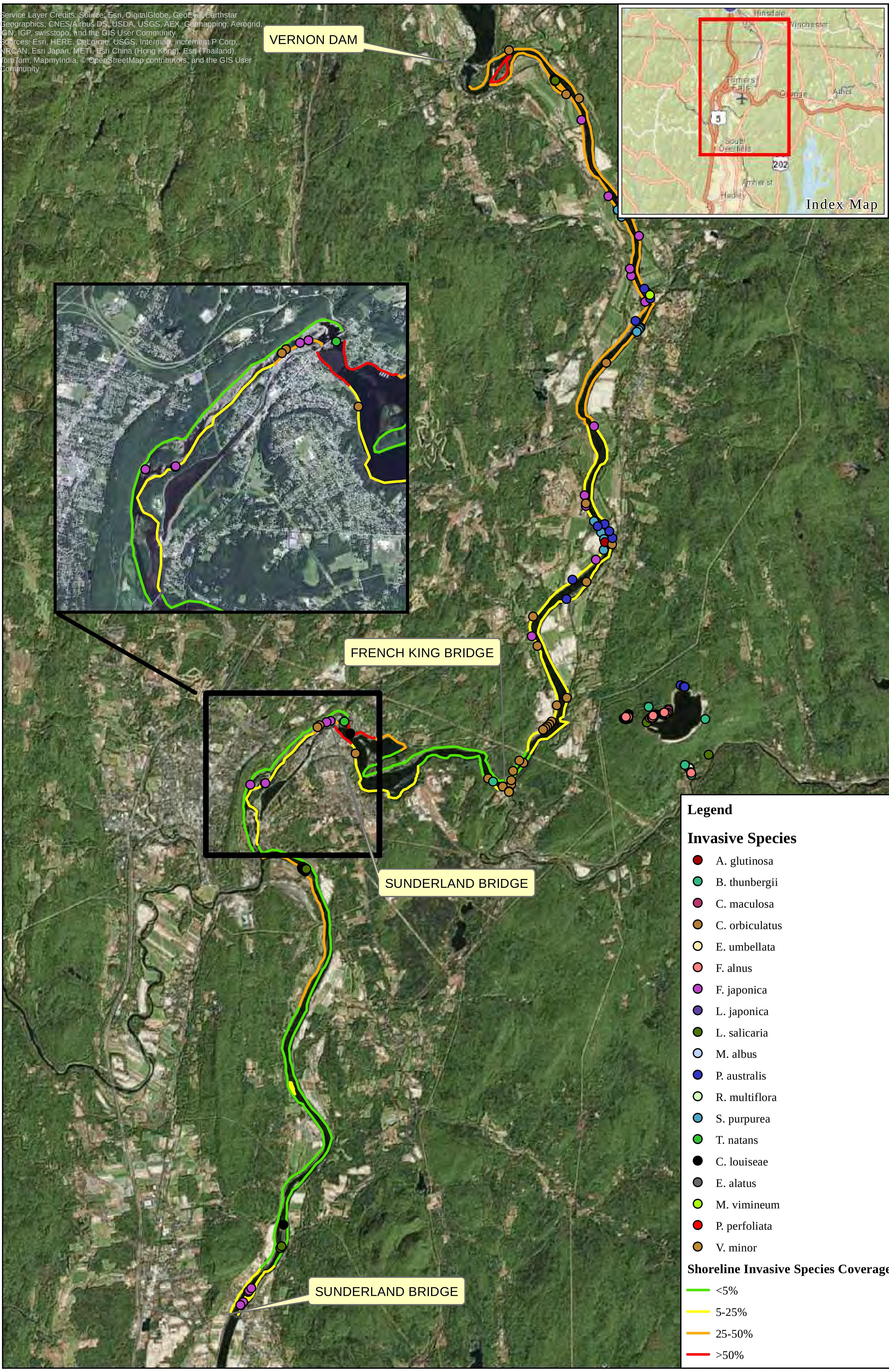

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

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Figure 3.3.4.1-15
Locations of Identified
Invasive Plants

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3.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species

In 2011, the following Federal and state agencies were contacted regarding the potential presence of rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) species and critical habitats within the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development boundaries:

- USFWS
- NMFS
- NHESP
- Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VTFWD)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFGD)

NHESP provided a list of state-listed species known or likely to occur in the vicinity of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development area in a letter dated October 27, 2011. Following the submittal of the Draft Modified Study Plan (No. 3.5.1 *Baseline Inventory of Wetland, Riparian, and Littoral Habitat in the Turners Falls Impoundment and Assessment of Operation Impact on Special Status Species*) to the NHESP in December of 2013, comments were received and incorporated in to the Revised Study Plan (FirstLight, 2013). The Revised Study Plan, which included surveys for identified special concern species at the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, was completed throughout 2014 and 2015.

FERC Relicensing Studies

FirstLight has conducted several studies to gather information necessary to understand the potential effects of land management practices and recreational use on protected resources within the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and the Turner Falls Development study area. The goal of these studies is to characterize and describe both the extent of protected resources within the Project as well as potential effects:

- Survey and inventory identified protected and sensitive species;
- Note the occurrence of additional sensitive species during the course of the surveys;
- Complete fine scale data collection related to the elevation of specific species (i.e., vascular plants and tiger beetles) to identify potential impacts related to water level fluctuations.

3.3.5.1 Affected Environment

Background

Protected species within the Project area include vascular plants, vertebrate animals, and invertebrate animals.

At a November 1, 2013 meeting, NHESP provided FirstLight with a list of 10 sensitive plant species of concern (target plants) known to occur or have historical records of occurrence within or near the vicinity of the Project between Vernon Dam and the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland. NHESP targeted these state-listed plant species as having the highest likelihood of experiencing potential effects due to Project operations - specifically related to inundation (including depth, timing and duration).

Pursuant to the NHESP Data Release Agreement (NHESP File #11-30121) dated November 13, 2013, NHESP provided FirstLight with a list of specific locations where the above listed sensitive plant species have been observed or where NHESP has historical records of occurrences. For some locations NHESP has spatial data they have provided to FirstLight to better focus survey efforts. Pursuant to the data release agreement, FirstLight is not permitted to disclose the specific location of the plant specimens in publicly available documents.

Vascular Plants

Field surveys completed in 2014 and 2015, and based on coordination with the NHESP, identified eight of the ten plant species identified by the NHESP within the TFI, bypass reach, and downstream section to the Sunderland Bridge (Table 3.3.5.1-1). One additional species, great blue lobelia, was also identified. The bypass reach, which is dominated by exposed bedrock was the preferred location for all species identified during the survey work. Habitat within the bypass reach, which includes ledges, exposed bedrock, cobbles, and occasional sandy areas, is ideal for the majority of the species. In most cases mapped polygons includes dense populations ranging from a few to several thousand individuals. The bypass reach was the only location where great blue lobelia was identified (FirstLight, 2015a). A location overview for all mapped species in shown in Figure 3.3.5.1-1.

A topographic survey was completed in 2015 to examine elevation preferences for occupied suitable habitat in relation to current water level fluctuations. In addition, suitable, unoccupied habitat was also surveyed. A total of 15 transects were surveyed for topographic elevation and species density. Transects were selected in areas containing occupied and unoccupied habitat. Analysis of elevation and water level data will be completed in December, 2015. \

Mountain Alder

The mountain alder is a shrub which may reach approximately 12 feet in height, similar to other alders. It has toothed leaves generally with 6-9 main veins. The range of the mountain alder extends from Canada south to northern New England, and in Massachusetts the species is primarily found on exposed ledges, boulders, and cobble bars. Often these habitats coincide with high energy rivers. The primary threat to this species is from disturbance of habitat as well as competition from exotic species such as Japanese knotweed. Within the Project area, mountain alder is primarily found within the bypass reach, a typical example of the habitat present in the bypass reach is shown in Figure 3.3.5.1-2. Eight polygons of mountain alder (Figure 3.3.5.1-1) were mapped within the bypass reach in 2014, these polygons included approximately 73 individuals. Two remaining populations of the species were mapped at the northern extent of the impoundment, just below Vernon Dam. These populations were surveyed in 2015 to examine preferred elevations as well as to determine population density. Density for the surveyed populations, identified near Vernon Dam was calculated as 0.07 stems/m^2 with one individual identified in a single plot. Analysis of elevation and water level data will be completed by December, 2015. Habitat for the upper impoundment populations was similar to the bypass reach and consisted of exposed ledges, large cobbles, and bedrock. Associated species included speckled alder, smooth alder, dogbane, and scrub oak.

Intermediate Spike Sedge

The intermediate spike sedge is a small densely tufted annual herb with very wiry stems. The primary aid to identification of this species is to examine the achene, which is hard and nut-like. The achene for the intermediate spike sedge matures in mid to late summer and is three-sided with a narrow tubercle. Habitat for the intermediate spike sedge includes marshes and freshwater mudflats, or areas with muddy substrates. Potential threats to this species are unknown, and based on habitat preference the species is generally found in the proximity of freshwater (i.e., streams, rivers, and ponds). The NHESP has noted that regular water level fluctuations may benefit the species as it maintains the exposed muddy habitat preferred by the species (NHESP, 2009). The species was only identified in one location, the Pauchaug Boat Launch, in the Project area during survey work completed in 2014 and 2015 (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). Identification in the field was completed by NHESP approved botanist Steve Johnson (J. Leddick, personal communication, December 2, 2013). The species was first identified in 2014, in an area of exposed sand and mud (Figure 3.3.5.1-3). In 2015, the species was not located, but several transects were established at the location. Analysis of elevation and water level data will be completed in December, 2015. In general, the entire shoreline ranges from elevation 187.72 to 187.87 feet. In 2014, the intermediate spike rush was located at the transition from exposed substrate to vegetation at the normal high-water line. Associated species include joe-pye weed, jewel weed, monkey flower, woolgrass, and, at higher elevations, spiny cocklebur (FirstLight, 2015a).

Frank's Lovegrass

Frank's lovegrass, a state species of concern, is an annual herb with repeatedly branched, erect culms, narrow blades (5-13 cm long and 1-3 mm wide), and small, ovate spikelets that are typically 3-5 flowered. This grass typically flowers from August through September. Frank's lovegrass is found along sandy riverbanks and sand bars and has been found only along the Housatonic and Connecticut Rivers in Massachusetts (NHESP, 2015). No observations of frank's love grass were recorded in 2014, however a single clump was identified next to the walking trail along the shoreline just south of the Pauchaug Boat Launch in 2015 (Figure 3.3.5.1-1).

Ovate Spike-sedge

The ovate spike-sedge is an annual grass that grows in low (2-6 inches) tufts. The straight, ascending stems are deep green and have a single, tight cluster of inconspicuous flowers (a "spike") at the apex. The stems do not have leaf blades but do have leaf sheaths surrounding the stem. The ovate spike-sedge is often found growing on sandy freshwater margins. This species was not observed during the 2014 survey; however, one clump was recorded on the sandy shore south of the Pauchaug Boat Launch in 2015 (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). Associated species include soft-stemmed spike-sedge, threeway sedge, buttonbush, soft rush, and common bur-reed (NHESP, 2015b).

Great Blue Lobelia

The great blue lobelia is a tall, showy perennial wildflower that inhabits circumneutral wetlands and transitional habitats. The species generally prefers open areas or areas of partial shade. While this species is listed, the plant was formerly cultivated and continues to be popular in gardening, and therefore some populations are likely introduced. A single stem of this species was located within the bypass reach in 2014. The plant was located within the exposed rocky habitat common to the area. Associated plant species include American water-horehound, purple loosestrife, smartweed, New York aster, and Tradescant's aster (FirstLight, 2015a).

Upland White Aster

The upland white aster is a small composite plant that flowers from July into early September. The species prefers rocky outcrops of sandstone, shale, or limestone. It is commonly found growing in cracks or fissures in bedrock outcrops. The upland white aster requires significant sunlight exposure and shading may be a threat. In addition, as the species is often located along exposed river banks, water level and recreational activities may pose threats to the species. Within the Project area, a number of polygons of upland white aster were mapped in 2014 in the bypass reach (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). Based on stem counts within these polygons, in excess of 638 individual plants were located within this area. The bypass reach is ideal habitat which includes exposed areas of bedrock (Figure 3.3.5.1-4). In addition, several smaller populations were identified within the TFI. In 2015, elevation transects at locations in the TFI were surveyed. These locations included both occupied and unoccupied habitats. Population mean densities were estimated at 1.36 stems/m^2 across each of five transects surveyed (FirstLight, 2015a). Associated species include big bluestem, dogbane, flat-top white aster, monkey flower, and joe-pye weed.

Sandbar Cherry

The sandbar cherry is member of the rose family and is a low growing shrub that can form mats up to 6 feet in breadth. The species, in Massachusetts, rarely grows above three feet in height. The species prefers flood-scoured areas, often along islands and shores. Habitat is generally dominated by cobble, gravel, and sloping rock at or near the floodline. In 2014, approximately 1,400 individuals were identified within several mapped polygons in the bypass reach (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). The habitat within this area, as described above, is ideal for species which prefer regularly scoured habitat. Figure 3.3.5-5 shows a typical view of sandbar cherry within the bypass reach. In addition, the species was identified on several islands below the bypass reach as well as the upstream extent of the TFI, below Vernon Dam (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). These smaller island populations were surveyed in 2015, the survey included occupied and unoccupied suitable habitat. Mean density for two of the transect locations was calculated as 1.33 stems/m², these locations were associated with larger islands. Mean density for the northern most population (just below Vernon Dam) was calculated at 0.17 stems/m². Associated species include mountain alder, dogbane, cottonwood, sycamore, sandbar willow, black willow, and big bluestem.

Sandbar Willow

The sandbar willow is a small shrub, ranging from 5-10 feet in height, which forms interconnected thickets. In Massachusetts, the willow is commonly found on islands, sandbars, and beaches within the flood zone. It prefers sandy, gravely, or rocky substrates which are subjected to annual inundation by high water. The plants are usually low and sprawling, and in the Connecticut River drainage stems are generally less than six feet in height. The primary threat to this species is a scarcity of habitat, which is related to shoreline development. The species prefers habitat which is tied closely to the annual flood regimes and disturbance from water level fluctuations. Survey work completed in 2014 identified the sandbar willow in several locations (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). The species occupies several areas within the bypass reach as well as on islands near Sunderland and to the north near the Vernon Dam. All these habitats share common characteristics in that all are dominated by cobble and rock and are within actively flooded habitats. Mean density varied by transect location, and ranged from 0.13 stems/m² to 0.77 stems/m². Across three transects mean density was 0.44 stems/m². Figure 3.3.5.1-6 shows a representative view of the typical willow habitat on First Island (near the Sunderland Bridge). Associated species include dogbane, purple loosestrife, black willow, blue vervain, and big bluestem.

Tradescant's Aster

The Tradescant's aster is a small, white-rayed aster that rarely grows more than one and a half feet in height. It is often found with a basal rosette of leaves and a cluster of erect stems. This aster is typically found rooted in fissures and cracks of rocky stream shores or river banks. These habitats are generally subjected to flooding throughout the year. The plant flowers late in the summer, when water levels are normally lower. Due to the dynamic nature of the Tradescant's preferred habitat, invasion by exotic species or damage from development are uncommon. The primary threats are modification of flood regimes that would allow the establishment of other species, and occasional invasive plant species such as spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculata*) and purple loosestrife, which have been found in Tradscant's aster's habitat. Surveys completed in 2014 identified the aster as occurring throughout the bypass reach as well as a few discrete patches; one occurring on the rock face just downstream from the French King Bridge and a few near the confluence with the Deerfield River (Figure 3.3.5.1-1). Populations within the bypass, mapped in 2014, are quite robust and approximately 16,770 stems were counted during fieldwork (Figure 3.3.5.1-7). The smaller patches, located near the confluence with the Deerfield River, were surveyed in 2015. Density of the Tradescant's aster at this location is calculated at 1.03 stems/m². In all locations, the habitat was dominated by exposed bedrock, boulders, and large cobbles. Associated species include mountain alder, big bluestem, dogbane, purple loosestrife, and seedbox (FirstLight, 2015a).

Vertebrate Species

Birds

Five state-listed RTE bird species were identified as potentially occurring within the Project area by NHESP. During field surveys completed along the Connecticut River and Northfield Mountain, two of the five species were identified as occurring within the Project area. Table 3.3.5.1-2 lists the potentially occurring species as well as those identified in the Project.

Bald Eagle

The enforcement of federal endangered species laws and regulations and improved controls of herbicides and pesticides on agricultural lands have aided in the recovery of this species. While the species was removed from endangered species status, the Bald Eagle is still protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. It winters along the Connecticut River in the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development area. In 2001, the USFWS documented a nesting pair of Bald Eagles on Barton Island in Barton Cove, approximately five miles downstream of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development (FERC, 2001) and slightly upstream of the Turners Falls Dam. Bald Eagles also nest on Kidd's Island in the impoundment. Bald Eagles are known to perch in riverbank trees and forage over the Connecticut River in the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development vicinity. Several Bald Eagles, adults and juveniles, have been observed perching or foraging in the impoundment and Northfield Mountain in both 2014 and 2015, and three occupied Bald Eagle nests were located within the study area. These nests are found downstream on Third Island, Barton Island in Barton Cove, and along the east bank of the impoundment across from Stebbins Island in the upper reaches of the impoundment (FirstLight, 2015a).

Peregrine Falcon

There are 14 known Peregrine Falcon historic cliff nesting sites in Massachusetts. Today, two known occupied nesting sites are located downstream of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development area at Mount Tom and Mount Sugarloaf (NHESP, 2007). Females begin breeding at age two or three, whereas males may breed as early as age one. Females typically lay four eggs in early April. The eggs will incubate over 28 days; by seven weeks after hatching (in mid-June), the juvenile chicks have fledged. Fledglings are fully independent of their parents by August. Peregrine falcons do not typically migrate for the winter season, with the exception of those that nest in the far north (e.g., in Labrador or Greenland).

Peregrine Falcons are not known to nest at the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, but are known to have nests down river of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development at Mount Tom and Mount Sugarloaf and could potentially utilize the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development area for foraging. A Peregrine Falcon was observed on the south eastern slope of Northfield Mountain in 2014.

Shortnose Sturgeon

The Shortnose Sturgeon is a federally-listed endangered species that occurs in the Connecticut River and is discussed with other migratory fish species in Section 3.3.3.1.2.

Mammals

No special status mammals were identified during consultation with state and federal agencies. However, on April 2, 2015 the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) was listed as federally threatened, and the USFWS published an interim final rule under section 4(d) of the ESA to exempt certain activities from the incidental take prohibitions of the ESA. The listing and interim final rule became effective on May 4, 2015. The primary reason for the listing of this species is the dramatic population decline which has resulted from the spread of white-nose syndrome. The northern long-eared bat overwinters in caves or old mines with high humidity and stable temperatures. During the summer the bats will roost in large diameter trees, preferring those with exfoliating bark. Reproduction begins in late summer or fall, with delayed implantation resulting in pupping in the following spring. The Project area includes old growth hemlock, shagbark hickory, silver maple, and several other species which are large in diameter and possess bark characteristics which could provide potential summer roosting habitat for the northern long-eared bat. During the 2014 and 2015 field work, this species was not observed in the Project area.

Herptiles

Consultation with the NHESP in 2011 (MDFW, 2011) identified two state threatened and three special concern herptile species that may occur within the Project area (Table 3.3.5.1-3). While specific survey methodologies for herptiles were not included as part of studies completed in 2014 and 2015, special care was taken during habitat, vegetation, wetland, and vernal pool mapping activities to opportunistically search for species. Several vernal pools and wetlands were mapped during fieldwork completed in 2014 and additional vegetation survey work occurred in 2015; no rare reptile or amphibian species were observed. While the species were not observed, it is likely that they occur within the Project area as a number of ephemeral pools were mapped and identified, particularly in the vicinity of Northfield Mountain.

<u>Invertebrate Species</u>

NHESP identified nine state listed endangered and threatened species of invertebrates at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and Turners Falls Development (Table 3.3.5.1-4). In 2014 and 2015, detailed studies were completed to document and analyze potential impacts to both tiger beetle populations, dragonflies, and freshwater mussels.

Clubtail Dragonflies

Clubtail dragonflies are large members of the taxon Anisotera and the family Gomphidae. They are so named for their club shaped abdomen terminus. Clubtails are a semi-aquatic insect in which the juvenile nymph inhabits aquatic habitat in streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. Breeding generally occurs in the spring and summer months with females depositing the fertilized eggs into the water. Nymphs emerge from the water on exposed rocks, woody debris, and emergent vegetation in the spring and undergo a metamorphosis into the adult, flighted stage, a process called eclosion.

Qualitative and quantitative surveys were performed in 2014-2015 (Study 3.3.10) to characterize the assemblage structure and emergence/eclosure behavior of odonates in the project area. In 2014, odonate larvae and exuviae were surveyed between the Turners Falls Dam and the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland, and in the TFI near Barton's Cove, to establish a qualitative baseline for the odonate assemblage in these areas (Phase 1). Biologists conducted qualitative surveys of odonate larvae and exuviae at four areas (5 sites) between the Turners Falls Dam and the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland, and one area (3 sites) in the TFI near Barton Cove.

Surveys were conducted on June 2, 6, 9, and 20 (2014). Table 3.3.5.1-5 lists the genera and species collected at each site. *Epitheca princeps*, a species common in lentic habitats, was the most common species collected at Sites 1-3. These sites in the lowermost portion of the TFI (Barton Cove) contain mostly lentic habitat with submerged and emergent vegetation. Sites 4-8 were generally more lotic; dominant taxa in these samples included *Gomphus sp*. (mostly *G. vastus*), *Ophiogomphus* (mostly *G. rupinsulensis*), *N. yamaskenensis*, *Boyeria vinosa*, and *Macromia illinoiensis*. There was very little variation in the odonate assemblage among sites 4-8. Species-level identification of some of the Gomphidae, especially *Gomphus sp*. and *Ophiogomphus sp.*, is incomplete; this report will be updated when these data become available. Most of the target state-listed species for Sites 4-8 were in the genus *Gomphus*. Based on historic survey data, which were generally more complete for the TFI, several uncommon species likely occur in these areas but were undetected in 2014.

Habitat parameters were recorded at each site. The most common habitat feature of nearshore areas and streambanks was a muddy slope of varying steepness, with lesser and variable amounts of sand, gravel, or cobble. Upslope, this mud transitioned into the riparian zone that was typically vegetated with trees (especially silver maple), low terrestrial herbaceous vegetation, moss, and vines, and contained varying amounts of large woody debris and detritus. The odonate surveys were typically done during periods of low flow, therefore relatively large amounts of the muddy bank were exposed and the distance from the water line to the interface between aquatic and terrestrial habitat was relatively great.

Less common nearshore habitat types included aquatic emergent vegetation and rock. Aquatic emergent vegetation was prevalent only in the more lentic habitats of Barton Cove (Site 1) and on the other side of Campground Point (Site 3). Elsewhere, aquatic emergent vegetation was either absent, or existed as a very sparse fringe of species that can tolerate daily exposure. Submerged aquatic vegetation, especially Vallisneria, was common in some areas but typically only as a narrow band in deeper waters.

Bare rock, an emergence substrate for odonates, is uncommon in the Connecticut River between the Deerfield River confluence and Route 116 Bridge. There are some isolated ledge outcrops, and the bridge abutments and areas near bridges often contained higher amounts of “unnatural” rock. The most “natural” rock is located in the Turners Falls bypass reach.

The results of the 2014 survey were used to develop a field monitoring plan for Phase 2 of the relicensing study, which involved quantitative surveys and behavior observations, was conducted in 2015. Concurrence on the monitoring locations and for the field methods was reached during an April 28, 2015 meeting with NHESP.

A final report presenting the results of the 2015 survey is due to be filed with FERC by March 1, 2016. A summary follows. FirstLight conducted quantitative surveys at five sites in the Connecticut River; the sites are listed below and shown in Figure 3.3.5.1-8.

1. Barton’s Cove (Gill)
2. Rock Dam in the bypass reach (Montague)
3. Area from bike path bridge to Montague City Road, opposite the Deerfield River confluence (Montague)
4. DFW conservation lands on the eastern shore upstream from the Sawmill River confluence (Montague)
5. Eastern shore near the Route 116 Bridge (Sunderland)

At each site, FirstLight established six transects that were oriented perpendicular to the river and spanned the continuum from the water’s edge into the upland terrestrial vegetation. Within and among the five sites, transects were established to provide adequate representation of available habitat type (such as natural vegetation, gradually sloping mud/sand, and rock) and of varying bank slopes (i.e., steep versus shallow). Each transect was three meters wide, and extended upslope from the water’s edge a minimum of 12 meters (longer in some cases).

Surveys for emerging larvae, exuviae, and tenerals were conducted at each transect approximately every two weeks beginning on May 26 and ending on September 3, 2015.

Biologists looked for larvae exiting the water or crawling on land, and focused on single individuals as they crawled upslope and came to rest to begin the eclosure process. The most critical period was the time from when larvae began to eclose to when the teneral’s wings hardened and the adult flew away. Biologists used a stopwatch to record the duration of this process. Several of these events were recorded using time-lapse photography. For each exuvia (i.e., post-eclosure), the vertical height above the water’s surface, the horizontal distance from the water’s edge, and its eclosure structure/substrate was recorded. Each exuvia was collected, stored in individual vials, labeled with site information and date, and will be identified to species in the laboratory. Up to 10 teneral/exuvia pairs, per species, were collected for identification purposes. Results will be incorporated into the final license application upon completion of data analyses and reporting.

Freshwater Mussels

Turners Falls Impoundment and Bypass Reach

In 2011, a freshwater mussel survey was conducted in a 20-mile reach of the TFI, and a 3.5-mile reach from Turners Falls Dam to the confluence with the Deerfield River (2.7 of the 3.5 miles is in the bypass reach), as well as 2.1 miles of the power canal (Biodrawversity, 2012). The objective of the survey was to assess the distribution, abundance and habitat of freshwater mussels. The impoundment and bypass reach surveys were conducted during low flow in August and the power canal survey was conducted during the September canal drawdown. Five freshwater mussel species were found, including the Eastern Elliptio, Alewife Floater, Eastern Lampmussel, Eastern Floater, and Triangle Floater. The Eastern Elliptio was found at 96.2 percent of the 52 sites sampled and was 100 to 1,000 times more abundant than other species. Over 400 Alewife Floaters were found with the highest densities in the upstream end of the impoundment. Of the few Eastern Lampmussel that were found, they were mostly found in the TFI and not in the bypass reach or Power Canal. A total of eight Eastern Floaters were found in the Impoundment and in the power canal. One Triangle Floater was found near the mouth of the Deerfield River. Mussels were found in a wide range of water depths, flow conditions, and substrate conditions.

Freshwater mussels are an important part of the benthic fauna in the impoundment, bypass reach, and power canal. The Eastern Elliptio is the dominant species forming expansive beds along much of the impoundment. The Alewife Floater was broadly distributed in the survey area but in low densities in the canal, bypass reach, and lower two-thirds of the Impoundment. The Eastern Lampmussel was found in limited numbers throughout the survey area. The Triangle Floater was listed as Special Concern in Massachusetts until 2012 when it was removed from the list. Triangle Floaters are numerous in many Connecticut River tributaries including the Ashuelot and Millers Rivers which flow into the TFI. No state listed or federally threatened or endangered mussel species were found during the survey.

Connecticut River from Deerfield River confluence downstream to Sunderland Bridge

FirstLight conducted a quantitative survey and habitat assessment of freshwater mussels in 2014 in the Connecticut River from Cabot Station downstream to the Route 116 Bridge in Sunderland (relicensing study 3.3.16). The objectives of the survey were to delineate populations of state-listed mussels and suitable habitat; characterize the distribution, abundance, demographics, and habitat use of these populations; and to identify potential habitat for state-listed species based on their habitat preferences. The target species included Yellow Lampmussel, Eastern Pondmussel, Tidewater Mucket and Dwarf Wedgemussel (federally-listed).

In July and August, biologists conducted semi-quantitative (i.e., timed qualitative) surveys and habitat measurements at 26 sites in the study area. No live target mussel species were found. One old relic Yellow Lampmussel shell was found near Second Island. Eastern Elliptio was the only live mussel species found during the survey. At most sites, thousands or even tens of thousands of Eastern Elliptio were observed, and they occupied a wide range of depth, flow, and substrate conditions.

The mussel community in the reach from Cabot Station to the Route 116 Bridge appears to be strongly dominated by Eastern Elliptio, as no live mussels of other species were found. Eastern Elliptio are common to abundant in a wide range of habitat types, and the presence of a relatively high proportion of juveniles (which are usually underrepresented in qualitative surveys) suggests recruitment success is high.

The presence of more than 30 Alewife Floater shells suggest that live Alewife Floater may also exist within this reach, but at very low population densities and possibly confined to small patches that were undetected in the 2014 survey. Only old relict shells of Yellow Lampmussel (1) and Eastern Lampmussel (2) were found, which is consistent with results of the few reports (NHESP data) in this reach in recent years. To our knowledge, live Eastern Lampmussel and Yellow Lampmussel have never been documented in this reach, nor have Tidewater Mucket or Eastern Pondmussel. Dwarf Wedgemussel were not found in 2014, and the most recent report of Dwarf Wedgemussel in this reach was from ~1978 (shell only).

Water depths were variable; some areas (near islands and point bars) were very shallow or dewatered during low flow conditions, but maximum depths at survey sites ranged from 6-25 feet. Water velocity was usually light to moderate (typically in the range of 0.1 to 0.3 m/s), and flow refugia were present at nearly all sites, even where moderate to strong velocities were prevalent. Substrate was characterized by co-dominance of sand, gravel, and cobble, and extensive sandbars were present. Silt, sand, aquatic vegetation, and organic material (detritus and coarse wood) were common closer to shorelines and in flow refugia.

Orange Swallow Moth

Field surveys for the listed orange swallow moth were completed in 2015. Results of these surveys will be available in December, 2015.

Tiger Beetles

A November 1, 2013 meeting, which included representatives of the USFWS and the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), part of MADFW, included discussion related to methods used for evaluating rare plants and special status species. On November 8, 2013, FERC ordered that the modified revised study plan shall be submitted by January 13, 2014. This section describes the results of data collected as part of Revised Study Plan, which included agency comments received on August 29, 2013.

Cobble Stone Tiger Beetle

One historic area of suitable cobblestone tiger beetle habitat occurs on the east bank of the Connecticut River near the confluence with the Deerfield River. Suitable habitat was found along the cobble shoreline downstream of Cabot Station, between the Route 2 Bridge and the Montague Wastewater Treatment Plant. Figure 3.3.5.1-9 shows a representative view of the suitable habitat. Based on site visits conducted in 2014 by Chris Davis (NHESP approved expert), no tiger beetles were observed. The site was visited twice during the 2014 field season. A search for additional, suitable habitat, was completed by boat as Chris Davis and field technicians searched from Cabot Station to the Oxbow state boat launch in Holyoke, MA. No additional suitable habitat was identified within this reach.

Puritan Tiger Beetle

Puritan tiger beetles are known to be present at Rainbow Beach, and surveys completed in August of 2014 confirmed the presence of Puritan tiger beetles. Chris Davis holds a collectors permit from the USFWS, and on August 8, 2014, two adult male Puritan tiger beetles were identified (Figure 3.3.5.1-10). Larval habitat for the Puritan tiger beetle is generally 10-20% vegetative cover with the remaining areas un-vegetated. A representative view of available habitat at Rainbow Beach is shown in Figure 3.3.5.1-11. Larval habitat at Rainbow Beach occurs throughout the area. In 2013, and based on several years of mark and recapture data, the population of Puritan tiger beetles at Rainbow Beach was estimated at 21 individuals. Common tiger beetle populations at the same location are estimated at approximately 3-5 thousand individuals.

In 2014, a topographic survey was completed at Rainbow Beach and North Bank. Elevation data at these survey transects was collected with a Real Time Kinematic (RTK) survey unit. Twenty-four transects were established in beetle habitat at Rainbow Beach and four transects were established at North Bank (Figure 3.3.5.1-11). Transects extended from the edge of water to the upper limit of beetle habitat. Elevations within the beetle habitat ranged from 100.8 feet at the lower limit to 115.9 feet at the upper limit, at both Sites. Water level monitoring, conducted in 2012, across from Rainbow Beach showed fluctuations of the water surface ranged from approximately 107 feet in May to a low of approximately 99 feet in summer. For most of the summer months (June-September) the water surface was maintained between 99 and 102 feet (FirstLight, 2015b).

3.3.5.2 Environmental Effects

Vascular Plants

A number of protected vascular plants have been mapped within the Turners Falls Development area as well as on islands downstream of the Project to the Sunderland Bridge. All the species identified tend to prefer habitats within or near the floodzone. Elevation data collected in August of 2015 will be used to compare water levels derived from hydraulic modeling. The analysis of this data is being completed during the fall of 2015 and will be included in the final study report and license application completed in December 2015.

Vertebrate Species

Given the nature and scope of Project operations, no adverse effects on terrestrial vertebrate species are anticipated. In the event that minimal tree removal may be necessary for maintenance activities, FirstLight would follow USFWS's published conservation measures to avoid effects to the northern long-eared bat. Protected birds within the project are currently utilizing habitat within the Project area and will continue to do so, regardless of project operation. Some minor impacts related to recreational activity on the impoundment, such as temporary dispersal, may occur as a result of boating or hiking. While no rare herptile species were identified within the Project area, it is not expected (should they occur) that they would be negatively impacted by Project operation. Vernal pools identified within the project are not hydraulically connected to the TFI or the Upper Reservoir. There is the potential for impact as a result of ground disturbing or recreational activities. These effects would be minor and are not likely to adversely affect these species.

Invertebrate Species

Clubtail Dragonflies

FirstLight deployed a water level logger (with temperature recording capability) to record data at 15-minute intervals for each quantitative survey reach in order to accurately evaluate water levels, standardize field measurements, and describe temperature in relation to odonate emergence behavior. Temporary water level/temperature loggers were installed at each site for the duration of the quantitative surveys to supplement data from the permanent gages at the Turners Falls Dam and the USGS Montague City gage. The field data will be used to determine if water level fluctuations affect the emergence and eclosure success of state listed odonates.

Freshwater Mussels

FirstLight is in the process of developing binary HSI criteria for all state-listed mussel species documented in the 35-mile reach between Cabot Station and Dinosaur Footprints Reservation. Based on 2014 survey results and prior data, these species include Yellow Lampmussel, Tidewater Mucket, and Eastern Pondmussel.

Using the binary HSI criteria, FirstLight will determine if any binary HSI thresholds are not met under a range of modeled operating conditions. In general the approach includes using the HEC-RAS hydraulic model to simulate the range of operating conditions at Holyoke Dam (WSEL at the dam) and the Turners Falls Project (up to its hydraulic capacity) to determine how operations impact depth, velocity, shear stress and Froude number at model transects near documented state or federally listed mussel beds. If threshold levels are not exceeded in any transects, then no further assessment of documented state and federally listed mussel beds is proposed. If threshold levels are exceeded, then a more detailed assessment is proposed. Analysis of the hydraulic model will be completed by December, 2015.

Tiger Beetles

Based on the observed water level monitoring completed as part of the Study 3.2.2 Hydraulic Study of Turner Fall Impoundment, Bypass Reach and Below Cabot, it appears that water level fluctuations over the course of the growing season fluctuate at Rainbow Beach and North Bank approximately 7 feet throughout the season with water levels fluctuating approximately 3 feet (99-102 feet) for the majority of the time. Based on the results of a survey, completed in 2014, beetle habitat occurs on Rainbow Beach from the low elevation (100.8 feet) to the high elevation (115.9 feet). It is possible that changing water levels may disperse individuals within the lower portion of the habitat. Additional analysis of the impact of fluctuating water levels using the results from the hydraulic model will be completed in December, 2015. In addition, impacts from recreation at Rainbow Beach are likely to affect both adult and larval beetles. Boat wakes may temporarily and rapidly disperse individuals along the water line and foot traffic from recreators may result in mortality or dispersal. At higher elevations (beginning at approximately elevation 105 feet), dense vegetation growth is limiting the available larval habitat.

3.3.5.3 Cumulative Effects

This section will be developed following completion of the data analyses and reporting for the ongoing studies.

3.3.5.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

There are currently no proposed environmental measures based on the results of completed study reports. Following the completion of the study reports, proposed environmental measures may be reassessed.

3.3.5.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

This section will be developed following completion of the data analyses and reporting for the ongoing studies.

Table 3.3.5.1-1: Massachusetts Listed Vascular Plants Identified Within the Project Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	State (MA) Status	Preferred Habitat
mountain alder	*Alnus viridis ssp. crispa*	Threatened	Exposed ledges/ Boulders/ Cobble Bars
intermediate spike-sedge	*Eleocharis intermedia*	Threatened	Open Sandy Margins
ovate spike-sedge	*Eleocharis ovata*	Endangered	Open Sandy Margins
Frank’s lovegrass	*Eragrostis frankii*	Special Concern	Open Sandy Margins
great blue lobelia	*Lobelia siphilitca*	Endangered	Circumneutral wetlands and transitional areas.
upland white aster	*Oligoneuron album*	Endangered	Open Rocky Habitat
sandbar cherry	*Prunus pumila var. depressa*	Threatened	Flooded Scoured Areas of Islands, Shores, & Peninsulas
sandbar willow	*Salix exigua ssp. interior*	Threatened	Island Sandbars, and Sandy Beaches
Tradescant’s aster	*Symphyotrichum tradescantii*	Threatened	Rooted Fissures & Cracks of Rocky Streams

Table 3.3.5.1-2: Special Status Bird Species That May Occur or Have Been Observed Within the Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status	TF	NM
American Bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	E		
Bald Eagle [1]	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	T	X	X
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco Peregrines*	E		X
Grasshopper Sparrow	*Ammodramus savannarum*	T		
Vesper Sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus*	T		

[1] No longer listed as federally Endangered, but still maintains federal protection under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Table 3.3.5.1-3: Herptile Species Identified by the NHESP That May Occur Within the Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status[1]
wood turtle	*Glyptemys insculpta*	SC
eastern box turtle	*Terrapene Carolina*	SC
Jefferson salamander	*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*	SC
marbled salamander	*Ambystoma opacum*	T
easter spadefoot	*Scaphiopus holbrookii*	T

[1]SC= Special Concern, T = Threatened

Table 3.3.5.1-4: Special Status Invertebrate Species Documented Within the Project Area

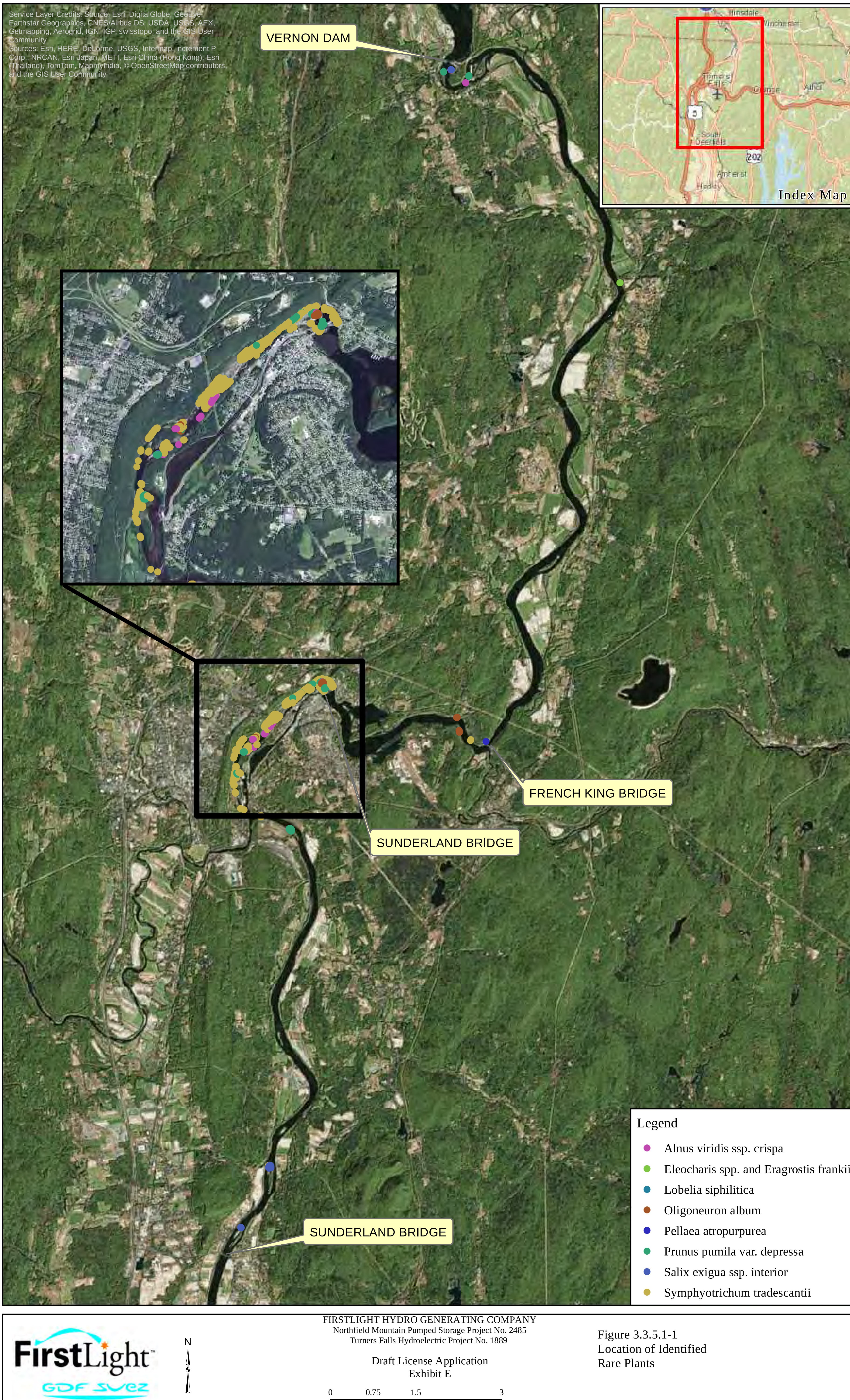
Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status[1]	Federal Status[1]
spine-crowned clubtail	*Gomphus abbreviates*	SC	-
midland clubtail	*Gomphus fraternus*	E	-
rapids clubtail	*Gomphus quadricolor*	E	-
riverine clubtail	*Stylurus amnicola*	E	-
cobblestone tiger beetle	*Cicindela marginipennis*	E	-
puritan tiger beetle	*Cincindela puritana*	E	T
yellow lampmussel	*Lampsilis cariosa*	E	-
dwarf wedgemussel	*Alasmidonta heterodon*	E	E
orange sallow moth	*Rhodoecia aurantiago*	SC	-

[1]SC= Special Concern, T = Threatened, E= Endangered

Table 3.3.5.1-5: Odonate Species Documented During the Qualitative Surveys of Larvae and Exuviae in June 2014

Species	Survey Site							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Arigomphus furcifer		X						
Boyeria vinosa	X			X	X	X	X	X
Epitheca princeps	X	X	X	X	X			
*Gomphus sp.**			X	X	X	X	X	X
Macromia illinoiensis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Neurocordulia yamaskenensis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
*Ophiogomphus sp**				X	X	X	X	X
Stylurus spiniceps				X	X	X	X	X
Arigomphus furcifer				X				

*Awaiting final species-level identification by Dr. David Wagner, University of Connecticut. Potential Species: *Gomphus fraternus*, *Gomphus ventricosus*, *Gomphus abbreviates*, *Gomphus vastus*, *Dromogomphus spinosus*, *Ophiogomphus rupinsulensis*, *Gomphus spicatus*, *Gomphus exilis*, *Gomphus descriptus*, *Gomphus lividus*



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Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

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Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.5.1-1
Location of Identified
Rare Plants

Path: W:\gis\maps\dla\figure_3_3_5_1-1.mxd

Figure 3.3.5.1-2: Typical Habitat Found Within the Bypass Reach, Below Turners Falls Dam.

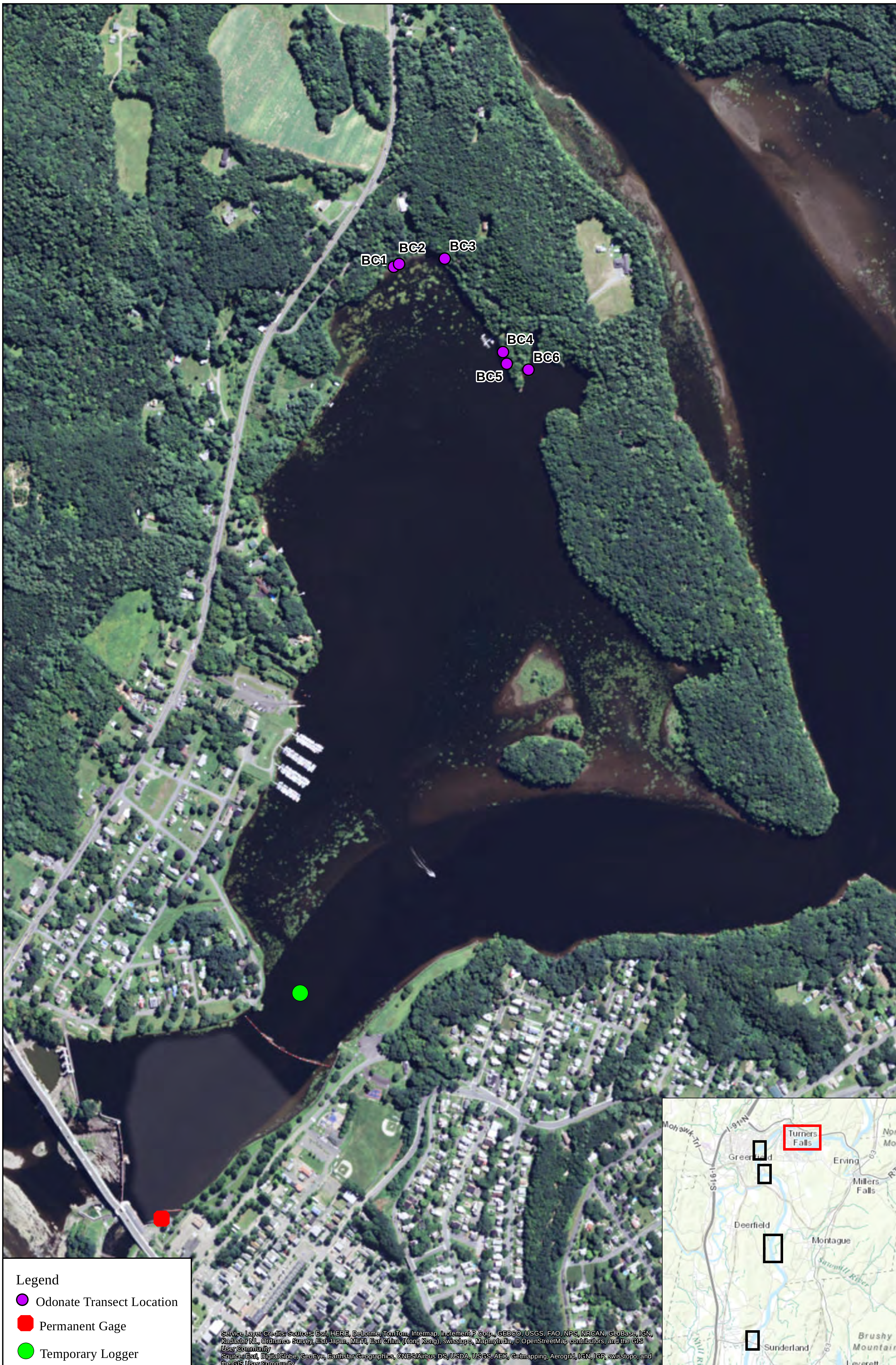
Figure 3.3.5.1-3: View of Typical Shoreline Habitat Near the Pauchaug Boat Launch.

Figure 3.3.5.1-4: Upland White Aster Identified Within the Bypass Reach in 2014.

Figure 3.3.5.1-5: Typical Sandbar Cherry Located Within the Bypass Reach in 2014.

Figure 3.3.5.1-6: View of Typical Habitat for the Sandbar Willow at First Island, near Sunderland Bridge.

Figure 3.3.5.1-7: Typical Tradescant's Aster Habitat Identified Within the Bypass Reach in 2014



FirstLight GDF SUEZ

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0 300 600 1,200 Feet

Figure 3.3.5.1-8
2015 Quantitative Odonate Survey Sites
Site 1 (Bartons Cove)

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Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

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0 150 300 600 Feet

Figure 3.3.5.1-8
2015 Quantitative Odonate Survey Sites
Site 2 (Rock Dam)

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0 150 300 600 Feet

Figure 3.3.5.1-8
2015 Quantitative Odonate Survey Sites
Site 3 (Opposite Deerfield River Confluence)

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0 225 450 900 Feet

Figure 3.3.5.1-8
2015 Quantitative Odonate Survey Sites
Site 4 (Near Sawmill River)

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Figure 3.3.5.1-8
2015 Quantitative Odonate Survey Sites
Site 5 (Near Route 116 Bridge)

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Figure 3.3.5.1-9: Suitable Cobblestone Tiger Beetle Habitat Located Downstream of Cabot Station.

Figure 3.3.5.1-10: Adult male, Puritan Tiger Beetle Identified at Rainbow Beach in 2014.

Figure 3.3.5.1-11: Typical Puritan Tiger Beetle Habitat Observed in 2014 at Rainbow Beach.

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N

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

Figure 3.3.5.1-12
Tiger Beetle Elevation Transects

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3.3.6 Recreation Resources

3.3.6.1 Affected Environment

3.3.6.1.1 Regional Recreation

The Northfield Project is situated on the Connecticut River, within the states of Massachusetts (MA), New Hampshire (NH), and Vermont (VT). The majority of the Project lands are located within the county of Franklin, Massachusetts, specifically in the towns of Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Montague, and Northfield. Northern sections of the TFI reach into the towns of Vernon, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Turners Falls Dam is located on mile 122 of the Connecticut River, (above the Long Island Sound) in the towns of Gill and Montague, MA. The TFI is approximately 20 miles long, with 5.7 miles located within the states of NH and VT.

Recreation sites and facilities in the vicinity of the Northfield Mountain Development include hiking trails, fishing access, picnic areas, camping, wildlife management areas, boat launches, hunting, observation areas, and bike trails. There are recreation sites in near proximity to the Project that provide hiking and nature observation opportunities, as well as numerous state lands for hiking, hunting and enjoyment of the outdoors. Some of the nearby recreation sites include the King Philip's Hill Trail, Brush Mountain Conservation Area, Stacy Mountain Preserve and the Erving State Forest. The Connecticut River Greenway State Park in Massachusetts is a linear state park paralleling the river for the 69-mile portion that flows through the state and connects key recreational areas including boat launches and other public lands. The park includes over 12 miles of permanently protected shoreline. The Connecticut River is also a National Blueway; and although the program was dissolved in 2014, the Connecticut River has retained its designation.

There are several other FERC licensed hydroelectric projects located near the Northfield Project that also provide a variety of recreation opportunities for the public. These Projects include the Holyoke Project (FERC No. 2004), approximately 35 miles downstream of the TFI and the Vernon Project (FERC No. 1904), located on the Connecticut River main stem, immediately upstream of the TFI. In addition, the nearby Deerfield Project (FERC No. 2323) is located approximately 2.9 miles downstream of the Turners Falls Dam on the Deerfield River. Recreation resources and opportunities in the general vicinity of the Project are discussed in more detail in FirstLight's Pre-Application Document (PAD) (FirstLight, 2012), and in several of the recreation studies conducted by the Licensee, including Study 3.6.2 Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment Report (FirstLight, 2014), 3.6.3 Whitewater Boating Evaluation (FirstLight, 2015a), 3.6.4 Assessment of Day Use and Overnight Facilities Associated with Non-motorized Boating (FirstLight, 2015b), and 3.6.7 Recreation Study at Northfield Mountain, including Assessment of Sufficiency of Trails for Shared Use (FirstLight, 2015d).[36]

In addition to recreation sites and facilities in the vicinity of the Project, there are also whitewater boating opportunities in the region including several reaches of the Deerfield River, the Ashuelot River, the West River, and the Millers River. Some of these opportunities are subject to natural flows while others are supported by scheduled whitewater releases. Whitewater boating opportunities in the Northfield Project region are discussed in detail in Study Report 3.6.3 Whitewater Boating Evaluation (FirstLight, 2015a).

Recreation facilities that provide access to the Project or are immediately adjacent to the Project were inventoried as part of Study 3.6.2 Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment Report and Addendum (FirstLight, 2014, 2015c). Existing recreation sites and trails at the Northfield Project are identified on Figure 3.3.6.1.1-1. The current licenses for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project and Turners Falls Project require FirstLight to operate and maintain certain public recreation facilities at the two

[36] The study reports for these studies can be found on the Northfield Project relicensing website at www. northfieldrelicensing.com. The report for Study No. 3.6.2 was filed with FERC as part of the ISR on September 15, 2014 and an addendum to the report was filed with FERC on June 15, 2015. The reports for Study Nos. 3.6.3, 3.6.4, and 3.6.7 were filed with FERC as part of the USR on September 14, 2015.

projects. These sites are included in the Projects' respective Recreation Plans (Exhibit R) and are therefore considered Project Recreation Sites. In addition to these Project Recreation Sites, there are a number of other public recreation sites located in the immediate vicinity of the Projects, many of which provide access to Project lands and waters. Some of these sites are formal recreation sites that FERC has previously approved as non-project use of project lands. Some of the sites are informal areas where no improvements have been made, and no facilities exist, but where the public is provided access to Project lands and waters and are using that access for recreational purposes. Such areas are common at hydropower projects and often include such activities as informal access paths for shoreline fishing, footpaths to the water's edge for carry-in boat launching, or local swimming holes accessed via footpath, bridge or roadway. The more significant of these informal access areas located within the Project boundary were inventoried as part of Study 3.6.2 Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment (FirstLight, 2014).

There are also private recreation facilities at the Project. Private recreation facilities include things such as boat docks, piers, picnic areas, or campsites. Some private facilities are located within the Project boundary, and may be on property owned by FirstLight, and have been approved as "non-project use of project lands" as allowed under the standard land-use articles in the existing FERC licenses. There are a number of such approved facilities and uses on the TFI, mostly associated with residences or camps located along the shoreline of the TFI, some of which are on leased FirstLight lands. There are also a small number of private clubs or organizations that also maintain approved recreation facilities on the TFI. There are no commercially operated recreation facilities at the Northfield Project.

3.3.6.1.2 Project Recreation Sites

Table 3.3.6.1.2-1 lists the Commission approved Project recreation sites for the Northfield Project. Below is a summary of the Commission approved Project sites. Additional information can be found in the Study 3.6.2 Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment Report and Addendum (FirstLight, 2014, 2015c).

Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Bennett Meadow WMA is located on the western shore of the Connecticut River, south of the Route 10 Bridge in Northfield, MA. The site is owned by FirstLight and is managed by both FirstLight and the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife (MADFW). While there are no developed recreation facilities, existing agricultural roads provide access for walking and hiking, as well as hunting.

Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area (Munn's Ferry). Munn's Ferry is located on the east side of the Connecticut River in Northfield, MA. This site is owned and managed by FirstLight. This site provides four tent campsites with platforms and a single lean-to site, all complete with trash can, picnic table, fire ring, and grill. Pit toilets are available at the site. A dock and bank fishing opportunities are also available at the site.

Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area. The Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area is accessed by Pine Meadow Road in Northfield, MA. This site is owned and managed by FirstLight and provides a picnic area and riverboat tours. Amenities include nine picnic tables, a pavilion that can be rented for events, as well as restroom facilities that are ADA accessible. There are two parking lots with a total of 54 parking spaces with two ADA signed spaces. Riverboat tours are conducted on the Quinnetukut II. The Quinnetukut II has 44 seats and provides a 12-mile sightseeing trip, guided by an on-board interpreter, through the French King Gorge and Barton Cove portions of the TFI.

Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center (NMTTC). Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center is located off Rt. 63 in Northfield, MA. FirstLight owns and manages this site. Amenities include an ADA accessible Visitor Center with ADA accessible restrooms, picnic tables, grills, a fire ring, and interpretive displays. There are approximately 25 miles of trails (Northfield Mountain Trail System) accessible from the NMTTC Visitor Center that can be used for hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The site has a parking lot with 50 parking spaces and three ADA parking spaces.

Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground. This campground is located north of the Turners Falls Dam in Barton Cove, on Barton Cove Road in Gill, MA. The Nature Area and Campground are owned and managed by FirstLight. The campground has two group campsites, two trailer sites, and 27 tent sites, one of which is considered ADA accessible. Each campsite has a picnic table, fire ring, and garbage can, while the group sites have a grill and additional picnic tables. The Nature Area and Campground has a set of flush toilets, two showers, along with vault and portable restrooms. Bank fishing is available from some campsites.

Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area. The Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area is located on the northern shore of the Connecticut River, off of Route 2 in Gill, MA. This rental area is owned and managed by FirstLight and offers paddling and picnicking. Site amenities include a gravel carry-in canoe/kayak launch, picnic tables, and a portable toilet. There is also the option for a watercraft rental, which includes a PFD and a paddle or oar. The parking area holds 28 vehicles.

Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area. The Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area is located on the north side of 1st Street across from town operated Unity Park in Montague, MA. The viewing area is owned and managed by FirstLight. The site consists of a visitor center which provides the public an opportunity to view fish when the Gatehouse fishway is operating. The first floor of the visitor center is ADA accessible with a closed-circuit TV feed from the viewing window to a TV monitor that allows for ease of access for those with limited mobility. There are interpretive panels to provide information about anadromous fish, along with bathrooms, and benches on the outside of the facility. The site also contains the picnic area on the north site of 1st Street with six (6) picnic tables, five (5) grills, a bike rack, and parking for 29 vehicles.

Turners Falls Branch Canal Area. The Turners Falls Branch Canal Area is located off of Power Street in Montague, MA, This site is owned and managed by FirstLight. The site provides fishing access and has four (4) benches for anglers to use while fishing.

Cabot Woods Fishing Access. Cabot Woods Fishing Access is located on Migratory Way in Montague, MA. This site is owned and managed by FirstLight and is open to day use activities. Amenities at this site include three (3) picnic tables, two (2) parking lots, and many informal angler access trails. The two (2) parking lots provide 17 parking spaces and three (3) ADA parking spaces. The first parking lot is located outside of a gate at the northerly terminus of Migratory Way where it joins G Street. The second lot is located roadside along Migratory Way, inside of the gate.

Turners Falls Canoe Portage. The Turners Falls canoe portage operation provides boaters with a means of circumventing the Turners Falls Dam. Boaters wishing to proceed downriver of Barton Cove call FirstLight for vehicular portage. They are then picked up and driven downstream of the Turners Falls Dam to the Poplar Street Access site in Montague, where they can continue their trip. (The Poplar Street Access is outside of the Project boundary.) Signs explaining the canoe portage operation procedures and providing the portage request call-in number are located at the following recreation sites: Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area, Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area, Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground, Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area, and at the Poplar Street Access site. Instructions are to paddle to the Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area, unload gear, and then call (413) 659-3761 to request a pick up. Typically a vehicle for the portage will arrive within 15 to 90 minutes of the telephone call. Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area has a phone that boaters can use from Memorial Day through Labor Day. During the off-season, boaters need to use their own phones to make the portage request.

3.3.6.1.3 Other Formal Recreation Sites

Other formal recreation sites that provide access to the Project are summarized below. Most of these sites are fully or partially within the Project boundary, although one site is fully outside the Project boundary. Additional information regarding the recreation sites can be found in the Study 3.6.2 Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment Report and Addendum (FirstLight, 2014, 2015c).

Governor Hunt Boat Launch and Picnic Area. This site is located immediately downstream of the Vernon Project dam and is owned and managed by TransCanada, which owns the Vernon Project. While this recreation site is within the Vernon Project boundary, a portion of the site along the shoreline, which includes the boat launch is also located within the Northfield Project boundary.

Fort Hill Rail Trail. The Fort Hill Rail Trail is a multiple use trail, located in Hinsdale, New Hampshire. The trail is nine miles long and travels from Route 63 along the Connecticut River to the old bridge on Route 119. A small portion (approximately 190 feet) of the trail crosses through the Northfield Project boundary, over the Ashuelot River. The trail is owned and maintained by the State of New Hampshire.

Pauchaug Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The Pauchaug WMA is located on the eastern side of the Connecticut River in Northfield, Massachusetts. This WMA is owned and managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife (MADFW). The site is open for hunting and is also used for walking/hiking, bird-watching, and bank fishing. The site is located within the Northfield Project boundary. There are no formal amenities within the WMA.

Pauchaug Boat Launch. This site is owned and managed by the MADFW as part of the Pauchaug WMA. The boat launch is located on state owned property on the eastern shore of the Connecticut River, upstream of the Schell Bridge in Northfield, Massachusetts. Facilities at this site include a hard surface boat launch with two launching lanes, parking, informational signage, and portable sanitation (seasonal). This site lies within the Northfield Project boundary.

Northfield Connector Bikeway. The Northfield Connector Bikeway is an 11-mile shared roadway route connecting the Canalside Trail Bike Path with the Town of Northfield. There is a spur off the main route to the Northfield Mountain Trail System. The route travels along the shoulders of existing roads from the East Mineral Road Bridge along Dorsey Road, River Road, Pine Meadows Road, Ferry Road, and finally onto Route 63, in Northfield, Massachusetts. The bikeway is part of the public roadway and signage is maintained by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Approximately 4,580 feet of the 11-mile trail passes through the Northfield Project boundary near the NMTTC Visitor Center.

Cabot Camp Access Area. This area is located within the Northfield Project boundary at the end of Mineral Road in Montague, Massachusetts. The site is owned and managed by FirstLight and is open to the public for shoreline access and bank fishing. A parking area which provides parking for approximately 15 vehicles is available at the site.

State Boat Launch. This launch is located upstream of the Turners Falls Dam. A portion of this site is within the Northfield Project boundary, off of Route 2 in Gill, Massachusetts. A portion of this site is owned by FirstLight, and a portion is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The boat launch site is managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and is open to the public free of charge. The site offers boat launching, and bank fishing opportunities. There is a hard surface boat ramp with two launching lanes, a dock and portable sanitation facility (seasonal) at the site.

Canalside Trail Bike Path. This hard surface trail begins within the Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area and ends at McClelland Farm Road in northeast Deerfield, Massachusetts. The trail is 3.27 miles long, with approximately 1.5 miles within the Northfield Project boundary. The trail runs along the Turners Falls Power Canal in Montague, Massachusetts and along the Connecticut River. The trail property is owned by FirstLight and is leased to and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (now the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation).

Poplar Street Access Site. The Poplar Street Access site is located outside the Northfield Project boundary, downstream of Cabot Station, on Poplar Street in Montague, Massachusetts. This site is owned by FirstLight and is utilized for carry-in boat access, fishing and as the downstream put-in location for the Canoe Portage. A parking area that can hold approximately 16 vehicles, a FERC Part 8 sign, and a trash can are available at the site.

3.3.6.1.4 Informal Recreation and Access Areas

Informal areas within the Project provide various recreation opportunities. Informal fishing access, whitewater boating access, climbing areas, and camp sites make up a majority of these opportunities. These areas have been created through repeated use by the public and have not been improved by the Licensee or other authorized entities.

Ashuelot River Informal Campsite. The informal campsite is located just downstream of the confluence of the Ashuelot River with the Connecticut River on the east side of the Connecticut River. The site is located on private property and FirstLight maintains flowage rights over the property. The area appears to be used for camping and picnicking.

Schell Bridge Informal Fishing and Swimming Access. The Schell Bridge informal fishing and swimming access is located on the western shore of the Connecticut River just south of the Pauchaug Boat Launch in Northfield, Massachusetts. This site is located partially within the Northfield Project boundary on private property and FirstLight holds flowage rights to the property. The area appears to be used for fishing and swimming.

Informal Multi-Use Access. This informal multi-use access area is located on the western shore of the Connecticut River, in Northfield, Massachusetts, upstream of the Route 10 Bridge. The access area is located on property owned by FirstLight within the Northfield Project boundary. It appears that this access area is used as an informal fishing access and campsite.

Informal Munn's Ferry Fishing Access. This informal access area is partially located within the Project boundary on the west side of the river in Gill, Massachusetts across from the Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area. The access area is located on private property and FirstLight has flowage rights for the property. The area appears to be utilized for informal fishing access.

Turners Falls Station No. 1 Fishing Access. Station No. 1 is located in Montague, Massachusetts. The area is owned by FirstLight and is used as an informal fishing access. There is a parking lot associated with Station No. 1, which is maintained by FirstLight.

Turners Falls Dam Downstream Put-in. This informal area is located within the Northfield Project boundary immediately downstream of the Turners Falls Fishway on river left. The area is owned by FirstLight and appears to be used informally for angling and launching of carry-in boats.

Rose Ledge Climbing Area. This area is an informal climbing area located within the Northfield Project boundary on land owned by FirstLight. The area consists of a 40'- 60' cliff line that is used for rock-climbing. There are no formal amenities associated with the Rose Ledge Climbing area. Access to the area is via an informal foot path stemming from the NMTTC Trail System's Lower Ledge Trail. Climbers may park at the parking lot located at the NMTTC. Additional parking for the climbing area is located outside of the Project boundary on private property.

Farley Ledge Climbing Area. This informal climbing area is located partially within the Northfield Project boundary. A loop trail encompasses the climbing ledges associated with Farley Ledge and provides access to the crags. The Western Massachusetts Climbing Coalition (WMCC) owns property that provides parking and access to the loop trail. The total area encompassed by the trail along with the property that provides access to the site is approximately 51 acres. Approximately 46% of this land is located within the Northfield Project boundary. Farley Ledge is part of a larger chain of ledges (Farley Ledges) utilized for rock-climbing. There are no formal amenities associated with this area within the Project boundary. There are three (3) parking areas associated with the climbing area, which are located on private property outside the Project boundary.

3.3.6.1.5 Use at Formal Recreation Sites

FirstLight conducted an in-depth study from January 2014 to December 2014 to assess the type and level of use at formal recreation sites in the Northfield Project (Study 3.6.1 *Recreation Use/User Contact*

Survey).[37] Data collection objectives included the determination of the amount of recreation use and demand at Project recreation sites and user opinions with regard to existing recreation sites and perceived adequacy of recreation facilities. The data regarding the type and amount of use was obtained using spot counts, calibration counts, traffic counters, and when applicable, FirstLight registration data. Using these methods, the study was able to determine the type and amount of use at sites based in recreation days, a recreation day being defined by FERC as each visit by a person to a development for recreational purposes during any portion of a 24-hour period. Data regarding user opinions were obtained through the recreation user survey, the residential abutters' survey, and the Northfield Mountain trail user survey. Spot counts, calibration counts, the recreation user survey, and the Northfield Mountain trail user survey were conducted at parking locations associated with the formal recreation sites.

Based on data collected between January 2014 and December 2014, the total annual recreation use of surveyed recreation sites at the Northfield Project in 2014 was estimated to be 152,769 recreation days. Table 3.3.6.1.5-1 provides a breakdown of estimated use by season. As shown, approximately half of the recreation use occurred during the summer with 50% of recreation days. Recreation use was lowest in winter (10%) with moderate use in spring (16%) and fall (23%)[38].

Table 3.3.6.1.5-2 shows a breakdown of recreation use by activity type per recreation site surveyed. As shown, recreationists participated in a wide variety of activities at the Northfield Project. Project-wide, walking, hiking, and jogging was found to be the most popular recreation activity at the Northfield Project with 30% of recreation days. Motor boating was the second most popular activity (12%), followed by fishing (7%), bike riding (6%), picnicking (5%), climbing (4%), non-motorized boating (4%), cross-country skiing (3%), fishway viewing (3%), and camping (2%).[39] Hunting, ice fishing, ice skating, riding horses, sightseeing and birding received 1% or less of recreation days.

In addition to determining the type and amount of use at each of the surveyed recreation sites, the degree to which each recreation site had the capacity to sustain the recreation activity occurring at a site was estimated. Table 3.3.6.1.5-3 provides a breakdown of percent capacity utilized for each site. Percent capacity was determined by the available amount of parking at each site versus the average number of parking spaces that were occupied during surveys during summer weekends.

Governor Hunt Boat Launch: Annual recreation use at the boat launch was 1,812 recreation days in 2014. The portion of the site within the Northfield Project boundary was estimated to be utilized at 50% of capacity. Motor boating (53%) was the most popular recreation use at the boat launch followed by non-motor boating (15% of the use) and fishing (12% of the use).

Pauchaug Wildlife Management Area (WMA): There were a total 1,005 recreation days spent at the WMA. The site was estimated to be utilized at 1% of capacity. Forty-four percent (44%) of the recreation use at the WMA was for hunting followed by walking, hiking and jogging at 32% of use.

Pauchaug Boat Launch: Annual recreation use at the boat launch was 9,630 recreation days. The site is utilized at 20% of capacity. Motor boating accounted for 49% of the recreation use at this site, followed by fishing at 12% of the use, and non-motorized boating at 10% of the use.

Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area (WMA): There were a total 3,729 recreation days spent at the WMA. The site was utilized at 10% capacity. Walking, hiking and jogging accounted for 41% of the use. Hunting was also a popular activity at this site, particularly during the fall, accounting for 25% of the use.

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[37] The results from the Recreation Use/User Contact Survey presented herein are preliminary as data are still being analyzed with a final report scheduled to be available by December 31, 2015.
[38] Figures shown do not total to 100% because of rounding.
[39] Bike riding includes both biking on hardened surfaces and mountain biking.

Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area: Annual recreation use at the camping area was 1,716 recreation days. The site is utilized at 40% capacity. Motor boating and camping were the most popular uses of this area and accounted for 39% and 30%, respectively.

Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area: Annual recreation use at the area was 13,651 recreation days. The site was utilized at 10% capacity. On an annual basis, 20% of the use was for riverboat trips on the Quinnetukutt II (2,733 riverboat trips). During the period that the Quinnetukutt II was operating (June 28 through October 19), it accounted for 43% of use at the site. Other popular recreation activities included walking, hiking, and jogging at 29% of use, followed by picnicking at 18%. Based on data maintained by FirstLight, use of the Quinnetukutt II has declined since the 1980's (FirstLight, 2015d).

Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center (NMTTC): The total number of recreation days at the NMTTC during 2014 was 20,024. This included use of the Visitor Center, registered programs, and trail use. Trail use was the most popular recreation activity at the NMTTC, which includes hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The NMTTC is utilized at 10% capacity.[40] The NMTTC is discussed in more detail in section 3.3.6.1.6.11.

Cabot Camp Access Area: Annual recreation use at the area was 5,326 recreation days. The site was utilized at 15% capacity. The most popular recreational activities were fishing (26% of the use at the site) and walking, hiking, and jogging (19% of the use).

Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground: The total number of recreation days at the nature area was 7,842, while the campground had a total of 2,963 recreation days. The most popular recreation activities at the nature area were walking, hiking, and jogging and fishing. Camping was the most popular recreation activity at the campground. Based on parking area usage levels, the Nature Area was utilized at 20%. Utilization of the campground was based on campsite use, and was estimated to be utilized at 40%.

Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area: Annual recreation use during 2014 at the rental area was 4,455 recreation days. The area was utilized at 25% capacity. Sixty percent (60%) of the use at the site was by individuals who were participating in non-motorized boating. Twelve percent (12%) of the use was picnicking.

State Boat Launch: The total number of recreation days during 2014 at the boat launch was 15,126. While the launch was utilized at 65% on average during summer weekends, there were times when the site was used above 100% capacity, such as fishing tournaments. Boating (motorized at 74% of use and non-motorized boating at 11%) is the most popular recreation activity at this site.

Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area: Annual recreation use during 2014 at the fishway viewing area was 27,345 recreation days. This includes individuals touring the fishway and utilizing the picnic area along the river. The visitor center associated with the fishway was utilized at 90% capacity. The parking lot serving the Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area, which includes the picnic area was at 25% capacity. Based on existing use records maintained by FirstLight since the 1980s, visits to the fishway have declined. Walking, hiking, and jogging (36% of use) and fishway viewing (19% of use) were the most popular activities at the site.

Turners Falls Branch Canal Area: The total number of recreation days spent at this area and Turners Falls Station No. 1, combined, in 2014 was 1,264. Parking for this area is available at Turners Falls Station No. 1. Percent capacity utilization at Turners Falls Station No. 1 was 1%. The area was primarily utilized for walking, hiking, and jogging (26% of use), fishing (21% of use), bike riding (21% of use), and cross-country skiing (14% of use).

Cabot Woods Fishing Access: There were a total of 18,230 recreation days spent at the fishing access during 2014. The site was utilized at 25% capacity. The most popular recreation activities included walking, hiking, and jogging (53% of use), fishing (11% of use) and bike riding at 10% of use. There are two parking

[40] This is based on parking lot capacity.

areas associated with the fishing access, as well as 3,100 feet of Migratory Way, which links the two parking areas. This helps to account for the primary use of the access being attributable to walking, hiking, and jogging and bike riding.

Turners Falls Canoe Portage: FirstLight provided a total of nine vehicle portages around the Turners Falls Dam between May 17th, 2014 and September 3rd, 2014. Of these, three vehicle portages were related to camp groups totaling 39 boaters. The remaining six vehicle portages totaled 14 boaters.

Poplar Street Access Site: Annual recreation use during 2014 at this access area was 1,877 recreation days. The site was utilized at 10% capacity for fishing (41% of use), walking, hiking, and jogging (23%), and non-motorized boating (21%).

Of the formal recreation sites for which percent capacity utilization was calculated, only two sites were used at greater than 30% capacity – the State Boat Launch, which was utilized at 65% capacity on summer weekends and the Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area building, which during the short viewing season had the heaviest utilization at 90%. Six of the formal recreation sites were utilized at 10% of capacity or less. Observed capacity utilization was lowest at Pauchaug Wildlife Management Area (1%) and Turners Falls Branch Canal/Station No. 1 (1%). The other wildlife management area, Bennett Meadows (10%), also has a low level of utilization.

Project-wide, the formal recreation sites have sufficient capacity to meet recreational demands, with several of the sites having significant excess capacity.

3.3.6.1.6 Use of Informal Recreation Areas

Use of the informal recreation areas was estimated based on field observations of compaction, litter and other indicators noted during site visits, as well as spot counts and calibration counts made at Turners Falls Station No. 1 Fishing Access, Rose Ledge parking area, and at Farley Ledge's Wells Street and Route 2 parking lots.[41] It appeared that the majority of the informal recreation areas received low to moderate use with a few exceptions.

Ashuelot River Informal Campsite. This site is located on private property and appears to receive moderate use based on physical improvements and compaction at the site.

Schell Bridge Informal Fishing and Swimming Access. This area appears to see moderate use based on the amount of compaction along the shoreline. Individuals appear to use this area for informal fishing access and swimming.

Informal Multi-Use Access. This informal multi-use access area appears to have been used for informal fishing access and camping. This use appears to vary from moderate to minimal use. Site indicators were compaction and erosion.

Informal Munn's Ferry Fishing Access. The area appears to be utilized for informal fishing access, however this use appears to be minimal based on site indicators such as compaction and vegetation.

Turners Falls Station No. 1 Fishing Access. This area appears to see minimal use based on parking area information that was collected during 2014. The area is used as an informal fishing access.

Turners Falls Dam Downstream Put-in. This area appears to receive minimal use with some individuals participating in kayaking or bank fishing. There was no compaction noted, however the area does appear to receive some unauthorized improvements such as an informal fire ring and graffiti.

Rose Ledge Climbing Area: While the climbing area itself was not surveyed for use, the parking area, which is located on private property outside of the Project boundary, was utilized at 60% capacity.

[41] Turners Falls Station No. 1 Fishing Access is utilized for parking by recreationists utilizing the Turners Falls Branch Canal Area and is discussed in section 3.3.6.1.5.

Farley Ledge Climbing Area: This climbing area appears to receive moderate to heavy use based on compaction and anecdotal information. There are three parking areas associated with Farley Ledge Climbing Area, which are located on lands owned by others outside of the Project boundary. The Route 2 parking area was frequently used and saw utilization of 60% capacity during 2014.[42] The Wells St. parking area saw utilization of 30% capacity during 2014.

3.3.6.1.7 Recreationist's Opinions of Project Recreational Opportunities

As part of Study 3.6.1 *Recreation Use/User Contact Survey*, recreationists were asked their opinions regarding the recreational opportunities offered in connection with the Project. Based on the results of the survey of recreationists, visitors traveled an average of 23 miles to utilize recreation sites within the Northfield Project. The majority (69%) of the recreationists were from 10 or fewer miles away, while 2% of the people traveled 100 or more miles. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the overall quality of the Project recreational opportunities was excellent (41%), fair to excellent (44%), or fair (12%). Two percent (2%) of respondents considered the overall quality to be less than fair.[43]

Surveyed visitors were asked to rate their perception of the level of use at the Project on a scale of 1 ("not crowded") to 5 ("extremely crowded"). Recreationists perceived the amount of use at Project recreation sites to be "not crowded" (39%), "somewhat crowded" (21%), and between "not crowded" and "somewhat crowded" (19%). Only six (6) percent perceived the use at the Project sites to be "extremely crowded."

The majority of recreationists (93%) responded that they were satisfied (37%), moderately satisfied (43%), or extremely satisfied (13%) with water levels in the river when asked: Overall, how satisfied were you with the river water level during your trip?

Recreationists were also asked about their levels of satisfaction with the number of facilities at the Project. Ninety-six percent (96%) of recreationists surveyed were satisfied (3), moderately satisfied (4), or extremely satisfied (5) with the number of recreation facilities at the Project. Extremely satisfied (36% of responses) was the most frequently given rating for the number of recreation facilities available. Thirty-one percent (31%) reported being moderately satisfied (4), with 29% being satisfied.

Visitors were asked their opinions of the Project with respect to several recreation attributes and conditions. Parking received very positive responses. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents rated the parking as excellent (46%) or between fair and excellent (35%), while fourteen percent (14%) rated the parking as fair. Facility conditions also received very positive responses, with 42% rating the facility conditions as excellent (the most common response), 40% rating the facility conditions as between fair and excellent, and 14% rating the conditions as fair. Regarding the variety of amenities, 88% rated the existing variety of amenities as fair or better. Only 12% of respondents felt that the variety was poor or between poor and fair. With respect to river access, survey respondents had positive perceptions, with 43% of respondents rating the access to be excellent (the most common response), 36% between fair and excellent, and 14% fair. Restrooms were the one area in which visitors had more mixed responses, with 50% rating the restrooms as fair or better and the remaining 50% rating the restrooms as poor or between poor and fair.

3.3.6.1.8 Residential Abutters' Opinions of Project Recreational Opportunities

As part of Study 3.6.1 Recreation Use/User Contact Survey, a mail survey of the 211 residential landowners abutting the Northfield Project boundary and within the Northfield Project boundary was conducted. While some of these properties directly abut the Connecticut River, there are residences that do not. The residential abutters' survey intended to capture recreation users at the Project who access through private lands, as opposed to through the formal recreation sites at the Project. Of the 211 surveys mailed to residential landowners, 95 surveys (or 45%) were completed and returned. The majority of the residential abutters who

[42] The Route 2 and Wells Street parking areas were surveyed to capture individuals utilizing Farley Ledges. Climbers utilizing the Overflow parking would likely utilize the Route 2 area for access.
[43] Percentages shown do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

responded to the survey were year round residents. The residential abutters were asked: Overall, how satisfied were you with the river water level during your trip? Forty-three percent 43%) responded that they were satisfied, moderately satisfied, or extremely satisfied with water levels in the river; 19% indicated that they were slightly satisfied, while the remaining 39% gave water levels a rating of 1, indicating that they were “not satisfied at all”.

Fifty-eight percent of the 95 respondents stated that they access the Connecticut River from their property for recreation purposes. When asked if they ever use the recreation sites associated with the Project, 42 (47%) of the 89 respondents answering the question stated yes. The majority of the respondents (81 of 89) stated that they utilized the Connecticut River or amenities at Northfield Mountain for recreation purposes. Of these respondents, the majority (60%) use the Connecticut River or amenities at Northfield Mountain for recreation purposes approximately 1-25 days per year. Respondents utilized a variety of recreation sites within the Northfield Project boundary including: Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground, the NMTTC, the Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area, Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area, the MA State Boat Launch, and the bike paths. The most popular recreation activities reported by the residents include walking and nature observation, in all four seasons.

3.3.6.1.9 Recreation Use of the Bypass Reach for Whitewater Boating

The bypass reach of the Connecticut River begins at the Turners Falls Dam and extends downstream 2.7 miles to Cabot Station. The bypass reach is created by the power canal, which parallels the river on the east side, and is used to divert river flows to Cabot Station and Station No. 1. Flows in the bypass reach vary depending on time of year, operational needs and constraints, tributary inflows, and weather events. Flows range from leakage to extremely high flows when the river flow exceeds the hydraulic capacity of the power canal (18,000 cfs). Under current operation of the Turners Falls Development, the availability of flow in the bypass reach is dependent on river flows, which are largely determined by hydrologic conditions in the basin and discharge from the upstream hydropower projects on the river.

Under the current FERC license, FirstLight is required to release a continuous minimum flow of 1,433 cfs or inflow, whichever is less below the Turners Falls Development. This is typically maintained through discharges at Cabot Station (located at the downstream terminus of the power canal) and/or Station No. 1 which is located approximately 0.9 miles down the bypassed reach. The FERC license also requires a continuous minimum flow of 200 cfs in the bypassed reach starting on May 1, and increasing to 400 cfs when fish passage starts. This flow is provided through July 15 unless the upstream fish passage season has concluded early, in which case the 400 cfs flow is reduced to 120 cfs to protect Shortnose Sturgeon. The 120 cfs continuous minimum flow is maintained in the bypassed reach from the date the fishways are closed (or by July 16) until the river temperature drops below 7°C, which typically occurs around November 15th.

The 2.7 mile bypass reach from the Turners Falls Dam to Cabot Station exhibits variable boating characteristics that include whitewater features interspersed with longer stretches of flat water or riffles, depending on the flow. The first approximately 2,500 feet of the bypass reach are characterized by a series of rock ledges and outcroppings, which create a whitewater play area under a range of flows. Downstream the reach is characterized by a series of riffles and some flat water just before the Station No. 1 powerhouse, located about 4,000 feet downstream of the Turners Falls Dam. Below Station No. 1 is an area of riffles and small rapids, interspersed with flat water. Approximately 4,000 feet downstream of Station No. 1 is Rawson Island. There are boatable channels on both sides of the island, although the larger left channel contains a feature consisting of a natural bedrock vertical drop in the river gradient known as Rock Dam. The right channel contains a series of riffles and rapids. The remainder of the bypass reach is a mixture of flat water and riffle areas. The bypass reach is accessible to whitewater boaters from three locations: the informal put-in area downstream of Turners Falls Dam, Turners Falls Station No. 1 Fishing Access, and Cabot Woods Fishing Access.

To evaluate the potential of the bypass reach to support whitewater boating, the Licensee conducted a controlled release whitewater boating study (FirstLight, 2015a).

The study was designed to provide information on the boating conditions at various flows in the bypassed reach. A total of six flows (2,500, 3,500, 5,000, 8,000, 10,000 and 13,000 cfs) were evaluated over a three-day period in the summer of 2014. Participants paddled a variety of watercraft including kayaks, closed canoes, open canoes, rafts and a stand-up paddleboard. During the study, boaters utilized the International Scale of River Difficulty to rate whitewater in the bypassed reach under each of the flows. Boaters rated the bypassed reach Class I to Class IV, depending on the type of boat, the level of flow, and the features of the bypassed reach. For most evaluation flows, the Class IV rating was assigned to a single feature, Rock Dam The reach was found to be boatable at all six evaluation flows i.e., between 2,500 cfs and 13,000 cfs.

When Connecticut River flows exceed about 18,000 cfs, the excess flow is likely to be spilled into the bypassed reach, under normal Project operations. Bypass flows above 2,500 cfs naturally occur during the spring but may also occur occasionally during the summer and fall. Based on a review of the hydrologic record (Table 3.3.6.1.9-1), the study found that acceptable boating flows (flows > 2,500 cfs) typically occur in the bypass an estimated 40-45 days a year between April and November, under the existing normal operation of the Project. Additional boating flow days may occur in the bypass reach when the power canal is shut down for maintenance or other reasons.

Current use of the bypassed reach for boating is limited, even though the reach is available for boating during periods of spillage from Turners Falls Dam. This may be indicative of low demand, or may be due to a general lack of knowledge of periods of spill into the bypass reach. Anecdotal information collected from boaters in preparation for the boating study indicated whitewater boaters have run the bypass reach when there is water available but no information specifically correlating bypass flows with recreational boating opportunities in the bypass reach was found. In fact, research found that existing published boating guides (AMC) and other resources (AW national river database) contained very limited information on the bypass reach. This research suggested that although existing USGS gage data are available and can be used to estimate flows in the bypass reach, boaters may not be aware that it exists or do not know how to use it (FirstLight, 2015a).

Although the boaters who participated in the study found the bypass reach to provide an acceptable boating experience for most watercraft, other regional rivers were rated more desirable. Other regional whitewater boating opportunities identified include several reaches of the Deerfield River, the Ashuelot River, the West River and the Millers River (Figure 3.3.6.1.9-1). Scheduled releases occur on the West River, Millers River, and two reaches of the Deerfield River. These releases provide whitewater boating opportunities throughout the recreation season including in the summer and on weekends.

3.3.6.1.10 Recreational Use of the Project for Boating

The TFI is utilized for both motorized and non-motorized boating. Public motorized boating use on the TFI is generally accessed by launching at the Governor Hunt Boat Launch, the State Boat Launch, and Pauchaug Boat Launch, which provide trailered boating access. An estimated 18,470 recreation days, or 12% of the total number of recreation days at the Project, were spent participating in motor boating.

The Project is also used for non-motorized boating, which had an estimated 6,656 recreation days in 2014. Non-motorized boating at the Project is supported through several Project recreation sites. Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area rents kayaks and is open from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. Hours of operation on weekdays are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., while on weekends the rental area is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. A total of 2,681 recreation days were spent participating in non-motorized boating from the Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area. In addition, non-motorized boating access within the Northfield Project is available at the Governor Hunt Boat Launch and Picnic Area (operated by TransCanada as part of the Vernon Hydroelectric Project); Pauchaug Boat Launch; the Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area; the Cabot Camp Access Area, the Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground; and the State Boat Launch. These sites are located approximately 1.3 to 8.2 miles apart.

The TFI is part of the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail. According to the National Park Service (NPS) a water trail (paddlers' trail) is defined as a recreational route on a waterway with a network of public access points supported by broad-based community partnerships. Initially developed in 1992, the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail is a series of primitive campsites and river access points extending from the headwaters of the Connecticut River to the NH/VT/MA state line. In 2012, partnerships were formed to establish a "southern" trail chapter to extend the river trail to Long Island Sound (FirstLight, 2015b). With respect to the TFI, a 2013 Friends of the Connecticut River Paddlers (FCRPT) report stated that "in general, most access points are well maintained, well-spaced, and are in adequate condition" (Pollock, 2013).

Numerous stakeholders requested a study of Project facilities that support multi-day non-motorized boating trips. In response, Study No. 3.6.4 Assessment of Day Use and Overnight Facilities Associated with Non-Motorized Boats was conducted in 2014 (FirstLight, 2015b). The focus of the study was to determine the number of existing overnight and access facilities that support self-powered boating trips and the adequacy of the spacing. The study also included the feasibility of alternate walkable canoe portages and the need for additional future facilities. The study area was the Connecticut River from Vernon Dam to the Sunderland Bridge (Route 116) in Sunderland, Massachusetts; a distance of approximately 32.5 miles, of which 9.5 miles or river downstream of Cabot Station, which is outside the Project boundary.

There are three existing campsites and, as described above, seven access sites along the 23-river miles between the Turners Falls Dam and the Vernon Dam that can be used by paddlers traversing the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail. Campsites are located on Stebbins Island (operated by TransCanada as part of the Vernon Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1904); and at FirstLight's Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area and Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground. The distance between the existing campsites within the Northfield Project boundary ranges from 6.8 to 10.4 miles.

Water access camping is available from Memorial Day through Columbus Day at the Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area and from Memorial Day through Labor Day at the Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground. Combined there are a total of 36 campsites along the TFI, five of which are water access only. There are an additional four to five camping areas at Stebbins Island, which is owned by TransCanada. The island is located approximately one (1) mile downstream of Vernon Dam.

Existing camping use at the Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area and Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground are below capacity, and annual weekday use has declined over the last five years. Weekend use at Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area dropped significantly from 2011 to 2012 but has remained relatively stable since with an occupancy rate of approximately 30% in 2012 - 2014. Weekend use at Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground has declined significantly between 2010 and 2014 from an occupancy rate of 67.1% to 37.6%.

In the reach of river from downstream of the Turners Falls Dam to the Sunderland Bridge, there are three access sites for use by paddlers. One of these is the Poplar Street access located downstream of Cabot Station, which serves as both a take-out location for boaters utilizing the Turners Falls bypassed reach and as a put-in location for the canoe portage and boaters traveling downstream. In addition, access is provided at the Sunderland Bridge Boat Launch, an unimproved boat launch on river left at river mile 32.5 and maintained by the Town of Sunderland and the Sunderland Bridge access on river right at river mile 32.5, which is within a State right-of way. There are no formal campsites in the 9.5 mile stretch of the study area below the Project boundary, although there are several informal campsites on private and state property.

Canoe Portage Use

FirstLight operates and maintains a canoe portage around the Turners Falls Dam during daylight hours for the paddling season, which is typically mid-May to mid-November. The existing canoe portage is comprised of a free vehicular shuttle service from Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area to the Poplar Street Access Site. Portage is provided, by request, on an as-needed basis, for groups with four or fewer boats. Larger groups are asked to provide FirstLight with a one month advance notice. A telephone number to arrange a portage is provided on the FirstLight website and is posted on sign kiosks at several of the Project Recreation Sites located on the TFI. The telephone number is also posted in several regional and local recreational guides.

Use of the Turners Falls portage is light. As previously discussed, FirstLight provided a total of nine vehicle portages around Turners Falls Dam between May 17, 2014 and September 3, 2014. Of these, three vehicle portages were related to camp groups totaling 39 boaters. The remaining six vehicle portages totaled 14 boaters.

Study 3.6.4 also examined the feasibility of developing a walkable portage trail around Turners Falls Dam utilizing the Canalside Trail Bike Path and public side streets. It was found, that using existing access areas and side streets would result in a portage of approximately three (3) miles. Overall, the study concluded that the existing vehicle portage provided by FirstLight also provides sufficient portage around Turners Falls Dam (FirstLight, 2015b).

3.3.6.1.11 Recreational Use of the Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center

The NMTTC is a four-season facility that provides many on-site recreational opportunities, environmental and educational programs. The NMTTC also serves as a base for management and oversight of other FirstLight Project recreation facilities. Public recreation facilities and amenities at the NMTTC include a Visitor Center, Trail System, Mountain Top Observation Area located on the Upper Reservoir, and a number of additional amenities such as picnic tables, grills, informational kiosks and a yurt.

The NMTTC, is located on Route 63 in Northfield, MA, and offers a variety of public and school programs through the Visitor Center. Public programs are both educational and recreational in nature, and are scheduled and offered year-round, many at no charge to participants. Programs include such activities as guided hikes, animal track identification, and winter tree identification. School programs are scheduled during the school year and offer opportunities for hands-on environmental education and recreation.

Individuals utilize the NMTTC and associated amenities for a variety of activities including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and access to informal climbing opportunities. Individuals can also use the hiking trails to reach the Mountain Top Observation Area which has views of the Upper Reservoir.

At the request of stakeholders, FirstLight conducted a study to evaluate the number of existing recreation facilities and amenities associated with the NMTTC including a review of the trail system. Study No. 3.6.7 Recreation Study at Northfield Mountain, Including Assessment of Sufficiency of trails for Shared Use was conducted in 2014. The study found that the NMTTC is a well-utilized regional recreation resource that provides a wide variety of opportunities, programs and amenities, which supported an estimated 20,024 recreation days in 2014 (FirstLight, 2015d). Visitors to the NMTTC participated in environmental and recreation programs, and used the trail network for a variety of recreational activities.

Registration and use records available since the 1980s demonstrate that over the long-term NMTTC environmental program use has declined. This long-term decline appears to reflect a change in interest and participation, and is not a result of reduced program offerings, which have remained relatively constant. Over the past five years, however, with a few exceptions due to unusual circumstances, recreation use associated with the NMTTC, as well as environmental program registrations, have remained relatively consistent.

Surveyed visitors were overwhelmingly satisfied with the amenities provided at the NMTTC. One hundred percent (100%) of respondents to the survey question asking about their overall satisfaction with the NMTTC said they were extremely satisfied (46%), moderately satisfied (33%), or satisfied (21%). Visitors' responses to the question "What did you like most about your recreational experience today?" included "world class touring center", the trails, the Visitor Center exhibits and the variety of programs. Visitors also reported liking most that the NMTTC was not crowded and was quiet. Surveyed visitors were asked to rate the variety of amenities at the NMTTC on a scale of 1 ("poor") to 5 ("Excellent"). Eighty-one percent (81%) of those who responded rated that the variety of amenities available at the NMTTC was a 4 or 5. In addition, there were many more responses to the two positive open-ended questions ("what did you like most about your recreation experience today?" and "what, if anything, enhanced your recreation experience today?") than responses to the two open-ended negative questions ("what did you like least about your recreation experience today?" and "what, if anything, detracted from your recreation experience today?").

3.3.6.1.12 Recreational Use of the Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center Trail System

The NMTTC Trail System is an approximately 25-mile network of trails that supports cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking, and horseback riding. The Trail System includes 28 individually named trails (Figure 3.3.6.1.12-1). The NMTTC Trail Systems receives moderate use, and Study 3.6.7 Recreation Study at Northfield Mountain, Including Assessment of Sufficiency of Trails for Shared Use found that the NMTCC Trail System supported an estimated 16,123 recreation days in 2014 (FirstLight, 2015d). A review of FirstLight records for the period 2010 through 2014 show that, after adjusting for special events and closures in various years, trail use has remained relatively consistent of the 2010-2014 period.

Study 3.6.7 also found that the Trail System is well designed, well maintained and with few exceptions, in good condition. The trails were designed and built to a very high standard at the time that they were constructed in the 1970's. Although the trails were designed primarily for hiking and cross-country skiing, the trail assessment (Study No. 3.6.7) found that the cross-country ski trails are well adapted to handle mountain biking and can also accommodate horseback riding use, while remaining in good condition. The hiking and snowshoe trails are not as suitable for mountain biking or horseback riding use (FirstLight, 2015d).

The vast majority of visitors to the NMTTC Trail System are very satisfied with the number of trails and with the difficulty of the trails. Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the trails are in good condition, with 95% strongly agreeing or agreeing that the trails are well maintained. Surveyed visitors also disagreed or strongly disagreed (61% of responses) that more trails are needed while another 26% of respondents remained neutral. The majority of respondents (85%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the grooming of winter trails is sufficient. The majority of respondents (96%) also agreed or strongly agreed that the hours of operations are adequate, while the remaining 4% were neutral. When asked how any of the trail variables could be improved, only nine (9) users chose to respond while an additional 23 recreationists chose not to respond.

In addition to the trails provided at the NMTTC System, there are 133 properties with hiking and/or mountain biking trail opportunities within 25 miles of the NMTTC. Of the 133 properties, 64 provide both hiking and mountain bike trails, 62 provide only hiking trails, and seven provide only mountain bike trails. The properties are owned and managed by a variety of federal, state, and local agencies, land trusts, and private entities. All but two of the properties are open to the public on a year-round basis.

3.3.6.2 Environmental Effects

The continued operation of the Northfield Project, as proposed, will have a beneficial effect on existing recreational use of the Project, the recreation opportunities provided by the Project, or use of the Project recreation sites. There are 10 Commission-approved Project recreation sites (listed in Table 3.3.6.1.2-1), which provide the public with a variety of recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, camping, swimming, picnicking, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, rock-climbing, and mountain biking.

Recreation-related studies conducted by FirstLight as part of the relicensing process demonstrate that the existing Project recreation sites, combined with other public recreation sites and facilities, as well as informal access areas, provide the public with a diversity of recreation opportunities, and an abundance of options for accessing and utilizing Project lands and waters for recreation. An inventory of both Project and other improved recreation sites found that with few exceptions all of the sites and their associated facilities and amenities are well maintained and are functioning as designed. A survey of site users also found that users felt that the existing sites were generally well operated and maintained. The major recreation facilities at the most popular Project recreation sites received favorable marks from most users, including the Barton Cove Campground, the Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak rental area, the Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area, and most notably, the NMTTC and NMTTC Trail System. Continued operation of these Project recreation sites will ensure that the public continues to benefit from the recreational opportunities afforded by Project lands and waters.

The continued operation and maintenance of the existing Project recreation sites is supportive of current recreation use and demand levels. Use surveys conducted as part of Study 3.6.1 demonstrate that current facility capacities do not exceed 50% with two exceptions. The State Boat Launch was utilized at 65% capacity during 2014, while a portion of the Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area building was utilized at 90 % capacity during the fishway viewing season. However, even these two sites are expected to provide adequate use capacity for the foreseeable future.

The NMTTC is the most popular of the Project recreation sites, and in addition to the facilities and amenities provided at the NMTTC, the Visitors Center also serves as the base of operations for some of the other Project recreation facilities, including the QII riverboat tour, and the fishway viewing area. Study 3.6.7 results found that visitors to the NMTTC consistently gave it favorable marks for its facilities and amenities, as well as for how the facilities are operated and maintained by FirstLight. Continued operation of the NMTTC will continue to provide the region with a recreational resource offering a variety of recreational experiences, including the provisions of educational and recreational programs offered through the NMTTC. Study 3.6.7 results also found that users of the NMTTC Trail system consistently gave it favorable remarks and there were almost no negative comments. Study 3.6.7 found the trails overall, to be well maintained and in good condition. The Trail System will continue to operate year-round and provide hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding opportunities in the spring, summer and fall, as well as skiing and snowshoeing opportunities in the winter. The Trail System will also continue to provide parking and access for those wishing to access the New England National Scenic Trail, and the popular Rose Ledge climbing site. Continued maintenance of the trails by FirstLight will ensure that the trails remain in good repair, functional and sustainable for existing uses well into the future.

Continued operation of the Project, as proposed, including the operation and maintenance of the existing Project recreation sites will also be supportive of the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail's goals of expanding the Connecticut River Trail to include the TFI and Project areas downstream of Turners Falls Dam. Study 3.6.4 found that existing access and camping opportunities located throughout the TFI are located and spaced consistent with water trail design standards and practices. FirstLight's proposed maintenance of its existing campsites and access areas will ensure that these facilities will be available for water trail users and multi-day through paddlers in the future. FirstLight also proposes to continue to operate the Turners Falls Dam vehicle portage between Barton Cove (take-out) and the Poplar Street Access Site (put-in), as it does currently, which will also support water trail users and through-paddlers.

Continued operation of the Project will also continue to support existing recreational use of the bypassed reach for recreation. The bypassed reach will continue to receive seasonally variable minimum flows (120-400 cfs) during periods of normal Project operation and when river flows are less than the hydraulic capacity of the power canal. Periodically, the bypassed reach will receive significant flows, if the canal is shutdown for maintenance or other reasons, as well as when river flows exceed the hydraulic capacity of the canal (>18,000 cfs). Study 3.6.3 demonstrated that flows of 2,500 cfs or greater occur in the bypassed reach approximately 17% of the time, annually. Study 3.6.3 also demonstrated that the bypassed reach is suitable for whitewater boating at a range of flows (2,500 cfs – 13,000 cfs). Bypassed reach flows in excess of 2,500 cfs, would be expected to occur most frequently in the spring, but can be expected to provide boatable conditions in the bypassed reach approximately 40-45 days between April and November, in an average hydrologic year. Study 3.6.3 also found that there are numerous other regional whitewater boating opportunities, including several reaches of the Deerfield River, the Ashuelot River, the West River, and the Millers River. Some of these boating opportunities are dependent on natural flows but several of these opportunities are available through the recreation season through scheduled flow releases, including reaches on the Deerfield River, the West River, and Millers River. Scheduled releases at these rivers provide regional boaters with significant whitewater boating opportunities, including in the summer and weekends.

Access for whitewater boaters wishing to utilize the bypassed reach is available for “put-in” at an informal area below the Turners Falls Dam, at the Cabot Woods Fishing Site; and for “take-out” at the Station No. 1 Fishing Access and at the Poplar Street Access Site. FirstLight’s proposal to continue to operate and maintain these formal sites, and to continue to allow public access to the informal access areas will ensure that the bypassed reach can continue to be utilized for whitewater boating, whenever flow conditions allow.

Continued operation of the Project will also continue to support boating use of the TFI. Boat launching for trailered boats is currently provided at two formal recreation sites: the Pauchaug Boat Launch and the State Boat Launch. The Pauchaug Boat Launch is owned and managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of the Pauchaug Wildlife Management Area. The boat launch is located on state property on the eastern shore of the TFI, and within the Project boundary. Both the boat launch and parking lot are maintained by the state. The boat launch itself is a hard surface ramp with two launch lanes. The paved lanes are approximately 50 feet in length and function as intended over the typical range of TFI water levels that occur as a result of normal Project operations. The State Boat Launch site is on property partially owned by the state, and partially by FirstLight, and the site is operated and maintained by the state. The launch at this location is a hard surface ramp with two launch lanes. The launch is approximately 100 feet in length, and functions as intended over the typical range of TFI water levels that occur during normal Project operations. Both boat launches that provide trailered boats access to the TFI would be expected to remain fully functional under the proposed operation of the Project.

The continued operation of the Project will have no impact on the recreational use of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development’s Upper Reservoir. For both safety and security reasons, public recreational use of the Upper Reservoir is currently restricted to the observation platform, which is maintained as part of the NMTTC, and which is accessed via the NMTTC Trail System. There is no boating, fishing or swimming allowed on the Upper Reservoir, and therefore no boat launches or recreation access sites, other than the viewing platform. Because there is no boating allowed on the Project’s Upper Reservoir, proposed modifications of the operation of the Upper Reservoir will also have no impact on recreational use of that reservoir.

Existing Project recreation sites and facilities are currently meeting recreation demand and are adequate to meet demand in the reasonably foreseeable future.

3.3.6.3 Cumulative Effects

In Scoping Document 2 FERC identified that recreational uses maybe cumulatively affected by the proposed operation and maintenance of the five Connecticut River Projects. The presence of the dams may have a cumulative effect on recreation for multi-day paddling trips on the Connecticut River. During licensing studies it was determined that the availability and types of recreation facilities along the Connecticut River within the Northfield Project adequately supports multi-day paddling trips and are also consistent with plans for Connecticut River water trail expansion.

3.3.6.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

FirstLight is proposing no changes or modifications to the existing Project recreation sites at this time. FirstLight proposes to develop and implement a Recreation Plan

3.3.6.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No unavoidable adverse impacts are expected to recreational resources in the Northfield Project.

Table 3.3.6.1.2-1: Commission Approved Recreation Facilities at the Turners Falls Project (FERC No. 1889) and Northfield Mountain Project (FERC No. 2485)

Recreation Site Name	Recreation Facilities
Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area	Hunting area
Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area	5 Water Access only campsites (4 Tent platform sites and 1 shelter site), pedestrian foot bridge, restroom, picnic area (1 table)
Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area	56 vehicle parking spaces (2 ADA + 54 single vehicle spaces), restroom (ADA), , picnic area (12 tables + 2 benches), pedestrian foot bridge, picnic pavilion (8 tables), interpretive boat tour
Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center	53 vehicle parking spaces (3 ADA + 50 single vehicle spaces), restroom (ADA), picnic area (7 tables), overlook, visitor center, interpretive sign (11 displays), hunting area, winter area, 22 trails
Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground	26 vehicle parking spaces at the Nature Area and 28 vehicle parking spaces at the Campground, shower house, 2 restroom facilities (ADA), picnic area (15 tables), overlook, interpretive sign (display), walk-in campground with 2 group sites and 29 campsites, nature trail
Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area	28 vehicle parking spaces, picnic area (6 tables), canoe and kayak rentals, canoe portage take-out
Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area	29 vehicle parking spaces (2 ADA + 27 single vehicle spaces), picnic area (6 tables + 5 grills), bike rack, trail, visitor center (ADA accessible), interpretive sign (display)
Turners Falls Branch Canal Area	Overlook with 4 benches
Cabot Woods Fishing Access	19 vehicle parking spaces (2 ADA + 17 single vehicle spaces), informal trails to shoreline, picnic area (3 tables)
Turners Falls Canoe Portage	Trail, canoe portage take-out and put-in, portage procedure

Table 3.3.6.1.5-1: Estimated Use of Surveyed Sites by Season

Recreation Site	Estimated Annual Use (2014)	Estimated Winter Use	Estimated Spring Use	Estimated Summer Use	Estimated Fall Use
Governor Hunt Boat Launch	1,812	13%	11%	67%	9%
Pauchaug WMA	1,005	15%	0%	23%	62%
Pauchaug Boat Launch	9,630	1%	7%	68%	23%
Bennett Meadow WMA	3,729	2%	14%	40%	44%
Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area	1,716	0%	0%	84%	16%
Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area	13,651	17%	23%	39%	21%
Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center	20,024	24%	12%	33%	31%
Cabot Camp Access Area	5,326	4%	10%	62%	24%
Barton Cove Nature Area	7,842	15%	19%	45%	21%
Barton Cove Campground	2,963	0%	5%	92%	3%
Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area	4,455	2%	0%	98%	0%
State Boat Launch	15,126	1%	2%	74%	23%
Canalside Trail Bike Path	6,362	1%	13%	54%	31%
Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area	27,345	7%	28%	46%	20%
Turners Falls Branch Canal/Station No. 1 Fishing Access	1,264	27%	29%	20%	24%
Cabot Woods Fishing Access	18,230	17%	19%	38%	27%
Poplar Street Access	1,877	14%	5%	56%	25%
Rose Ledge Climbing Area Parking	1,790	2%	27%	54%	17%
Farley Ledge Climbing Area—Wells Street Parking	2,390	7%	51%	29%	13%
Farley Ledge Climbing Area—Route 2 Parking	6,232	4%	22%	48%	25%
Total Project Recreation Site Use	152,769	10%	16%	50%	23%

Note: Percentages of estimated use by season at each recreation site may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3.3.6.1.5-2: Percent of Recreation Use by Activity at Each Site

Recreation Site	Walk/ Hike/ Jogging	Motor Boating	Fishing	Ride Bikes	Picnicking	Climbing	Non-motor boating	Fishway Viewing	Cross-country Ski	Camping	Riverboat	Sight see	Hunt	Birding	Ice Fish	Ride Horses	Snow Shoe	Whitewater boat (Bypass only)	Ice Skate/ Boat	Unidentified Recreation Activity
Governor Hunt Boat Launch/Picnic Area	0%	53%	12%	0%	0%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
Pauchaug WMA	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	44%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%
Pauchaug Boat Launch	4%	49%	12%	0%	1%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
Bennett Meadow WMA	41%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%
Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area	0%	39%	0%	0%	5%	0%	9%	0%	0%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%
Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area	29%	3%	2%	2%	18%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	20%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	24%
Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center	49%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	29%
Cabot Camp Access Area	19%	1%	26%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	39%
Barton Cove Nature Area	31%	0%	23%	6%	5%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	9%	0%	0%	0%	1%	19%
Barton Cove Campground	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area	0%	8%	4%	0%	12%	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%
State Boat Launch	1%	74%	2%	0%	1%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Canalside Trail Bike Path	41%	0%	0%	55%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area[2]	36%	0%	6%	8%	14%	0%	0%	19%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%
Turners Falls Branch Canal/Station No. 1 Fishing Access	26%	0%	21%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
Cabot Woods Fishing Access	53%	0%	11%	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
Poplar Street Access	23%	0%	41%	3%	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	11%
Rose Ledge Climbing Area Parking	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	75%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Farley Ledge Climbing Area—Wells Street Parking	71%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Farley Ledge Climbing Area—Route 2 Parking	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	75%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Total Project-Wide Use of the above Sites.	29%	12%	7%	6%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	18%

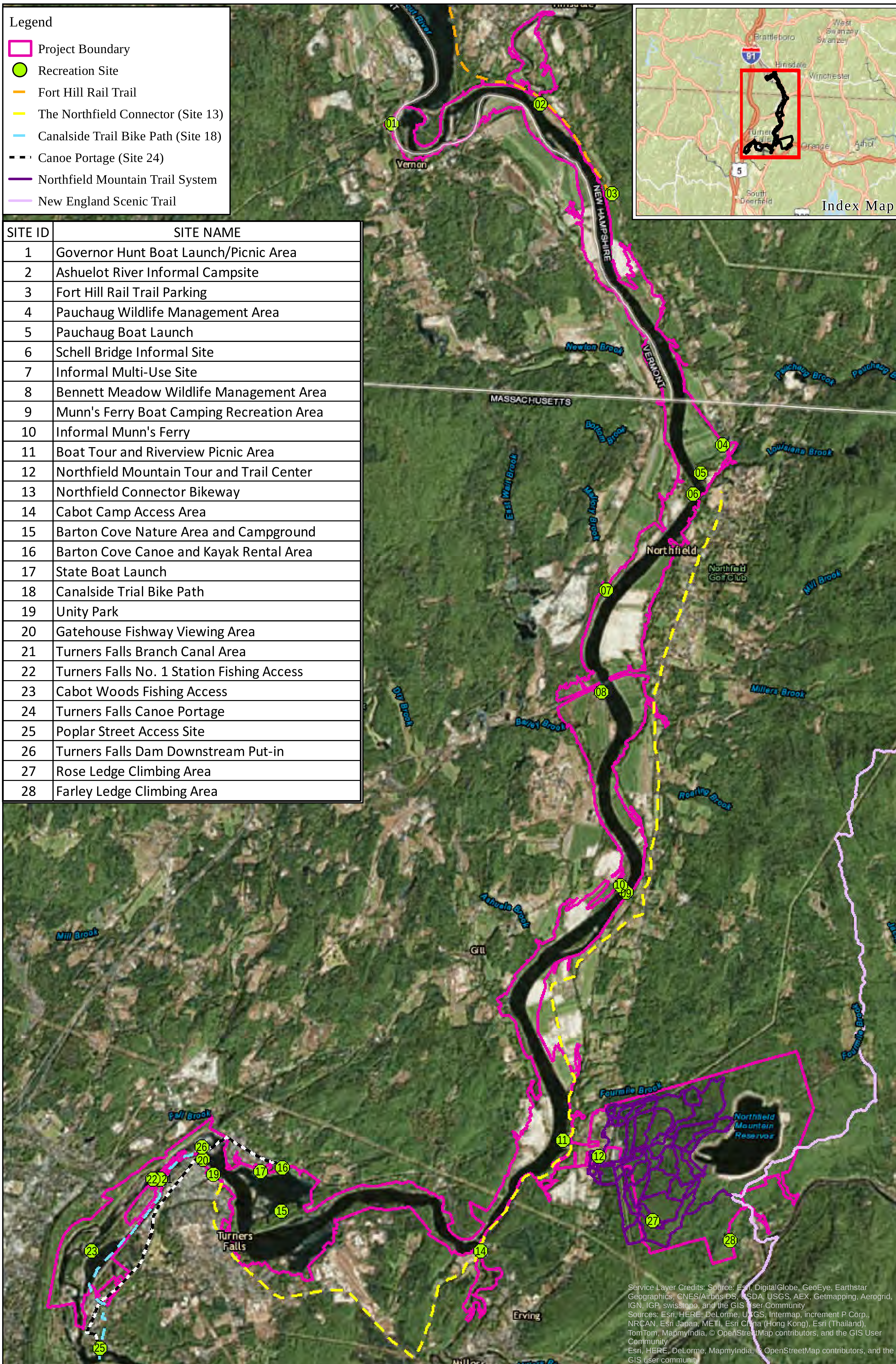
- [2]. *Use includes visitors utilizing the Visitor Center and the associated picnic area, which includes a portion of the Canalside Trail Bike Path.*

Table 3.3.6.1.5-3: Capacity Utilization by Site

Season	Recreation Days	Percent Capacity Utilized
Governor Hunt Boat Launch	1,812	50%
Pauchaug WMA	1,005	1%
Pauchaug Boat Launch	9,630	20%
Bennett Meadow WMA	3,729	10%
Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area	1,716	40%
Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area	13,651	10%
Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center	20,024	10%
Cabot Camp Access Area	5,326	15%
Barton Cove Nature Area	7,842	20%
Barton Cove Campground	2,963	40%
Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area	4,455	25%
State Boat Launch	15,126	65%
Canalside Trail Bike Path	6,362	NA
Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area	27,345	25%
Turners Falls Branch Canal/Station No. 1 Fishing Access	1,264	1%
Cabot Woods Fishing Access	18,230	25%
Poplar Street Access	1,877	10%
Rose Ledge Climbing Area Parking	1,790	60%
Farley Ledge Climbing Area—Wells Street Parking	2,390	30%
Farley Ledge Climbing Area—Route 2 Parking	6,232	60%
Annual Total	152,769	

Table 3.3.6.1.9-1: Percentage by Month and Estimated Number of Days Spill Flows Equal or Exceed Boating Evaluation Flows

Month	Flows Evaluated during the July 2014 Bypass Reach Whitewater Boating Study					
	2,500 cfs		5,000 cfs		10,000 cfs	
	Percent of Time	Estimated Days	Percent Exceeded	Estimated Days	Percent Exceeded	Estimated Days
January	7%	2	5%	2	4%	1
February	6%	2	4%	1	2%	<1
March	29%	9	24%	7	18%	6
April	74%	22	66%	20	54%	16
May	38%	12	31%	10	21%	7
June	8%	2	6%	2	3%	1
July	3%	1	2%	1	1%	<1
August	2%	1	2%	1	1%	<1
September	2%	1	2%	1	1%	<1
October	8%	2	6%	2	4%	1
November	12%	4	9%	3	4%	1
December	17%	5	14%	4	10%	3



SITE ID	SITE NAME
1	Governor Hunt Boat Launch/Picnic Area
2	Ashuelot River Informal Campsite
3	Fort Hill Rail Trail Parking
4	Pauchaug Wildlife Management Area
5	Pauchaug Boat Launch
6	Schell Bridge Informal Site
7	Informal Multi-Use Site
8	Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area
9	Munn's Ferry Boat Camping Recreation Area
10	Informal Munn's Ferry
11	Boat Tour and Riverview Picnic Area
12	Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center
13	Northfield Connector Bikeway
14	Cabot Camp Access Area
15	Barton Cove Nature Area and Campground
16	Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental Area
17	State Boat Launch
18	Canalside Trial Bike Path
19	Unity Park
20	Gatehouse Fishway Viewing Area
21	Turners Falls Branch Canal Area
22	Turners Falls No. 1 Station Fishing Access
23	Cabot Woods Fishing Access
24	Turners Falls Canoe Portage
25	Poplar Street Access Site
26	Turners Falls Dam Downstream Put-in
27	Rose Ledge Climbing Area
28	Farley Ledge Climbing Area

FirstLight GDF SUEZ

N

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.6.1.1-1
Existing Recreation Sites
and Facilities

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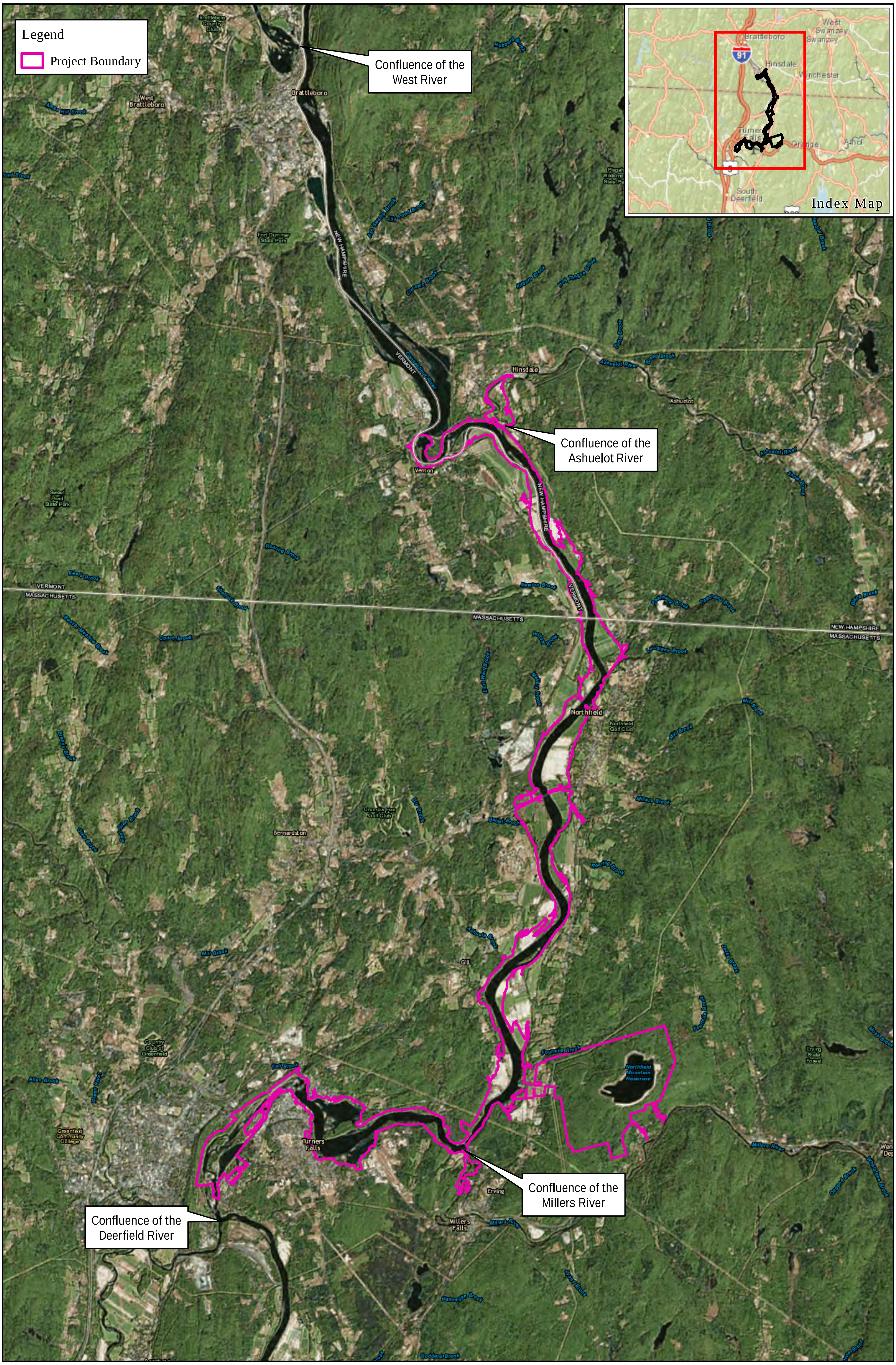

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Figure 3.3.6.1.9-1
Regional Rivers Containing Whitewater Boating Opportunities

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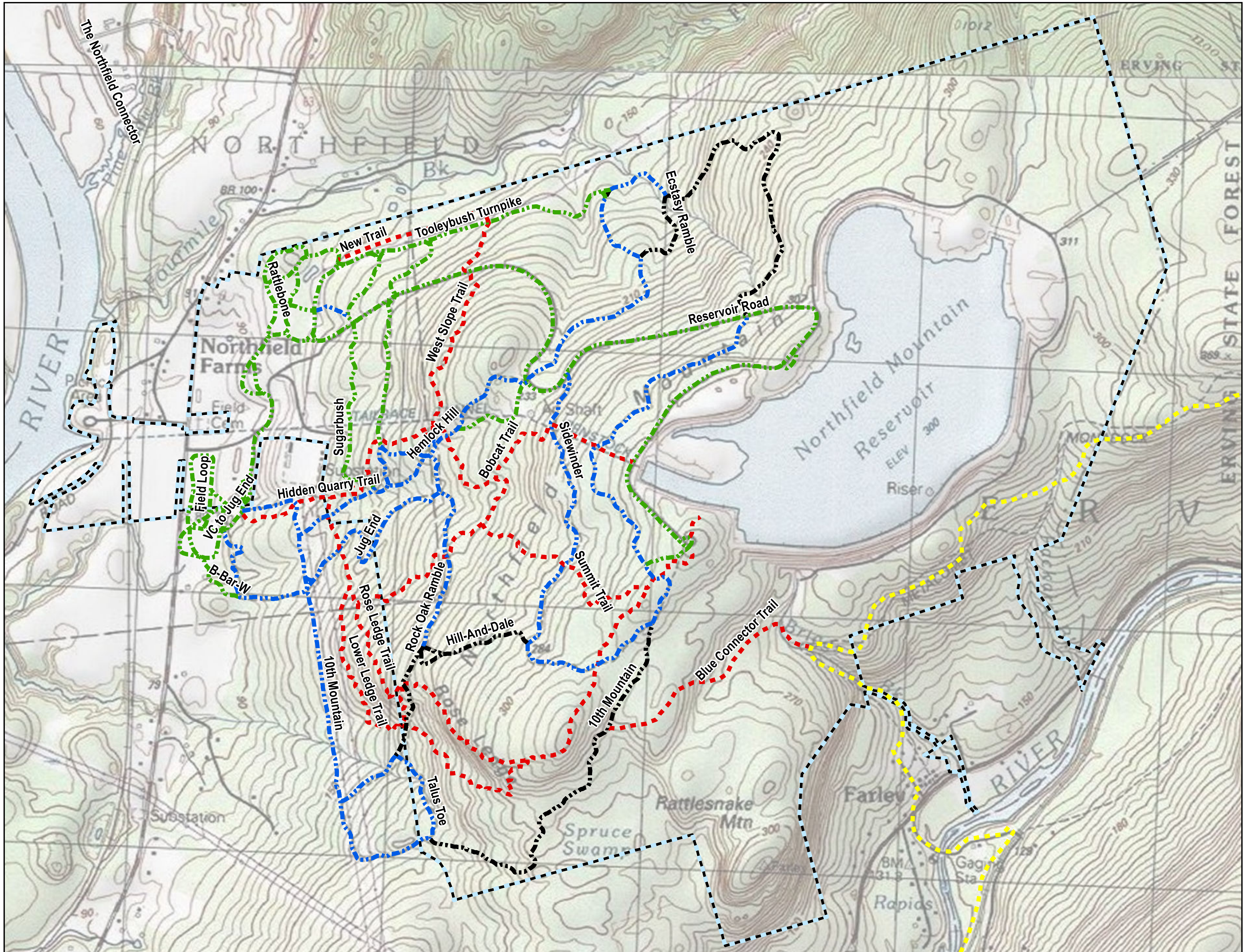

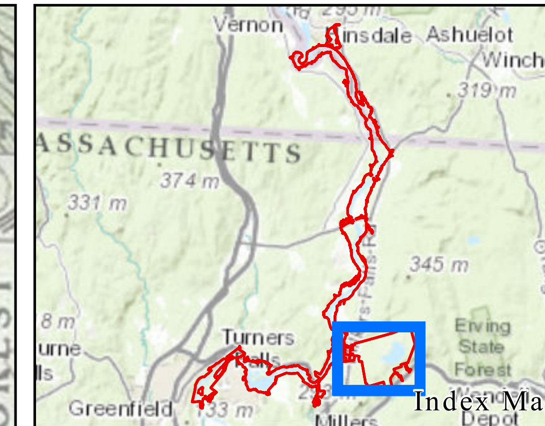

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.6.1.12-1
Northfield Mountain Trail System

Legend

N

Trail Rating

- Most Difficult
- More Difficult
- Easier
- Snowshoeing/Hiking Only
- New England National Scenic Trail
- Northfield Mountain Project Boundary

Note:
Blue Connector Trail digitized based on best available imagery.

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap

0 625 1,250 2,500 Feet

1 inch = 1,250 feet

FirstLight
GDF SUEZ

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3.3.7 Land Use

3.3.7.1 Affected Environment

3.3.7.1.1 Project Lands

The Northfield Project is situated on the Connecticut River, within the states of MA, NH, and VT. The Project is comprised of two developments, the Turners Falls Development and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development. The Turners Falls Dam is located on mile 122 of the Connecticut River, (above the Long Island Sound) in the towns of Gill and Montague, MA. The TFI is approximately 20 miles long, with 5.7 miles located in the towns of Vernon, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development is located approximately 5.2 miles upstream of the Turners Falls Dam and utilizes the TFI as its lower reservoir. The upper reservoir is located atop Northfield Mountain to the east of the TFI. With the exception of the northern portion of the TFI extending into Vermont and New Hampshire, Project lands are located within the county of Franklin, Massachusetts, specifically in the towns of Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Montague, and Northfield.

An overview of the existing Project boundary is shown in Figure 3.3.7.1.1-1. As shown, the boundary extends upstream along the Connecticut River approximately 20 miles to TransCanada's Vernon Hydroelectric Project Dam, located in the towns of Vernon, VT, and Hinsdale, NH. The Project extends to the east up to Northfield Mountain, to include the Northfield Mountain Upper Reservoir, north of State Route 2. The Project extends 0.9 miles downstream of the Turners Falls Dam to Cabot Station, a hydroelectric generating facility, which is part of the Turners Falls Development.

The existing Project boundary encompasses 7,246 acres: 2,238 acres of flowed land and 5,008 acres of upland, at minimum flow conditions.[44] When the river is at maximum flow (50 year flood) conditions, there are 3,981 acres of flowed land and 3,265 acres of upland. [45] There are no federal lands within the Project boundary, with the exception of land associated with the Conte Fish Lab, which is owned and operated by the USGS, and which is not necessary for Project purposes. As discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.7.4, FirstLight is proposing to remove the lands associated with the Conte Fish Lab from the existing Project boundary.

The land use in and around the Project boundary consists primarily of recreation, agricultural, and forested lands. There are pockets of developed areas around the Project that consist of roads, industrial buildings and residences. There are also a variety of wetland areas along the banks of the river and in low lying areas within the Project area. There is a distinct difference in land uses between the lands north of the Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center (NMTTC) and the lands surrounding the Turners Falls Dam. The land in and around the northern portion of the Project is mostly rural and there is very little developed land. Land that is developed consists of residential areas, roads and farming complexes. The lands surrounding the southern portion of the Project are more developed in nature, consisting primarily of residences and industrial lots with pockets of parks and greenspace. There are recreational use areas that are dispersed throughout the Project area with boat launches, hunting areas and fishing areas.

3.3.7.1.2 Land Use Designation of Lands within the Project Boundary

As part of Study No. 3.6.5 (*Land Use Inventory*), lands within the existing Project boundary were classified and mapped in eight (8) defined land use designations (Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1). National Land Cover Database (NLCD) layers were utilized in combination with Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS) layers to develop the land use designations. This information was then reviewed and refined by utilizing information gathered from Study No. 3.5.1 *Baseline Inventory of Wetland, Riparian and Littoral Habitat in the TFI, and Assessment of Operational Impacts on Special Status Species*; Study No. 3.4.1

[44] The minimum flow represents the minimum flow required to maintain elevation 176.0 feet throughout the impoundment.
[45] The maximum flow condition represents the 50 year flood scenario of 126,000 cfs.

Baseline Study of Terrestrial Wildlife and Botanical Resources; Study No. 3.7.*1 Phase IA (Reconnaissance) Archaeological Surveys* (Sara *et al*. 2014a and 2014b) and Study No. 3.7.2 *Historic Architectural Resources Survey & National Register Evaluation (MA, NH, VT)* (GSE & TRC, 2014), as appropriate.

The eight (8) land use designations for lands within the Project boundary are:

- **Agricultural – Crops**: generally tilled land used to grow row crops. Boundaries follow the shape of the fields and include associated building (e.g. barns). This category also includes turf farms that grow sod.
- **Agricultural – Pasture/Grass**: Fields and associated facilities (barns and other outbuildings) used for animal grazing and for the growing of grasses for hay.
- **Natural/Undeveloped**: Vacant land, idle agriculture, rock outcrops, and barren areas. Vacant land is not maintained for any evident purpose and it does not support large plant growth. This designation also includes shrub cover, and some immature tress not larger or dense enough to be categorized as forested. It also includes areas that are more permanently shrubby.
- **Developed**: areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation that is mostly in the form of grass.
- **Forested**: areas where tree canopy covers at least 50% of the land. Both coniferous and deciduous forests belong to this class.
- **Wetland**: Areas of vegetation, where the soil or substrate is periodically saturated with or covered with water.
- **Open Water**: areas of open water.
- **Recreation:** Lands managed for developed public recreational facilities and activities. This includes recreational sites described in the report for Study No. 3.6.2 *Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment Addendum* (GSE & TRC, 2015b) and recreation facilities managed by private landowners.[46]

Table 3.3.7.1.2-1 provides a summary of the acreages of lands within the existing Project boundary for each land use designation. As shown, the majority of land within the Project boundary is Recreation (1,835 acres), Agricultural-Crops (1,010 acres), and Forested (951 acres).

3.3.7.1.3 Conservation Lands within 200 feet of the Project Boundary

As part of Study No. 3.6.5, conservation protections on lands within the Project boundary and within 200 ft of the Project boundary were identified. Approximately 657 acres of conserved land in the State of Massachusetts were identified as either within the Project boundary or within 200 ft of the Project boundary. This information was obtained from the MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space data layer. There were no conserved lands identified within the Project boundary or within 200 ft of the Project boundary in New Hampshire or Vermont. This information was based on data collected from the National Conservation Easement Database. An online search of land trusts and land conservation organizations working in the vicinity of the Projects did not identify any additional conserved lands within the Project's boundaries or within 200 feet of the Projects' boundaries.

3.3.7.1.4 Special Designated Areas

Portions of land within and adjacent to the Project are designated under various national and statewide programs dedicated to promoting outdoor recreation needs, as well as conservation and protection of the natural environment.

[46] Recreation facilities managed by private landowners are the Turners Falls Rod and Gun Club, the Franklin County Boat Club, and Turners Falls Schuetzen Verein.

National Trails System

The National Trail System Act of 1968 authorized creation of a trail system comprised of National Recreational Trail, National Scenic Trails, and National Historic Trails. National Recreation Trails may be designated by the Secretary of Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance in response to an application from the trail's managing agency or organization. There is one National Scenic trail that passes through the Project boundary. The New England National Scenic Trail (NET) is a 220-mile hiking trail that travels through 39 communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Approximately 6,600 feet of the trail passes through the Northfield Project boundary near the southern edge of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development's Upper Reservoir. The portion of the NET that lies within the Project boundary is not operated or maintained by FirstLight. However, there is a connector trail that provides access to the NET from the Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center (NMTTC) Trail System that is maintained by FirstLight.

Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) focuses on protecting and conserving vertebrate and invertebrate animals, as well as native plants, that are officially listed as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern in the state of Massachusetts. NHESP gathers and provides information on priority habitat for all rare listed state species of plants and animals. Rattlesnake Mountain, which includes Farley Ledge, sits on the southern border of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development boundary is identified as priority habitat.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Federal government has developed a scenic and wild river program intended to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The Project is not located within or adjacent to a river designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

National Natural Landmarks

The National Natural Landmarks Program administered through the National Parks Service recognizes and encourages the conservation of sites containing outstanding biologic and geologic resources. Though there are National Natural Landmarks in the state, there are none within or adjacent to the Project boundary.

3.3.7.1.5 Non-Project Uses of Project Lands

FirstLight has granted permission to others for non-project uses of Project lands in accordance with the provisions of the current FERC licenses for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and the Turners Falls Development, along with its Permit Program. These non-project uses generally include camps, docks and landscape uses for abutters, and water withdrawals for agricultural purposes. In addition, FirstLight annually grants a number of permission for temporary use of non-project lands for one-time events, such as running races, state cross-country meets, horseback riding, and triathlons. All non-project uses that require prior FERC approval have been granted such approval.

FirstLight has an established Permit Program through which it administers non-project uses of Project lands including lands it owns in fee, or in which it has an interest (Howard, 2008). Under its Permit Program it is FirstLight's policy to "protect the scenic, recreational, and other environmental values of the Project, consistent with safe, efficient operation", and consistent with the Standard Land Use Articles in the current licenses for the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Developments.

Consistent with the Standard Land Use articles, FirstLight's Permit Program recognizes four categories of proposed uses of Project lands that require varying levels of FERC notification and control requirements:

Category A: Miscellaneous uses and/or conveyances of interests not addressed in subsequent categories which may require FERC approval. For Category A uses, FirstLight assesses the proposed use, and determines on a case by case basis the best method of processing the proposed use/conveyance request such as processing the proposed use under Category B, C, or D, or obtaining prior FERC approval prior to granting permission. Category A uses are typically temporary use of non-Project lands for one-time events, such as running races, state cross-country meets, horseback riding, and triathlons.

Category B: Uses associated with single-family residential dwelling abutting the Project boundary such as (1) landscape planting; (2) non-commercial piers, landings, boat docks or similar facilities; and (3) embankments, bulkheads, retaining walls, or similar structures for erosion control to protect the existing shoreline. For Category B uses, FirstLight has an established program for issuing permits without prior FERC approval or notification for the specified types of use and occupancy of Project lands and waters, which may be subject to the payment of a reasonable fee to cover the costs of administering the permit program. For proposed uses in this category, FirstLight places an emphasis on multiple use and occupancy of facilities for access to Project lands or waters. FirstLight also ensures, to the extent practical, that the uses and occupancies for which it grants permission are maintained in good repair and comply with applicable State and local environmental, health, and safety requirements. Before granting permission for construction of bulkheads or retaining walls, FirstLight inspects the site to consider whether planting vegetation, grading or the use of riprap would be adequate to control erosion at the sites, and to determine that the proposed construction is needed and would not change the basic contour of the reservoir.

Category C: Municipal and utility uses such as (1) replacement, expansion, realignment, or maintenance of bridges and roads for which all necessary State and Federal approvals have been obtained; (2) storm drains and water mains; (3) sewers that do not discharge into project waters; (4) minor access roads; (5) telephone, gas and electric distribution lines; (6) non-project overhead electric transmission lines that do not require erection of support structures within the project boundary; (7) submarine, overhead, or underground major telephone distribution cables or major electric distribution lines (69-kV or less); and (8) water intake or pumping facilities that do not extract more than one million gallons per day from a project reservoir. For Category C use, no later than January 15 of each year, FirstLight prepares a report for the Project, which is filed with FERC, that briefly describes each conveyance made during the calendar year.

Category D: Uses such as (1) construction of new bridges or roads for which all necessary State and Federal approvals have been obtained; (2) sewer or effluent lines that discharge into project waters, for which all necessary Federal and State water quality certificates or permits have been obtained; (3) other pipelines that cross project lands or waters but do not discharge into project waters; (4) non-project overhead electric transmission lines that require erection of support structures within the project boundary, for which all necessary Federal and State approvals have been obtained; (5) private or public marinas that can accommodate no more than 10 watercraft at a time and are located at least one-half mile from any other private or public marina; (6) recreational development consistent with an approved Exhibit R or approved report on recreational resources of an Exhibit E; and (7) other uses, if: (i) the amount of land conveyed or a particular use is five acres or less: (ii) all of the land conveyed is located at least 75 feet, measured horizontally, from the edge of the project reservoir at normal maximum surface elevation: and (iii) no more than 50 total acres of project lands for each project development acres conveyed under this category in any calendar year. For Category D uses, prior to conveying any interest in Project lands or waters, FirstLight conducts an internal review of the proposed use, and prepares information about the proposed use, including the location of the lands to be conveyed, the nature of the proposed use, and the identity of any Federal or State agencies consulted or approvals needed. At least 45 days prior to conveyance, FirstLight files the information on the proposed use and conveyance with FERC. Unless FERC, within 45 days from the filing date, requires FirstLight to file an application for prior approval, FirstLight then conveys the intended interest at the end of that period.

For both Category C and D uses, before notifying FERC, FirstLight consults with Federal and State fish and wildlife agencies, as appropriate, and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

For all categories of uses, FirstLight also reviews the proposed use/conveyance to ensure that it is not inconsistent with any FERC approved recreational resources.

Proposed uses of Project lands in all categories of uses are, to the extent practical, reviewed by FirstLight to ensure that the proposed use or conveyance of rights will not adversely affect the operation of the Project.

Permits granted by FirstLight under its Permit Program for non-project use of Project lands are generally in the form of a 5-year revocable license agreement. The license agreements regulate such use and occupancy through numerous provisions protecting Project and natural resources and thus are consistent with the "protection and enhancement of the project's scenic, recreation, or other environmental values…"[47] License agreement terms can vary and all can be terminated upon 6 months' notice by either party. The license agreements also expressly state that they are "subject to the terms and conditions as imposed by the FERC Project Licenses or to be imposed by FERC in connection with any order relative to the Projects." As a result of this provision, the ability of the Commission to further condition or even prohibit such authorized use and occupancy in order to meet the public interest standard of Section 10(a) of the Federal Power Act is fully preserved by FirstLight. All license agreements have in common the provisions below:

- The license holder must allow unobstructed use of the property by the public without regard to race, color, religious creed or national origin.
- The license is not transferable.
- The license holder must obtain all necessary federal, state, and local permits.
- Excavation, clearing, grading or filling of property is prohibited.
- Docks, piers, walls or other waterway improvements are prohibited unless all state and federal approvals have been obtained.
- Construction of any structures, fixtures or improvements on the property is prohibited without prior written approval by FirstLight.
- Parking or storage of vehicles or equipment on Project Property is prohibited, unless expressly authorized by conditions of the license.
- Hazardous materials may not be used or stored on the property unless otherwise authorized by the conditions of the license.
- Removal of timber, vegetation or plantings is prohibited without prior written permission from FirstLight.
- FirstLight reserves its right to flood and flow water on the property.
- The application of any fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides is prohibited (applicable to vegetated shoreline sites).
- FirstLight may require the license holder to plant and maintain native vegetation to reduce or prevent erosion and run-off into the Connecticut River (applicable to vegetated shoreline sites).

These requirements provide a comprehensive regulatory structure that assures that the granting of permission for non-project uses does not adversely affect the Project's scenic, recreational and environmental values.

3.3.7.2 Environmental Effects

Continued operation of the Northfield Project, as proposed, will enable Project lands or the land uses surrounding the Project to continue. Project lands will continue to be a mix of forested, developed and agricultural lands which, for the most part, will remain available for public use for recreation. Non-project uses of Project lands will continue to be approved and managed by FirstLight in accordance with the terms of the standard land use articles that are anticipated to be included in the new license. As they do currently, under the new license, FirstLight will carefully manage non-project use of Project lands by issuing short-term license agreements/leases (typically 5 years) to ensure that uses of the lands are consistent with Project

[47] Article 52(a) of the Northfield License and Article 43(a) of the Turners Falls License.

purposes, that non-project uses of the lands are limited to the uses specified under the terms of the license agreement/lease, and that disturbance to the land, vegetation, and any other natural features are minimized. FirstLight will revoke or not renew license agreements or leases for such non-project use of Project lands if terms of those license agreements/leases are violated. For requested non-project uses of Project lands that have the potential to impact significant resources, including wetlands, historic properties, traditional cultural sites, RTE species or their habitats, or other important habitats, FirstLight will consult with the appropriate agencies before approving the requested non-project use of Project lands. For requested non-project uses of Project lands that require prior FERC approval, FirstLight will consult with the appropriate agencies and then prepare a request package for FERC that includes the results of the consultation and information about the proposed use of the lands. Overall, the continued operation of the Project, as proposed, will maintain the character of surrounding lands and will promote public interaction with the surrounding nature through the NMTTC, parks, trails and campgrounds. Use of adjacent lands is not anticipated to be affected by FirstLight's proposal for relicensing the Project.

3.3.7.3 Cumulative Effects

There are no cumulative effects identified for land use in the Northfield Project.

3.3.7.4 Proposed Environmental Measures

FirstLight is proposing minor modifications of the Northfield Project boundary so as to consolidate the two separately licensed projects, into a single licensed project. Minor modifications are also being proposed to remove lands that are not necessary for Project purposes from the Project boundary. Overall, the proposed Project boundary will look very similar to the existing Project boundaries for the two projects, with these exceptions:

FirstLight is proposing to remove the USGS-owned and operated Conte Fish Lab from the Project boundary. The lands associated with the Lab being proposed to be removed have a land use designation of Developed and Forested. Figure 3.3.7.4-1 depicts proposed parcel to be removed from the Project boundary. The Lab is owned, operated and maintained by the USGS for purposes of research, and serves no Project purpose. None of the facilities that comprise the Lab or the property owned by the USGS contains lands, waters, facilities or structures that are necessary for Project purposes. Nor are there any significant natural or recreational resources located on Conte Lab property. FirstLight's Phase IA (Reconnaissance) Archaeological Survey for Massachusetts identified several previously recorded archaeological resources on this parcel. These resources have not been investigated for NRHP eligibility. Removal of the parcel from the Project, however, will not result in an adverse effect to these resources because the parcel is owned by USGS (a federal governmental entity) and therefore will still be subject to Section 106 requirements. FirstLight's historical structures survey did not identify any eligible historic structures on this parcel. There are two parking lots owned by FirstLight, within the vicinity of the Conte Lab, which can be utilized for recreational access to the Cabot Woods Fishing Access site. These parking lots will remain within the Project boundary.

FirstLight is also proposing to remove an 8.1 acre parcel of land (Figure 3.3.7.4-2), which is a part of a larger parcel of land known as the Fuller Farm property. The parcel is located on the easterly side of Millers Falls Road (State Route 63) in Northfield, Massachusetts and has a land use designation of Developed, Agricultural – Pasture/Grass, and Forested. FirstLight's predecessor purchased the farm as part of a much larger tract when acquiring land to construct the Northfield Mountain Development. When the design was finalized, the farm and land were not necessary for Project purposes, even though they continued to remain in the Project boundary along with the larger tract, some of which contains recreational trails or is used for recreational programming. The 8.1 acre farm property, however, includes residential and agricultural structures, and the underlying lands are not necessary for power generation, recreation, or any other Project purpose. The 8.1 acre parcel has never been used for and is not needed for operation and maintenance of the Project. The parcel is also not needed for recreational opportunities. The Project currently provides ample recreational opportunities and the portion of the larger tract that contains recreational trails and used for recreation programming will remain in the Project boundary.

FirstLight's historical structures survey found that the buildings (house, barn, and outbuildings) (known as the Fredrick Morgan, Sr. house/Morgan-Fuller Residence in MHC's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets) located on the 8.1 acre parcel are not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to lack of historic/architectural significance and lack of integrity.[48] FirstLight's Phase IA (Reconnaissance) Archaeological Survey for Massachusetts identified the 8.1 acre parcel as sensitive for the presence of archaeological resources (Sara et al. 2014a and 2014b).[49] While FirstLight's Phase IA reconnaissance level archaeological survey included the 8.1 acre parcel in its recommendations for intensive (Phase IB) survey, the parcel is not in a location that is susceptible to erosion or in an area that suggests there are Project-related effects on the property.

Maps showing the location of the two parcels to be removed from the Project boundary are contained in Exhibit G.

There are no other environmental measures related to land uses proposed at this time.

3.3.7.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No unavoidable adverse impacts are expected to land use in the Northfield Project.

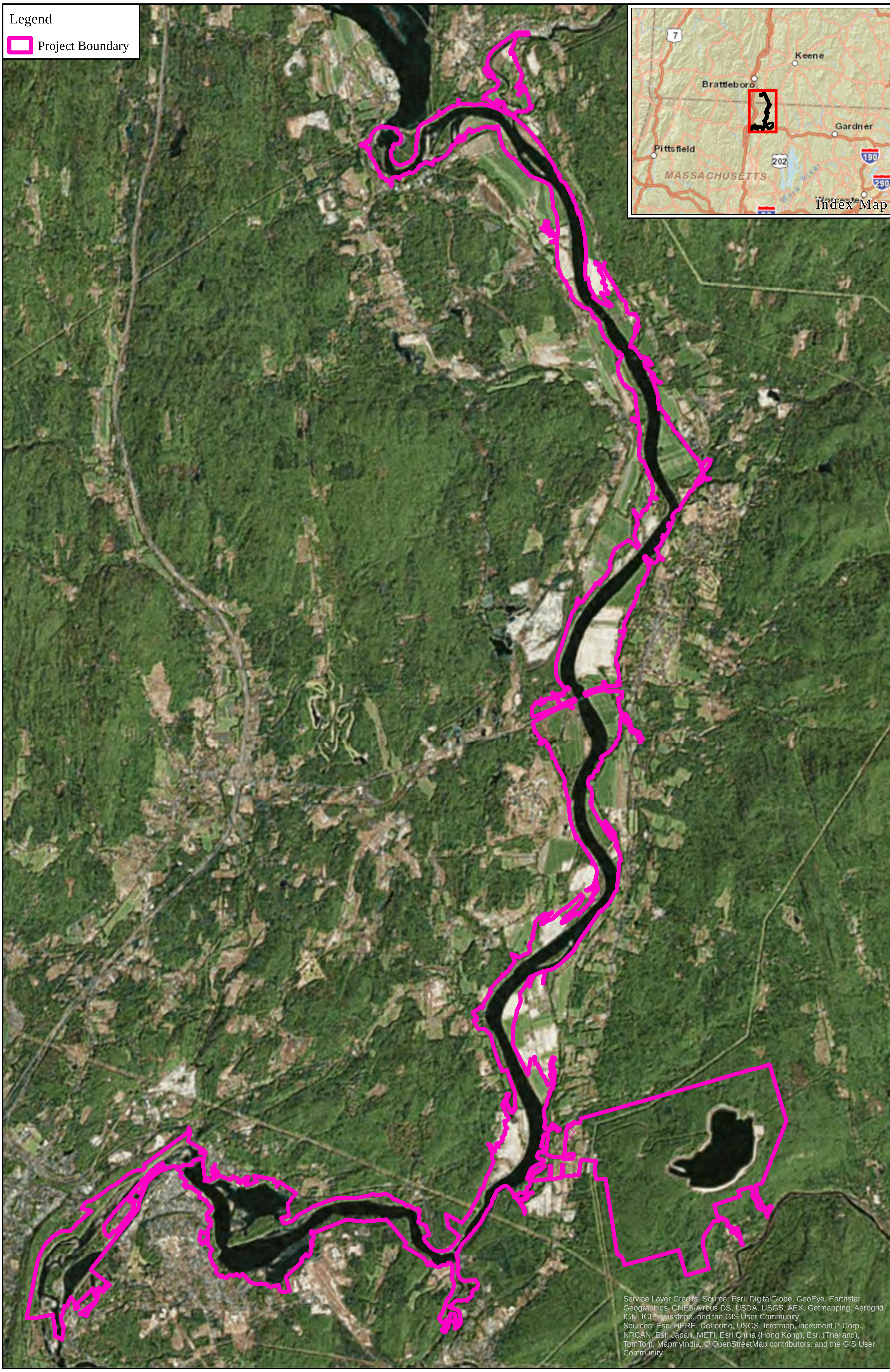
[48] Historic Architectural Resources Survey & National Register Evaluation at V-35, Project Nos. 2485 and 1889 (filed Jan. 21, 2015).

[49] The Study Report for the Phase IA Archaeological Investigation for Massachusetts was submitted to the MHC and filed with FERC as "privileged" on December 31, 2015. Technical revisions, as requested by the MHC, were submitted to the MHC and filed with FERC as "privileged" in May 2015.

Table 3.3.7.1.2-1: Land Use Designations within the Project Boundary

Land Use Designation	Acres	% of Project Area
Agricultural - Crops	1,010[1]	13.9
Agricultural - Pasture/Grass	37	0.5
Natural/Undeveloped	37	0.5
Developed	333	4.6
Forested	951	13.1
Open Water	2,647	36.5
Wetland	396	5.5
Recreation	1,835[2]	25.3
Total	**7,246**	**100**

[1] The majority of the agricultural cropland within the Project boundary is on lands which FirstLight does not own in fee.
[2] Approximately 1,673 of these acres are the Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center.



FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

N

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Figure 3.3.7.1.1-1
Existing Project Boundary

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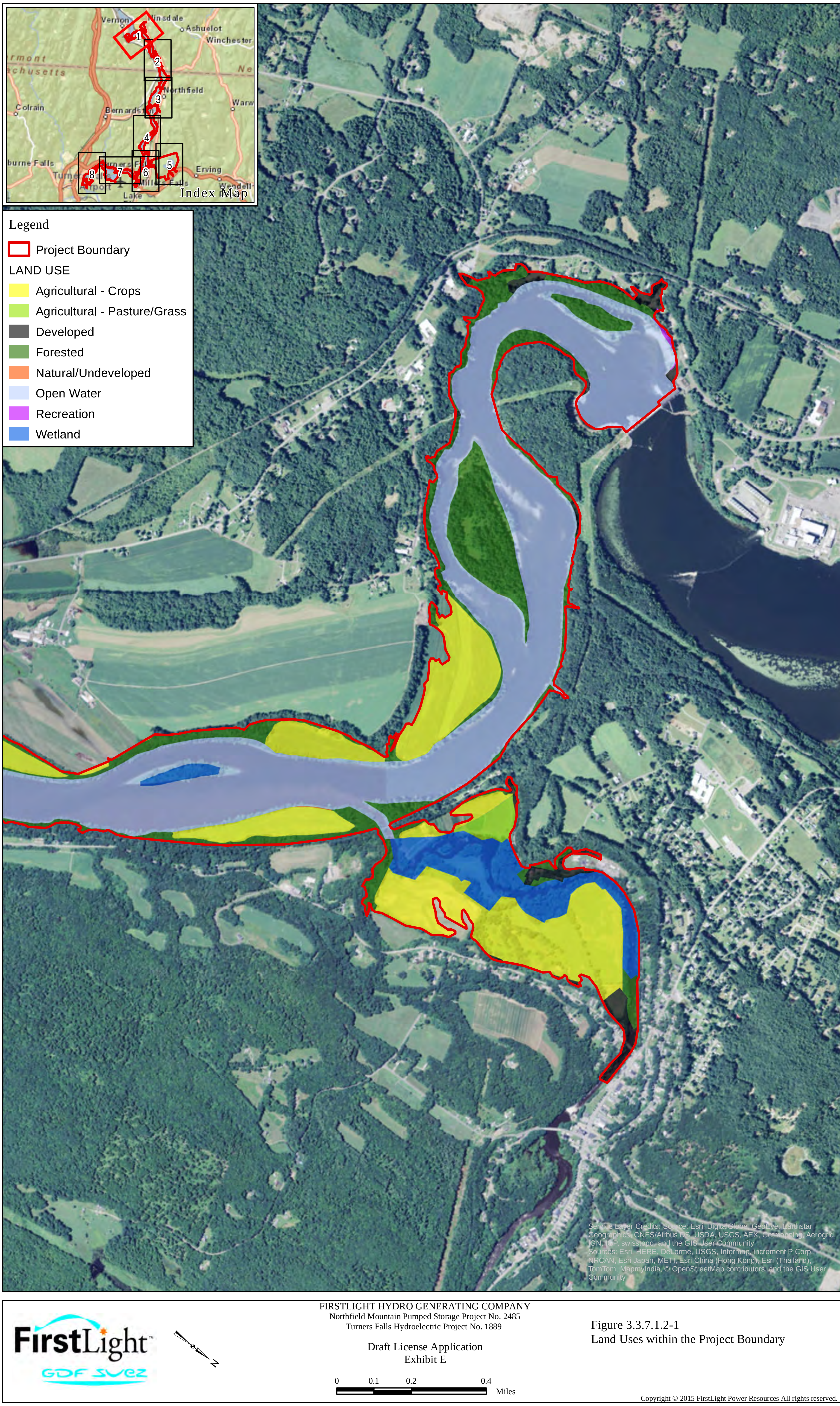

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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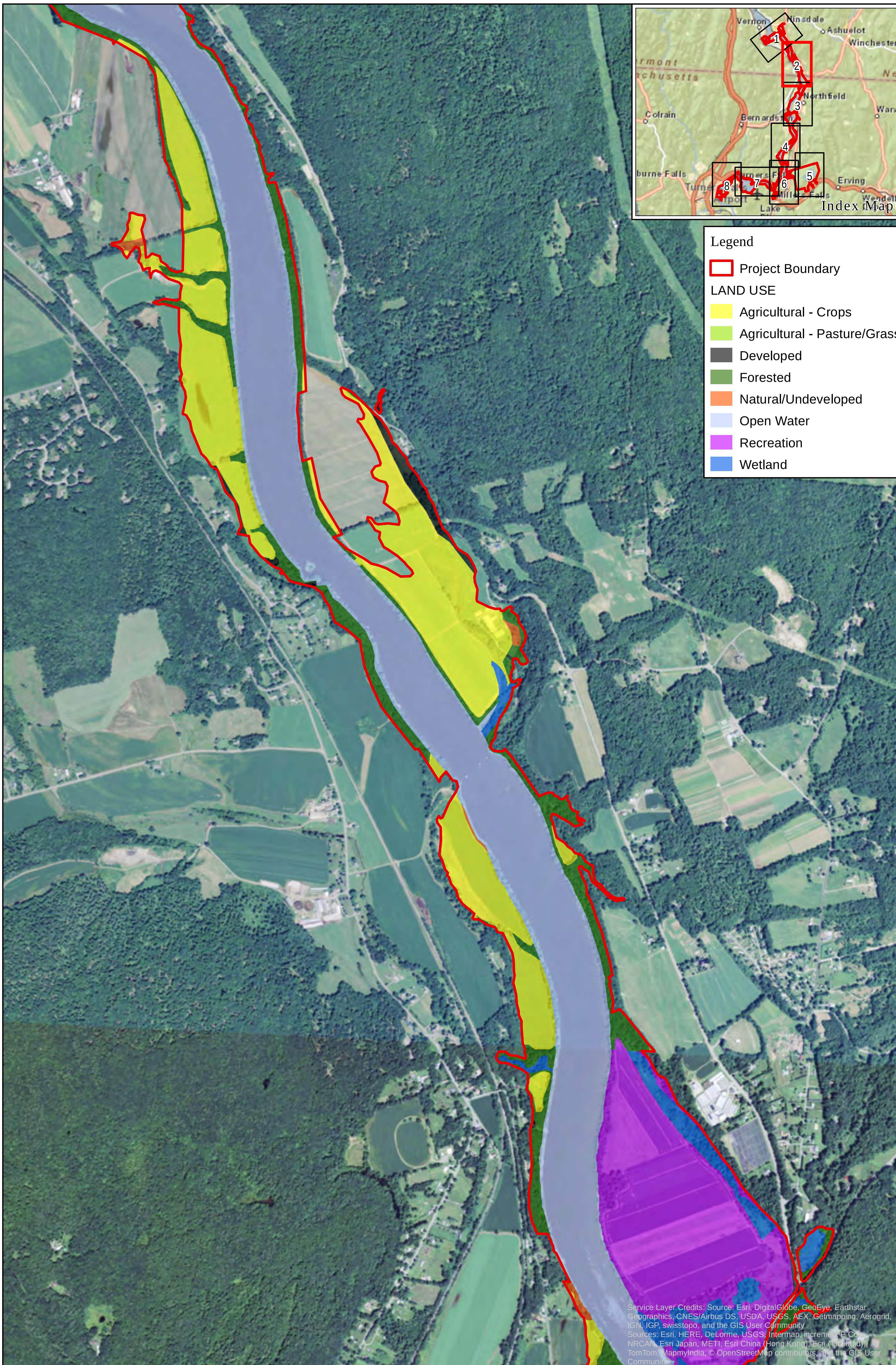

FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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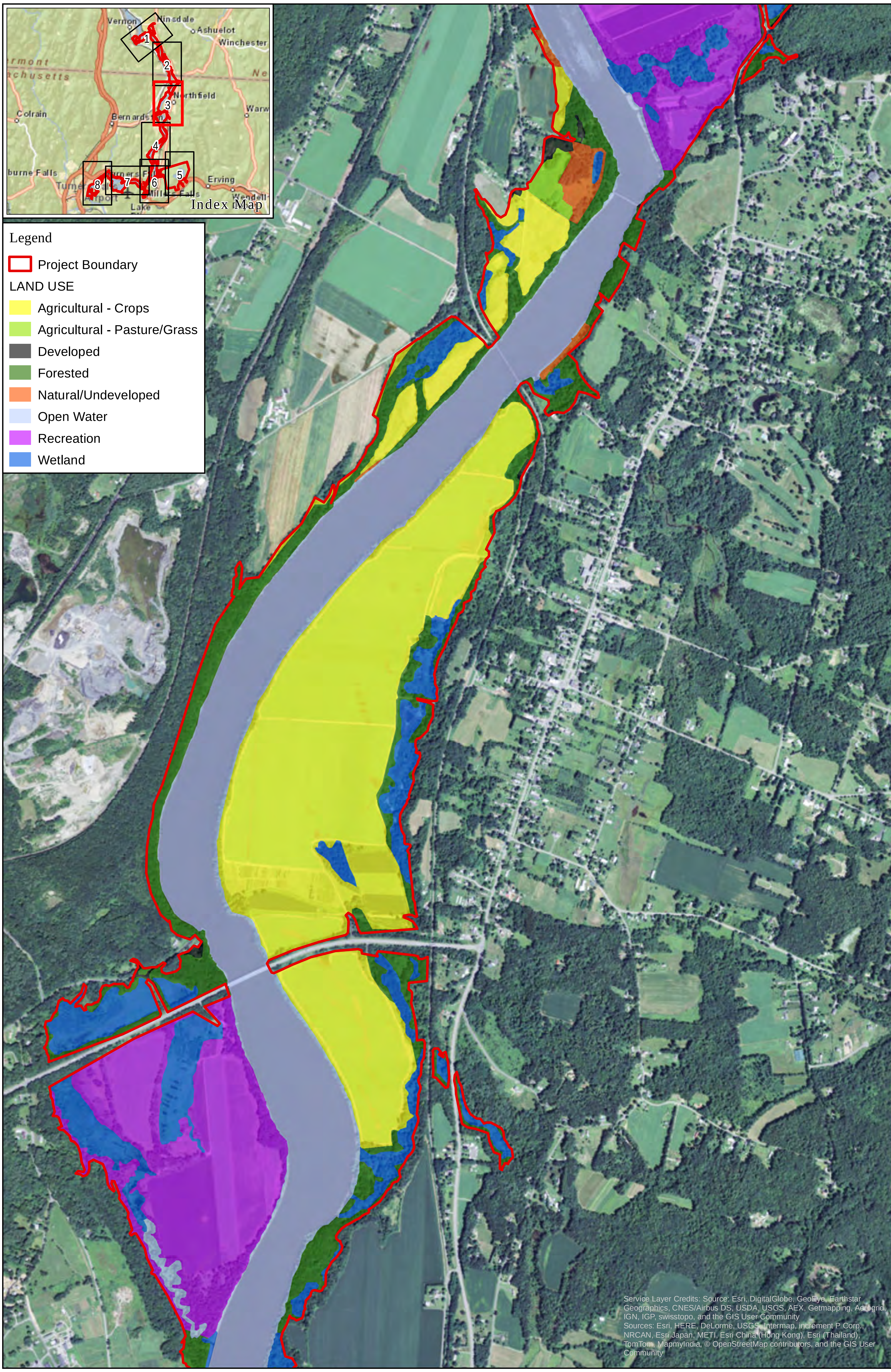

FirstLight
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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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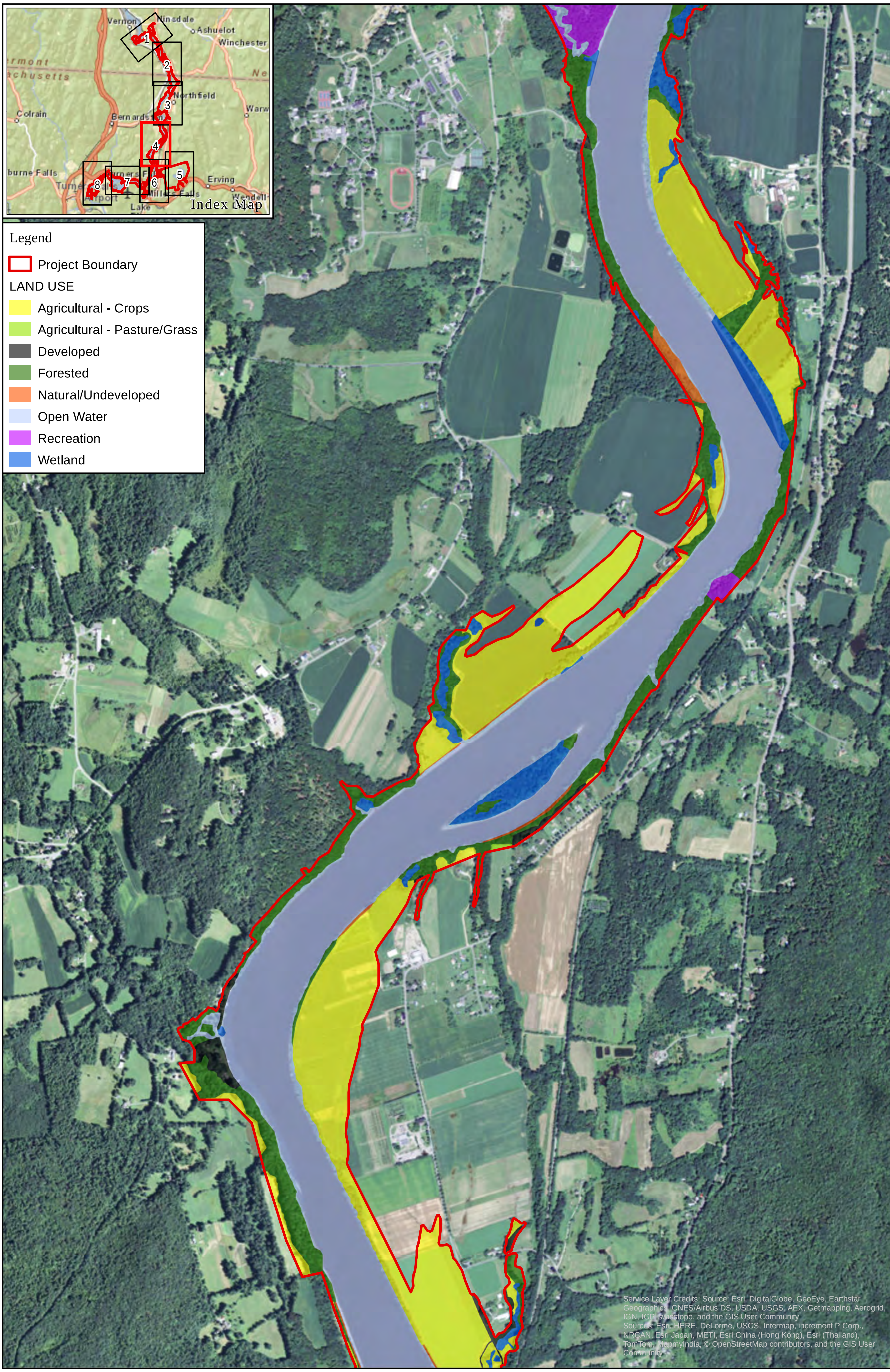

FirstLight
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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 0.1 0.2 0.4
Miles

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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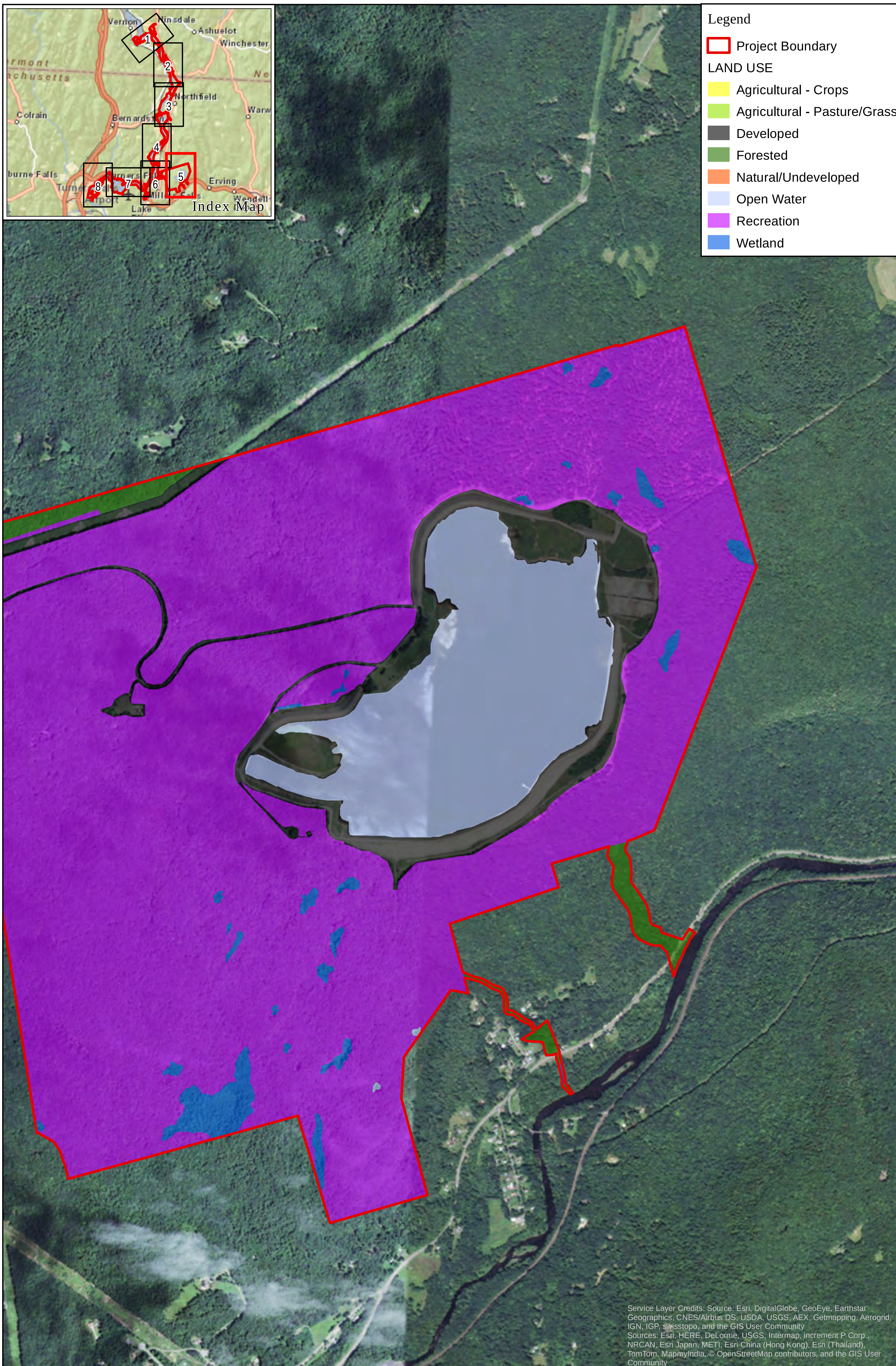

FirstLight
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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

N

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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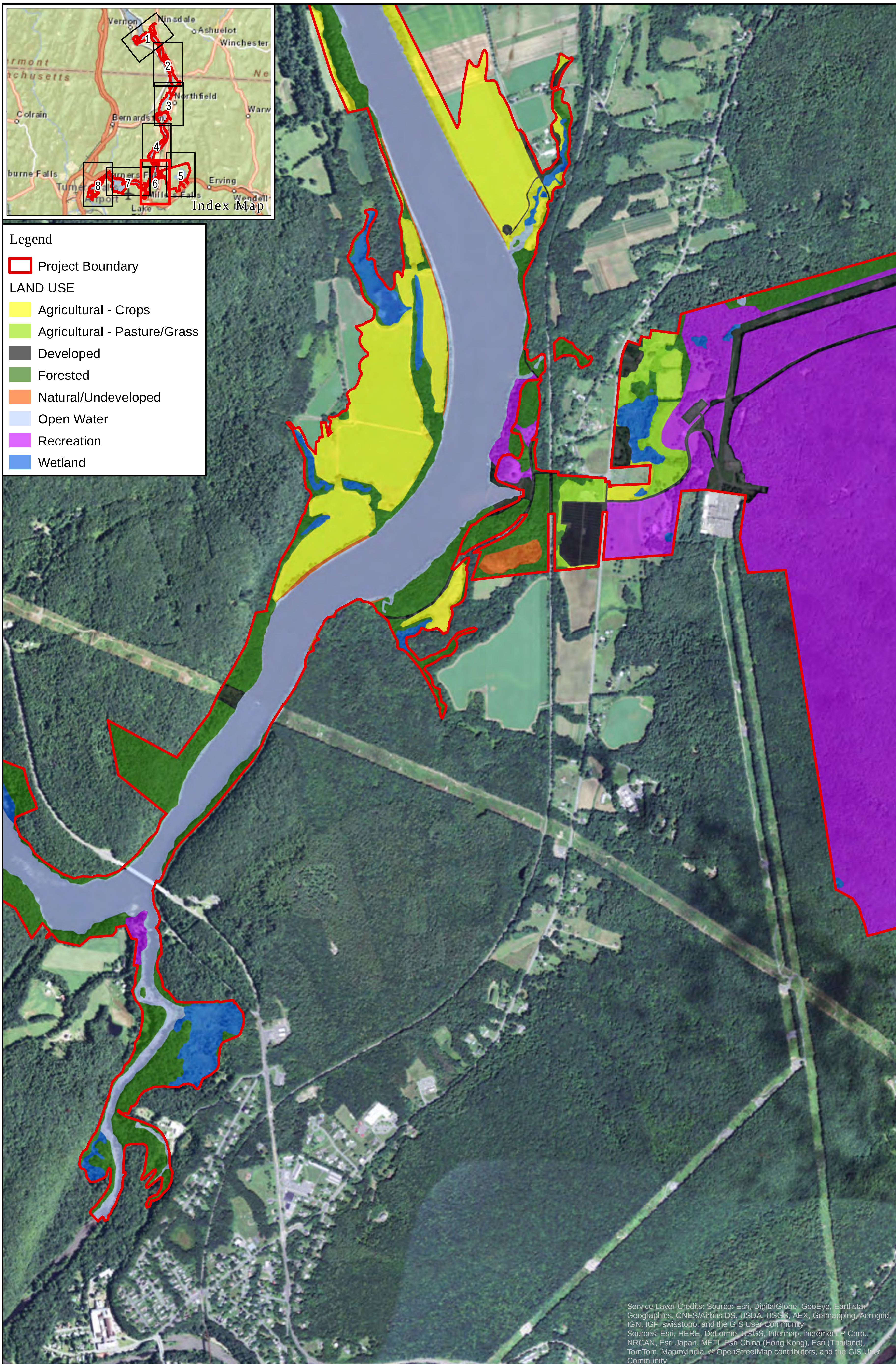

FirstLight
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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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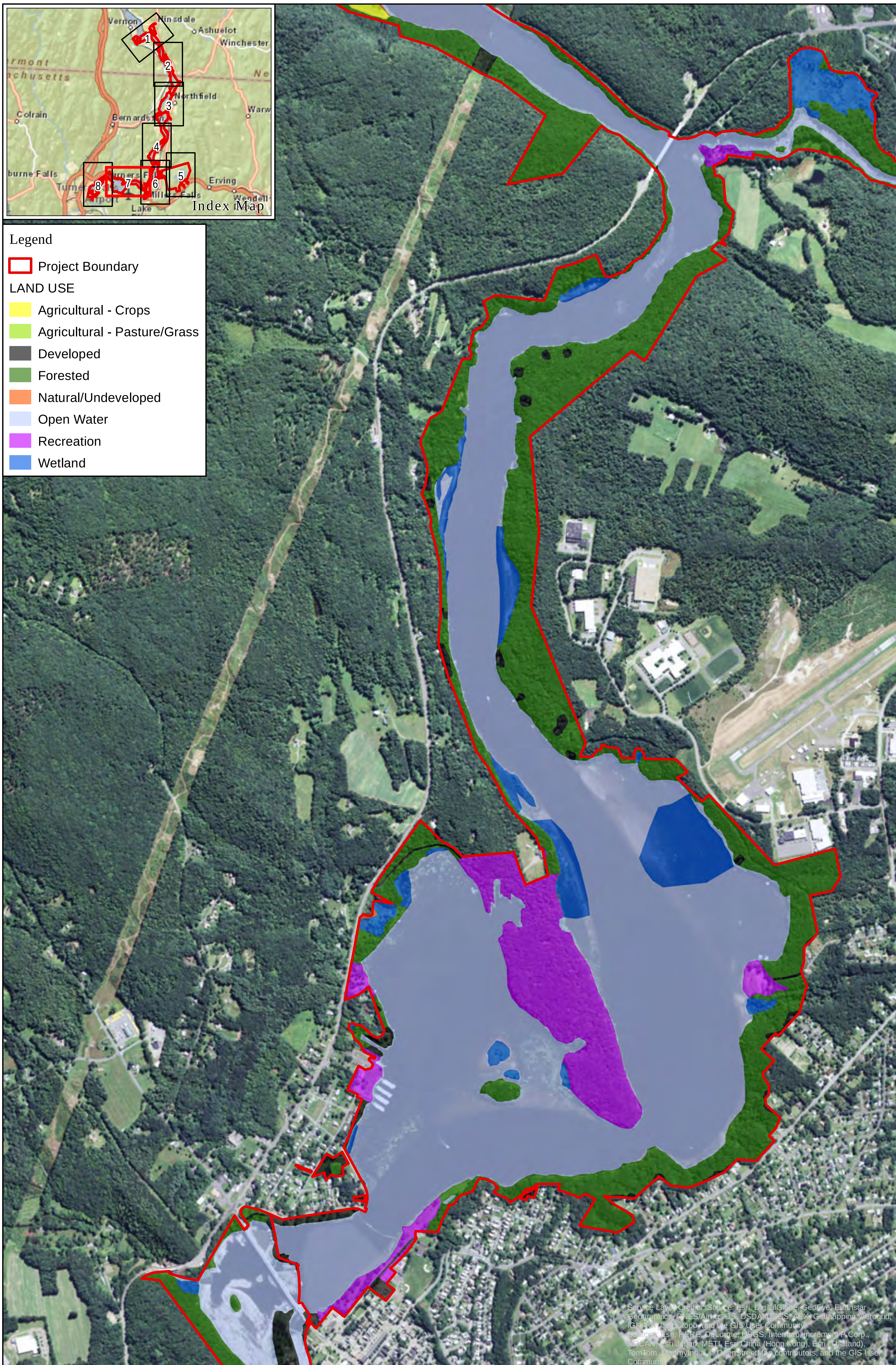

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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 0.1 0.2 0.4
Miles

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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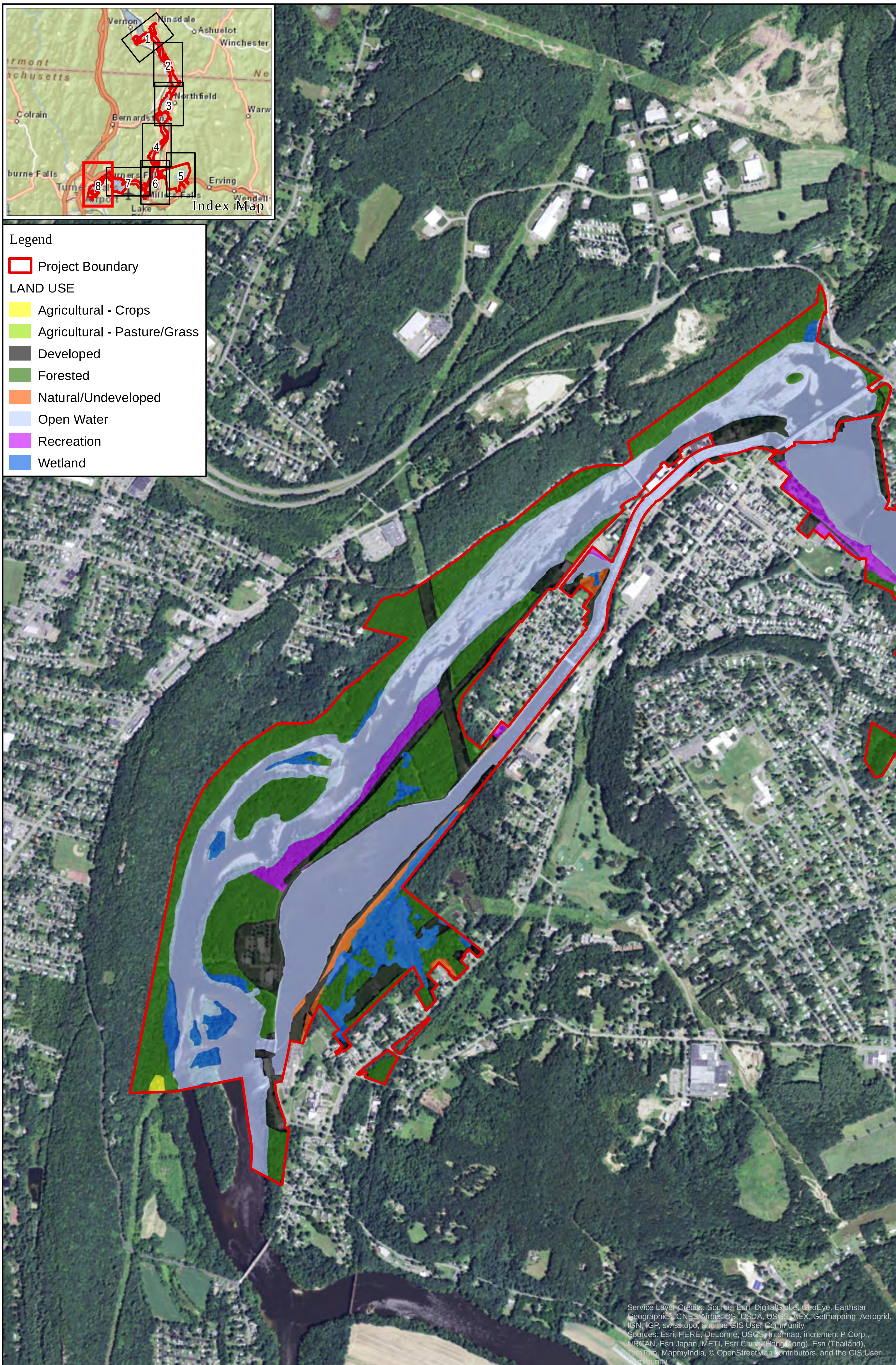

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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

Figure 3.3.7.1.2-1
Land Uses within the Project Boundary

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FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

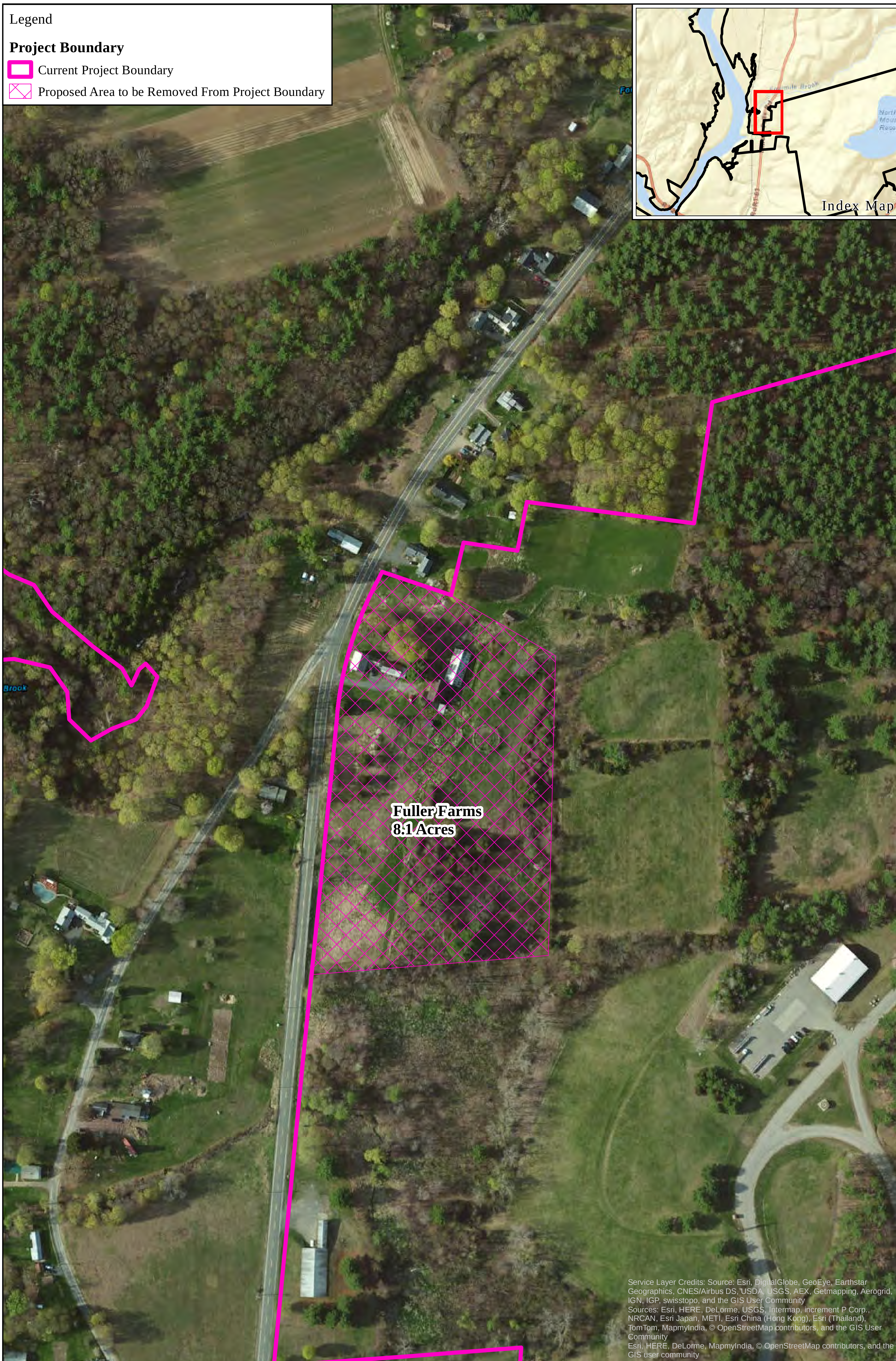
Draft License Application
Exhibit E

0 155 310 620 Feet

N

Figure 3.3.7.4-1
Proposed Removal of the
USGS Owned and Operated
Conte Fish Lab

Path: W:\gis\maps\dla\figure_3_3_7_4-1.mxd



FIRSTLIGHT HYDRO GENERATING COMPANY
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485
Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

Draft License Application
Exhibit E

Figure 3.3.7.4-2
Proposed Removal of the
8.1 Acre Fuller Farm Property

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3.3.8 Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (Section 106), as amended, requires the Commission to evaluate the potential effects of continued operation of the Project on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within the Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). Properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP are called historic properties. Section 106 also requires FERC to seek concurrence with the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) on any finding of effects, and allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment before acting on a license application.

If Native American Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) have been identified, Section 106 also requires the Commission to consult with interested Indian tribes that might attach religious or cultural significance to such properties.

3.3.8.1 Affected Environment

3.3.8.1.1 Area of Potential Effects

On November 27, 2013, FERC defined the APE for the Project in accordance with Section 106 and in consultation with the three SHPOs for the states included within the Project boundaries: the MHC, the NHDHR, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP), along with the Narragansett Indian Tribe, and the Nolumbeka Project. The Project APE for both archaeological and historic architectural resources is defined as *"…all lands within the current FERC Project Boundary of the two projects in addition to any other lands outside the FERC Project Boundary where historic properties could be affected by project-related adverse effects. The Projects' APEs include lands within Franklin County, Massachusetts, Windham County, Vermont, and Cheshire County, New Hampshire. On lands adjacent to the project boundaries, the APEs would also include an additional 10 meters (33 feet) of lands inland from the top of banks of the Connecticut River and associated tributaries."* The APE for the Northfield Project is shown on Figure 3.3.8.1.1-1.

3.3.8.1.2 **Precontact and Historic Period Background**

Geographic Background. The Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development are located on the Connecticut River in the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The greater portion of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, including developed facilities and most of the lands within the Project boundary, are located in Franklin County, MA; specifically, in the towns of Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Montague, and Northfield. The northern reaches of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development boundaries extend into the towns of Hinsdale, in Cheshire County, NH, and Vernon, in Windham County, VT.

Precontact Period Context (ca. 12,000 B.P. – ca. 500 B.P.)

The precontact period archaeological record of the Connecticut River Valley dates back more than 10,000 years (Johnson, 2007). Archaeologists have divided this record into three major periods known as the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland periods. Further subdivisions within these periods are based on similarities in artifact forms and cultural adaptations over broad regions of the northeast. It is important to note that these divisions may be useful as archaeological constructs, and that their boundaries may represent changes perceived as culturally significant by archaeologists in the region).

Paleoindian Period (ca. 12,000-10,000 Years B.P.). The earliest recognized precontact period inhabitants in the Connecticut River Valley, and throughout North America, are referred to as Paleoindians. Paleoindians are believed to be the first people to migrate into North America and, in their pursuit of large game, rapidly colonized the continent (Martin, 1973). Throughout North America, the hallmark of Paleoindian people is the fluted spear point, which presumably was used to hunt down large game species, some of which are now extinct. These spear points are characterized by a lanceolate form and exhibit a long, groove-like flake struck from their base on both faces. In the northeast, Paleoindians are believed to have been highly mobile hunters and gatherers reliant mainly on caribou and their site locations tend to be associated with elevated landforms that may have provided prominent overlooks for migrating caribou herds (Spiess *et al*., 1998).

In the Connecticut River Valley, very little is known of the Paleoindian period. Only a few sites have been found in the region and these occur in a variety of settings. For example, the DEDIC/Sugarloaf site in Deerfield is situated on the surface of Lake Hitchcock bottom deposits and overlooks the modern floodplain (Ulrich, 1978); the Hadley Site is located on a low rise in a broad alluvial plain (Curran & Dincauze, 1977: 344-345); and the Hannemann Site is located on the sandy, well-drained Montague Plain near the Turners Falls airport (Hasenstab, 1987). The lack of Paleoindian sites is somewhat perplexing as the valley would have been a natural corridor for travel over great distances. Boisvert (1999) suggests Paleoindian occupation of northern New Hampshire often correlates with river valleys in order to provide ease of travel and communication with other regions. As suggested by Curran and Dincauze (1977), it might be that the environment of Lake Hitchcock was not favorable for Paleoindian occupation due to its limited resources and this is supported by the fact that the few resources recovered to date are found within the former margins of the lake. This would suggest that the environment became more favorable after drainage of the lake. The lack of Paleoindian sites may also reflect sampling biases, or the possibility that sites favored by Paleoindians have long since been destroyed by erosion processes and development. Regardless, the Paleoindian resources in the valley share a common trait with other Paleoindian sites of the northeast. This trait is the use of high quality cherts and other cryptocrystalline materials to manufacture stone tools.

The end of the Paleoindian period and subsequent transition into the Early Archaic period is poorly understood with no clearly defined correlation between the two periods. The beginning of the Archaic period within the Connecticut River Valley is marked only by the presence of bifurcate projectile points that are typically out of context. These points are best known in more southern regions and they suggest a different material culture than the preceding Paleoindian period.

Archaic Period (ca. 10,000-3,000 Years B.P.). The Archaic period represents the longest cultural period in the region, spanning around 7,000 years. This time frame is indicative of persistent cultural adaptations, as inferred from artifact assemblages, which lasted over several millennia. As noted earlier, Early Archaic period occupation is poorly represented in the valley and not well understood. The scant evidence comes from a few bifurcate points representative of the Early Archaic period recovered from the Riverside Archaeological District (Johnson & Krim, 2007; Nassaney, 1999). The lack of Early Archaic period remains may be due to the fact that sites dating to this period have been deeply buried in alluvial deposits and therefore not adequately sampled. Another possibility is that sites dating to the Early Archaic period have gone unrecognized due to the absence of chipped stone projectile points. Research in northern New England has revealed Early Archaic assemblages consisting of crudely fashioned flake and unifacial tools made on cobbles and locally available stone (Robinson, 1992). These Early Archaic assemblages are commonly found in stratified riverine settings and reveal an adaptation to aquatic resources, particularly beaver, muskrat, and fish. It is presumed that similar resources and settings would have been available in the Connecticut River Valley as well.

By the Middle Archaic period, sites are somewhat more numerous, but still relatively scarce within the Connecticut River Valley. Middle Archaic period sites are marked by an increase in chipped stone spear points, particularly those of the Neville and Stark variety. These points have been found in a variety of settings, including river and stream margins in both upland and lowland areas (Johnson, 2007). They are believed to have affiliations with forms in the mid-Atlantic region suggesting broad regional influences during the Middle Archaic period (Dincauze *et al* 1976). The variety of settings where Middle Archaic sites are found led some researchers to hypothesize the establishment of seasonal scheduling of subsistence activities and increased recognition of territories (e.g., Dincauze *et al*., 1977; Thomas, 1980).

By the Late Archaic period, sites are more frequent and larger in size, possibly suggesting an increase in population density (Nassaney, 1999). The sites also tend to occur in a wider variety of settings with large sites occurring where resources could be seasonally procured in abundance (e.g., Turners Falls) and smaller sites occurring in upland areas where specific resources were exploited. Quarrying of diabase and steatite from sources within the valley also becomes more widely recognized during the Late Archaic period and is believed to be part of a groundstone industry that likely emerged during the earlier Archaic period (Robinson, 1992; Johnson & Krim, 2007). The Late Archaic is divided into three major traditions that include the Laurentian, Small-Stemmed, and Susquehanna traditions. These traditions are largely inferred from different point styles that range from side-notched forms (e.g., Otter Creek and Brewerton), crudely fashioned stemmed forms made of local materials (Small-Stemmed Point), and broad-bladed forms (Susquehanna). As in most areas of the northeast, the Laurentian and Small-Stemmed Traditions tend to predate the Susquehanna Tradition. In particular, it is uncertain whether the various archaeological assemblages of the Late Archaic reflect local, long-term cultural adaptations or movement of people into the region with a different culture and way of life. The expansion of sites and variety of point styles during the Late Archaic period, particularly those of the Susquehanna, may relate to environmental changes that led to decreases in aquatic resources and increases in the habitat of terrestrial animals.

Woodland Period (ca. 3,000-500 Years B.P.). The introduction of pottery manufacture signals the beginning of what archaeologists call the Woodland period in the Connecticut River Valley. Woodland period sites are the best represented in the valley and occur in a variety of sizes and habitats, as well as show a diverse range of activities (Johnson, 2007). The Connecticut River Valley played a significant role in the development of the Woodland period due to its fertile bottomlands, which were favorable for horticulture, and its exposures of Lake Hitchcock bottom sediments, which provided a readily available source of clay for pottery manufacture. The period is divided into Early, Middle, and Late subdivisions.

During the Early Woodland period, adaptations established during the Late Archaic continue with most Early Woodland components found in similar settings to Late Archaic sites. Diagnostic tool forms during the Early Woodland include Vinette I pottery, Meadowood projectile points, and blocked end tube pipes suggestive of influence from Adena cultures in the Midwest. The first real evidence for mortuary activity containing Adena-like artifacts, also appears during this time and is believed to be representative of wide-spread exchange system recognized over a broad region of eastern North America (Johnson, 2007). The Middle Woodland period is defined largely by the presence of different pottery styles. Long established patterns of seasonal exploitation of resources, and concomitantly congregation of people, at favored locations such as Turners Falls, continue. However, by the end of the Middle Woodland period, horticulture became established as a part of the subsistence pattern. The emergence of horticulture certainly would have affected settlement patterns to some degree with occupation increasing in areas where fertile soils were prevalent. The Late Woodland period is marked by the continued development of horticulture, evolving pottery styles, and the presence of diagnostic triangular projectile points known as Levanna.

The picture that emerges from Woodland period sites is one showing a long-standing cultural adaptation to the diversified use of local resources. In addition, the nature of artifact forms present and certain types of stone recovered from Woodland period sites indicate trade and communication with people from far-off regions. By the end of the period, historical evidence suggests core settlement areas had developed in the lowlands of the valley with peripheral areas occupied during certain times of the years for hunting and gathering. The Woodland period ends with European contact around 500-450 years ago. At this time, referred to as the contact period, many of the artifacts attributable to precontact period inhabitants disappear from the archaeological record and trade goods, such as copper and beads, emerge in the record.

Historic Period Context (1500-1973)

Contact Period (1500 – 1620). The contact period (1500-1620) in the Connecticut Valley is defined by direct and indirect interaction between Native American populations and Europeans. It is unclear when initial contact between these populations took place in the region, but most likely occurred to the south of the study area in the early seventeenth century. Contact between these populations (direct and indirect) was intermittent and it is thought that little material culture of European origin was utilized by Native Americans.

Plantation Period (1620 – 1675). The Plantation period (1620-1675) witnessed the development of a number of European settlements including those in the town of Northfield. During this period, direct contact between Europeans and the Native American population increased in part due to mutual involvement in the fur trade. This contact led to widespread epidemics and resulted in the decimation of Native American populations and the abandonment of Native American settlements.

Colonial Period (1675-1775). Colonial settlement of the Project area (present-day towns of Gill, Greenfield, Montague, Erving and Northfield, MA; Vernon, VT; and Hinsdale, NH) in the seventeenth century was scattered and short-term and is for the most part poorly documented. Turners Falls gained its name from the historic "Falls Battle" of 1676, when Captain William Turner attacked a group of Pocumtucks and members of other tribes camped at the falls of the Connecticut River. More than 300 Indians died in the battle before they counter-attacked, killing Turner and 40 of his men (Jenkins, 1980:8.1).

Considered a northern outpost of colonial settlement, the Vernon and Northfield areas were largely abandoned during King Philip's War and only lightly re-settled after the conclusion of Queen Anne's War in 1714. Confusion over the town boundaries of Northfield in relation to the New Hampshire colony to the north resulted in several inconclusive surveys that muddied settlement claims in the area for many years (NHDOT, 2007:4). A 1753 decree by New Hampshire's Royal Governor created two towns north of Northfield on either side of the Connecticut River, both named Hinsdale (Holmes *et al*., 1991:56).

Federal Period (1775-1830). Vermont, contested among New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts in the years before the Revolution, enjoyed a population boom in the late 1700s. In 1783, the province had a population of 10,000; by 1790, it had increased to 55,425. On March 4, 1791 Vermont gained statehood. In October 1802, the town on the Vermont side of the Connecticut River changed its name from Hinsdale to Vernon (Child 1884:304; Holmes et al. 1991:56).

Turners Falls itself was not settled until 1792, when a canal and dam were proposed by the Proprietors of the Upper Locks and Canals of the Connecticut River to aid navigation around both Turners Falls and South Hadley to the south. When completed in 1798, the locks and canals formed a vital link in the 300-mile system of waterways from Wells River, VT to Hartford, CT (Jenkins 1980:8.1). The canal, designed by Benjamin Prescott of Northampton, was 2.5 miles long and 14 feet wide, with ten locks. In 1799, the Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike Company was established to either construct new roads or take over and improve existing ones in western Massachusetts.

Early Industrial Period (1830-1870). Railroads opened up the entire Connecticut River Valley area to sustained economic development beginning in the 1840s and remained the area's transportation backbone for nearly a century. The first railroad line to reach the Turners Falls area of Montague was the Connecticut River Railroad, a north-south line between New Haven and Greenfield which began service in 1846 (Holmes *et al*., 1991:24). This line was extended to Brattleboro, Vermont in 1851.

The present-day Village of Turners Falls in Montague dates only from 1866, when Colonel Alvah Crocker decided to create a planned industrial community on the model of Lowell or Holyoke (Jenkins, 1980:8.1). Crocker and his associate Wendell T. Davis bought up the stock and water rights of the defunct Proprietors of the Upper Locks and Canals and eventually acquired 700 acres of land in the Turners Falls area (Abercrombie, 1925). Crocker and Davis founded the Turners Falls Company which embarked on building a dam and a new power canal that roughly paralleled the route of the old navigational canal, from which water was thereafter leased or sold to factories for power purposes. A wood-and-stone crib dam with a 30-foot fall at the Turners Falls rapids was completed in early 1867 (Jenkins, 1980:8.2).

The new village received a huge boost in 1868, when the John Russell Manufacturing Company moved to Turners Falls. Its complex of two- and four-story buildings (no longer standing) running for nearly 2,000 feet along the power canal housed one of the largest cutlery factories in the world at the time (Jenkins, 1980:8.2; Montague Bicentennial Committee, 1954:12; Great Falls Discovery Center, 1996:3).

Late Industrial Period (1870-1915). In 1871, the Montague Paper Company (partially owned by Alvah Crocker) built its complex on a site on either side of the power canal just below the dam bulkhead. The Keith Paper Company (later Hammermill Paper) Mill complex was completed in 1873. In 1874, the Turners Falls Cotton Mill was built at the southern end of the power canal (Holmes *et al*., 1991:28).

The Riverside area of Gill remained sparsely populated until late 1867 when Amos Perry, David Wood, and Nathaniel Holmes bought water rights on the Connecticut River from the Turners Falls Company along with a small parcel of land in Riverside at the edge of the river for a grist- and saw-mill (Gill Historical Commission, 1999:2). In 1872, Holmes, Wood and Perry incorporated as the Turners Falls Lumber Company to bring logs downriver to their saw-mill from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Canada. The company's saw-mill provided vast amounts of lumber for the development of Turners Falls across the river and lumber production soon surpassed the gristmill (Gill Historical Commission, 1999:3).

By the early 1880s, Hinsdale possessed a well-developed industrial infrastructure, centered on several paper and cotton mills built along the Ashuelot River. High, Hancock, and Prospect Streets were laid out on the north side of town, reflecting the steep hillside on which the village is built. High Street, located above the heat and noise of the valley below, was soon lined with spacious architect-designed residences (NHDOT, 2007:8).

On June 9, 1886, A.S. Clarke of the Clarke & Chapman Machine Company, made arrangements with the Turners Falls Company for a six-hour additional use of water for the purpose of generating electricity at night. In late 1886, an electric generating station opened at the Turners Falls gatehouse and in 1892, the gatehouse was expanded for greater water flow (Sanborn Map Company, 1895). The present Turners Falls Gatehouse was built in 1903-1904 following demolition of the original 1866 gate house and was substantially enlarged in 1913-1914 (Turners Falls Power & Electric Company, 1914a and b; Gregory, 2006: 12).

The Turners Falls Power Canal also was improved by widening it and increasing its depth (Sanborn Map, Company, 1895). By 1917, the canal was extended to its present length of approximately 2.5 miles (Turners Falls Power & Electric Company, 1917). Final work on the canal's excavation was completed that year when it reached its present depth of between 25-40 feet and between 100-920 feet (the latter at the Cabot forebay) in width (Jenkins, 1980: 8.4)(Gregory, 2006:13)(Holmes *et al*., 1991:28).

In 1892, the Boston & Maine Railroad acquired the entire Connecticut River Railroad, made up of the former 21-mile Ashuelot Railroad and the Cheshire Railroad, among others (Wallace *et al*., 2001:36). In 1911, the railroad extended its line from Dole Junction, NH to Brattleboro, VT on the other side of the river. Known as the Fort Hill Branch of the Boston & Maine Railroad, the rail line at one time included eight bridges, a 2,800-foot causeway and numerous stone culverts and drains (Hostutler and Muzzey, 1994).

In 1904, the Central Railroad of Vermont, rebuffed in its offer to construct a combination rail/vehicular bridge, proceeded with plans to construct its own bridge across the Connecticut River in Northfield. The six-span, pin-connected, metal Pratt truss bridge was completed later that year. The bridge's current appearance with five spans now consisting of a series of Warren deck trusses is the result of a major reconstruction carried out by the American Bridge Company for the railroad after the bridge was severely damaged in the 1936 flood (Arts Council of Franklin County, 1978d).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Turners Falls Company had moved into the emerging hydro-electric market (Jenkins, 1980:8.3). In 1904, Charles Hazelton, treasurer of the Turners Falls Company, proposed to his board of directors that that they make better use of the water power currently being wasted by widening and extending the power canal, and establishing a hydroelectric generating plant of 5,000 kilowatt capacity. (Bennett, 1990a:5).

In 1905, the Turners Falls Company completed construction of Turners Falls Power Station No. 1, a 1,000-kilowatt unit built approximately 3,000 feet downstream of the Turners Falls Gate House at the upstream end of the power canal (Turners Falls Company, 1904 and 1907). As designed, the construction of Turners Falls No. 1 Power Station involved the installation of six small horizontal Francis-type units (WMECO, 1987:2). The first generation of electricity from water power by the Turners Falls Company took place in 1906. By 1913, the station had grown to five units with a total capacity of 5,000 kW.

In 1908, Boston financier Phillip Cabot assumed the post of president of the Turners Falls Company, which was reorganized and renamed the Turners Falls Power & Electric Company, reflecting the company's new focus on hydroelectric power and its transmission. Cabot's ambitious plans called for the construction of a second powerhouse, named Cabot Station in his honor, replacing and raising the original Crocker-built dam with the present Gill and Montague (Turners Falls) Dams, and extending and widening the power canal and Gate House. Work began on dam construction in 1912 and was completed in 1915 along with the Cabot Station in 1917 and the newly improved power canal by the 1920s.

The Sixth Street Bridge was constructed across the power canal in 1912. It is a riveted, double-intersection Warren thru-truss, designed by the Eastern Bridge & Structural Company of Worcester MA, and erected by a crew of workers from the Turners Falls Company (Bennett, 1990a:4). The Eastern Bridge & Structural Company also built footbridges at Fifth Street and to the Keith's Mill (Arts Council of Franklin County, 1978a, b, and c).

Modern Period (1915-Present). In 1915, the Eleventh Street Bridge was completed over the power canal. The bridge is a unique triple-barreled configuration of a double-intersection Warren thru-truss, with a pair of trusses on either side of the roadway, and lateral bracing between each pair, but none over the roadway. The Eleventh Street Bridge was also engineered by the Eastern Bridge & Structural Co. and is the only known example of this bridge type in Massachusetts (Arts Council of Franklin County, 1978e; Bennett, 1990a:1).

In 1915, the Turners Falls Company completed construction of a new Turners Falls Dam to replace the original Crocker-built dam. That same year, construction began on the Cabot Station powerhouse located at the south end of the power canal. Cabot Station was named for Philip Cabot who was largely responsible for its construction, first as President of the Turners Falls Company after 1908, and then as founder and president of the Turners Falls Power & Electric Company (Arts Council of Franklin County, 1978c). Historically, Cabot Station represents the last major industrial development of the water resources at Turners Falls. When it was completed, Cabot Station was the largest hydroelectric facility in Massachusetts, and the principal source of power for the Turners Falls Power & Electric Company.

With the advent of the automobile in the early 1900s, the Massachusetts Highway Commission made plans to improve all the state's roads, including the section of highway from Greenfield to North Adams. Work was begun in September of 1912 and completed in November of 1914, at a cost of $350,000. At the opening ceremonies, October 24, 1914, the highway was officially dedicated as "The Mohawk Trail" after the Mohawk Indians of that region (Bennett, 1990b:1).

The French King Bridge was conceived as part of a state-financed project to relocate a particularly hazardous seven-mile stretch of the old Mohawk Trail Highway (State Route 2) between Erving and Greenfield. After looking at several plans, the engineers decided to cross the Connecticut River with a bridge at the height of the hills on either side, about 135 feet above the water. Construction of the French King Bridge began in September of 1931, was completed at a cost of $385,000, and opened to travel on September 10, 1932. The bridge is one of four known steel deck-arch vehicular bridges in Massachusetts, and has the sixth-longest span of any vehicular bridge in the state (Bennett, 1990b:6).

After extensive studies in the 1920s and 1930s, the Turners Falls Power & Electric Company and the Connecticut River Power Company of New Hampshire combined to form the Connecticut River Conservation Company. Its purpose was to "develop a system of reservoirs on the headwaters and tributaries of the Connecticut whereby the tremendous spring run-off might be stored for use during the period of low flow in the River." It was projected that five-billion cubic feet of storage water could be made available for power purposes, saving ten thousand tons of coal annually (Samartino, 1991:26).

In 1942, the biggest merger was made when three pre-existing companies were merged into Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO): Turners Falls Power & Electric Company, Pittsfield Electric Company, and United Electric Light Company. The several power companies continued to expand and to cooperate in transmission exchanges. Combined, nearly two dozen major hydroelectric stations along the Connecticut River were capable of producing collectively 700 thousand kilowatts of power. Studies to increase the generating capacity at the Turners Falls plants were well underway in 1961. In 1965, three Connecticut Valley power companies—Western Massachusetts Electric Company, Connecticut Light & Power Company, and the Hartford Light Company—joined forces to form Northeast Utilities Service Company (NU) (WMECO, 1987: 4).

Construction of the Northfield Project began in 1968, with the major job being the drilling and dynamiting of a 2,500-foot tunnel, 565-foot ventilation shaft, 1130-foot pressure shaft, and the mile-long tail race between the powerhouse and the river, as well as the 10-story-high underground power house. Over 4.9 billion tons of rock were blasted to create the tunnels, shafts, and powerhouse (Samartino, 1991:26). Four 250,000-kilowatt capacity turbine generators were placed in the powerhouse cavern 700 feet below the surface. Also built were a 300-acre reservoir, a rock-fill dam 144 feet high and 5600 feet long, and other dikes totaling 5600 feet. At the same time, the Turners Falls Dam downriver was raised, which created a 2,500 acre reservoir on the Connecticut River. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development began operation in early 1972. As part of the development, WMECO created the Northfield Recreation and Environmental Center (also known as the Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center or the Visitors Center), with exhibits on the area's geology, history, and ecology, along with facilities and trails for hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing (Samartino, 1991).

3.3.8.1.3 **Precontact and Historic Archaeological Resources**

In July and August 2014, FirstLight conducted an archaeological reconnaissance survey (Phase IA Study) within the Project APE (Sara *et al*., 2015a and 2015b). The purpose of the Phase IA archaeological reconnaissance was to identify archaeologically sensitive areas within the Project APE and provide recommendations where Phase IB archaeological surveys should occur based on identified sensitivity and Project-related effects, including Project-induced erosion. The study integrated background research with field investigations. The background research involved a review of state files at the MHC, NHDHR, and VDHP to identify known archaeological resources within a one-mile buffer of the Project APE and to review previous archaeological studies conducted in the region. In addition, numerous local repositories were consulted in order to provide a cultural context for the Project. The purpose of this research was to provide a framework for understanding the historic contexts of the region and to develop a sensitivity model for predicting the locations of potential archaeological resources. The field investigations consisted of walkover inspection and boat survey of the shoreline within the Project boundaries to assess current environmental conditions.

The field investigations segregated the Project APE into 65 segments (48 segments in Massachusetts, 10 in New Hampshire, and 7 in Vermont) based on geomorphic and topographic differences. These segments consist of floodplains, older river terraces, islands, and glacial and/or early postglacial landforms. Portions of all 65 segments are considered sensitive for archaeological resources. In addition to the 65 segments evaluated during the study, a separate archaeological sensitivity analysis was conducted for the Fuller Farm property in the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts.

In Massachusetts, background research identified 56 previously recorded precontact period and seven historic period archaeological sites within the Project APE. Additionally, 70 precontact period and 25 historic period archaeological sites were identified within a one-mile distance of the Project boundary. Precontact period sites in the Project vicinity span the known human occupation of the region from the Paleoindian period to the Late Woodland and Contact period. In addition, historic period sites are located within or adjacent to the Project APE. These include domestic, transportation related (ferry and bridge crossings), and industrial related sites dating from the first European contact in the region in the seventeenth century to the present day.

As a result of the fieldwork in Massachusetts, the locations of three previously recorded precontact period sites were confirmed in the field based on the observation of surface artifacts, and four previously unrecorded historic period archaeological sites were located within the Project APE. These newly identified archaeological sites include the remnants of historic Munns Ferry north of Kidds Island, the remnants of a small summer cottage on an upland ridge overlooking the Connecticut River, a historic surface scatter and related ground depression west of Cabot Camp, and a partial stacked-stone foundation and spring-related feature on a hillside west of the Route 2 Bridge (French King Bridge).

In addition, the sensitivity analysis for the Fuller Farm property in Massachusetts found it to be sensitive for the presence of archaeological resources.

In New Hampshire, background research did not identify any previously recorded sites within the Project APE, although there were three previously reported archaeological resources in Cheshire County, New Hampshire located within one mile but outside of the Project APE.

In Vermont, four sites (WD-1, WD-10, WD-124, and WD-125) are located within or directly adjacent to the Project APE. Site WD-1 is also located within the Project boundary for the Vernon Hydroelectric Project (Project No. 1855), which is currently undergoing relicensing. During field investigation, no newly identified archaeological sites were recorded in Vermont or New Hampshire during the Phase IA study.

A sensitivity model was developed to categorize the sensitivity of landforms within the Project areas for precontact period archaeological resources. This model is based on analysis of environmental attributes associated with previously recorded archaeological site locations within a one-mile distance of the Project boundary and is intended to predict where precontact period archaeological resources may be located in the Project APE. The model found that modern floodplains and early Holocene river terraces in the northern half of the Project APE are considered to have the greatest sensitivity for precontact period archaeological resources with no preference for secondary tributaries of the Connecticut River. In its Phase IA study review letter of February 5, 2015 to FirstLight, the NHDHR commented that not many surveys have been conducted along the margins of the Connecticut River and cautioned that this should be taken into account when using the model’s data set on informing archaeological sensitivity.

In addition to a sensitivity assessment, areas of shoreline in the Project APE were also evaluated for evidence of active erosion that may threaten culturally sensitive landforms although the causes of erosion were not examined in the Phase IA study. The causes of erosion within the impoundment are being examined as part of Study No. 3.1.2 *Northfield Mountain/Turners Falls Operations Impact on Existing Erosion and Potential Bank Instability;* a final report will be field with FERC. The erosion classification was based on the criteria set forth in the 2013 FRR of the Project APE and included identification of the type, stage, indicators, and extent of erosion (Simons & Associates, 2014). Indicators of active erosion such as exposed roots, creep, overhanging banks, and notching were noted along the shoreline during the course of the archaeological reconnaissance.

Erosion processes in the form of bank undercutting, slumping, exposed tree roots, and leaning shoreline trees were documented primarily in the Turners Falls Development APE along long stretches of low-lying floodplain shoreline from the Northfield tailrace to the Vernon Dam. Little to no erosion was noted in the stable shorelines south of the French King Gorge, with the exception of Barton Island and Rawson Island. No erosion processes were observed in the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development APE.

3.3.8.1.4 **Historic Buildings and Structures**

Between November 2013 and March 2014, FirstLight conducted a historic architectural survey and NRHP evaluation within the Project APE *(Relicensing Study 3.7.2: Historic Architectural Resources Survey & National Register Evaluation of Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project [No. 2485] and Turners*

Falls Hydroelectric Project [No. 1889]). The 2013-2014 historic architectural survey consisted of background research on previously identified architectural resources in the APE; preparation of a historic context of the APE from the colonial period to the modern period; a survey of all architectural resources 50 years or older within the APE; and evaluation of their NRHP eligibility, either as an individual resource or as a contributing resource in an NRHP-listed or -eligible historic district. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility, built between 1968 and 1972, also was surveyed as it will be 50 years old by the time the current license expires in 2018.

There are 29 previously identified resources within the Project APE. The Turners Falls Historic District, consisting of historic industrial, residential, and commercial buildings in Turners Falls, was listed in the NRHP in 1983 and contains 13 contributing resources located within the Project APE. Seven historic resources in the APE—Cabot Power Station and Dam; Eleventh Street Bridge; East Mineral Road Bridge; Gill-Montague Bridge; French King Bridge; Schell Memorial Bridge (all located in Massachusetts) and the Hinsdale Historic District (located in New Hampshire)—previously have been determined eligible for the NRHP. (The Cabot Station Gantry Crane was determined NRHP-eligible in 1987 but has since been demolished). Three previously surveyed resources—Central Vermont Railroad Bridge over the Connecticut River (MA); Boston & Maine Railroad-Fort Hill Branch Bridge over Ashuelot River (NH); and Boston & Maine Railroad-Fort Hill Branch Bridge Piers over the Connecticut River (NH)—previously have been determined not eligible for NRHP listing. Six previously surveyed resources in the Project APE—"The Patch" district, Frederick Morgan House, Red Suspension Bridge, the Riverside district and two individual resources, the Frank Smith House and the Hunt-Sanderson House both located within the Riverside district—had not been evaluated for NRHP eligibility at the time of the 2013 – 2014 survey. There are no previously surveyed resources located within the Vermont section of the APE.

As a part of its field survey, FirstLight identified an additional 38 resources 50 years or older (in addition to the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility, which is less than 50 years old) not previously surveyed within the APE. FirstLight evaluated these 39 resources, plus the six previously surveyed resources not yet evaluated, for NRHP-eligibility according to the NRHP Criteria and standards for integrity. Of the six previously surveyed resources, "The Patch" Historic District in Turners Falls (a small portion of which is located within the Project APE), the Riverside Historic District in Gill (with the two previously named contributing resources located within the Project APE), and the Hinsdale Historic District are eligible for the NRHP. Two previously surveyed resources—Red Suspension Bridge and Morgan House—are not eligible for NRHP listing.

Of the 39 newly surveyed resources, 12 resources (all located within Massachusetts) are eligible for NRHP listing and 27 (22 in Massachusetts, 3 in Vermont, and 2 in New Hampshire) are not eligible for the NRHP due to lack of architectural/historical significance and/or loss of integrity. In New Hampshire, three newly surveyed resources (a highway bridge, a culvert, and a USGS gauging station) are contributing resources within the NRHP-eligible Hinsdale Historic District in Hinsdale. The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility is considered NRHP-eligible under Criteria A and C in 2018.

The Vermont SHPO has concurred with FirstLight's recommendation that there are no NRHP-eligible architectural resources within the Project APE. The New Hampshire SHPO concurred that no additional survey or evaluation is required. Concurrence with FirstLight's recommendations on NRHP-eligibility on surveyed resources in the Massachusetts portion of the Project APE from the Massachusetts SHPO is pending.

3.3.8.1.5 **Traditional Cultural Properties**

To document TCPs in the Project APE, FirstLight contacted the Narragansett Indian Nation (NIT) and the Nolumbeka Project on several occasions in 2014 to initiate tribal consultation and documentation of TCPs within the Project APE. Despite several attempts to initiate interviews and field investigations with Tribal members to document TCPs within the Project APE, interviews and field investigations have not occurred as neither entity has yet agreed to meet with FirstLight's ethnographer. In response to an April 29, 2015 request of the Nolumbeka Project, by letter dated June 9, 2015, FirstLight agreed to walk the Wissatinnewag Property (located outside of the APE) with the Nolumbeka Project. To date, the Nolumbeka Project, however, has not contacted FirstLight's ethnographer to set up a site visit. Background research conducted in accordance with the Revised Study Plan (RSP) identified one NRHP-listed TCP in the Project vicinity. The TCP is located at the Turners Falls Municipal Airport, Franklin County, Massachusetts. Known as the Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site, it consists of four visible stone piles and an extended row of stacked stones. No NRHP-listed TCPs in the Project APE have otherwise been identified (Will, 2015).

3.3.8.2 Environmental Effects

The Licensee is proposing to remove an 8.1 acre parcel of land (the Fuller Farm property) from the Project boundary because it is not needed for continued operation of the Project. As noted above, the Fuller Farm property was found to be sensitive for the presence of archaeological resources and may require further studies (such as an intensive (locational) archaeological survey (Phase IB). The proposal to remove the 8.1 acre parcel is discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.7.4.

As set forth in Section 2.2.1, the Licensee is also proposing to remove a 20.1 acre parcel owned by USGS and on which USGS's Conte Lab is located. As noted in Section 3.3.7.4, the Phase IA Study identified several previously recorded archaeological resources on this parcel, which have not been investigated for NRHP eligibility. Nonetheless, because the parcel will remain under the ownership of USGS (a federal governmental entity), which is subject to Section 106 requirements, there will be no adverse effect as a result of removing the Conte Lab parcel from the Project. The Licensee is not proposing any other changes to the Project or any changes in the operation of the Project that would affect any of the identified archaeological or architectural resources found within the Project APE.

To protect eligible cultural resources over the term of a new license, the Licensee is proposing to prepare and implement a Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). The purpose of the HPMP is to set forth specific actions and processes to manage historic properties within the Project APE. It is intended to serve as a guide for FirstLight's operating personnel when performing necessary activities and to prescribe site treatments designed to address ongoing and future effects to historic properties. The HPMP also describes a process of consultation with state and federal agencies. Measures anticipated to be included in the HPMP are: identification surveys and site NRHP evaluations, site management measures; training of staff; routine monitoring of known cultural resources; and periodic review and revision of the HPMP.

As reported in the Phase IA archaeological reconnaissance survey reports, based on the results of the sensitivity modeling and the observed erosion, 24,425 meters of shoreline in the Project APE are recommended for future Phase IB survey in the event that it is determined that the observed erosion is Project-induced, or that there are other Project-related effects. This includes 12,200 m of shoreline in Massachusetts, 6,875 m of shoreline in New Hampshire, and 5,350 m of shoreline in Vermont. The purpose of such field survey would be to ascertain the presence or absence of archaeological site(s) and if such resources have the potential to be adversely impacted by Project-induced erosion or other Project-related effects. The MHC has concurred that an intensive (locational) archaeological survey (Phase IB) should be conducted within the survey segments identified in the Massachusetts Phase IA report (Sara *et al*., 2015a). The NHDHR and VDHP have concurred with the recommendation for Phase IB archaeological survey within the segments identified for survey in New Hampshire and Vermont (Sara *et al*., 2015b). Provisions will be included in the HPMP to provide for continuing archaeological surveys of these portions of the Project shorelines in the event that it is determine that the observed erosion is Project-induced, or that there are other Project-related effects, as well as for the Fuller Farm property.

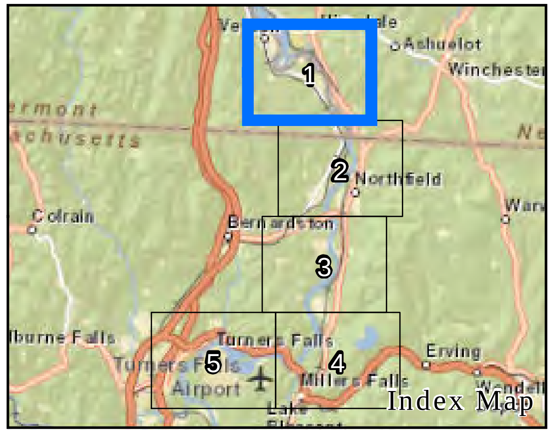
As noted in Section 3.3.8.1.4, there are 23 previously evaluated architectural resources and 16 newly evaluated architectural resources located in the Project APE (all located within Massachusetts), which are either listed (the Turner Falls Historic District) or eligible for NRHP listing. One of these resources is the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility, which will be 50 years old in 2018. Provisions will be included in the HPMP to provide for management measures to avoid adverse effects to these resources from any future Project modifications or activities.

3.3.8.3 Proposed Environmental Measures

As described above, FirstLight's proposed Project includes one measure specifically related to the protection of cultural resources, which is the development and implementation of the HPMP. The HPMP will ensure that appropriate consultation occurs prior to any future activity that may affect the historic properties associated with the Project. When developed, the HPMP will be filed with the SHPOs for Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire, Tribes, and FERC under separate cover as "privileged," because it will contain confidential archaeological site location information. The HPMP will address known NRHP-eligible historic properties as well as include provisions to address any subsequently historic properties identified during the term of a new license.

3.3.8.4 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Continued operation of the Northfield Project will result in no unavoidable adverse impacts on historic properties. Implementation of the HPMP would assure that the effects of the Project on cultural resources will be taken into account. Therefore, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 (16 U.S.C. § 470f (2006) and 36 CFR § 800.5(b) (2008), the Project as proposed would not have any adverse effects on historic properties located at the Project.



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Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889

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Exhibit E
Figure 3.3.8.1.1-1: Area of Potential Effects
Map 1

Legend

*Area of Potential Effects**

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* Final Area of Potential Effect defined by Northfield Project Boundary

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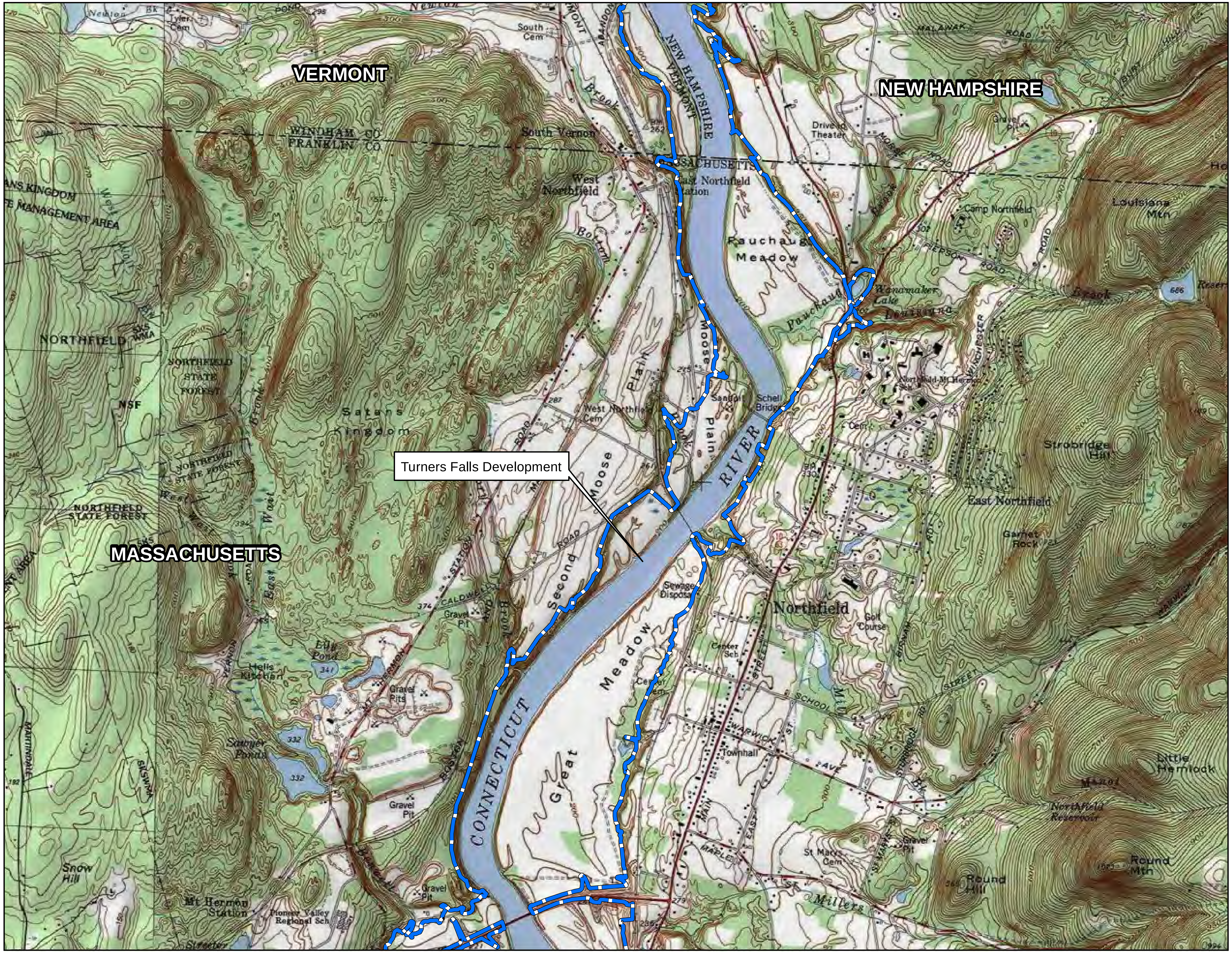

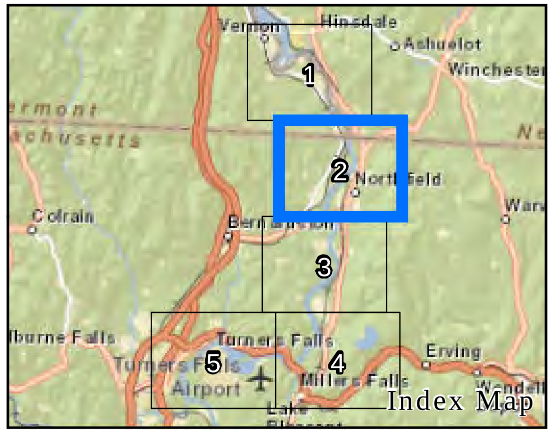

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Figure 3.3.8.1.1-1: Area of Potential Effects
Map 2

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Legend

Area of Potential Effects*

* Final Area of Potential Effect defined by Northfield Project Boundary

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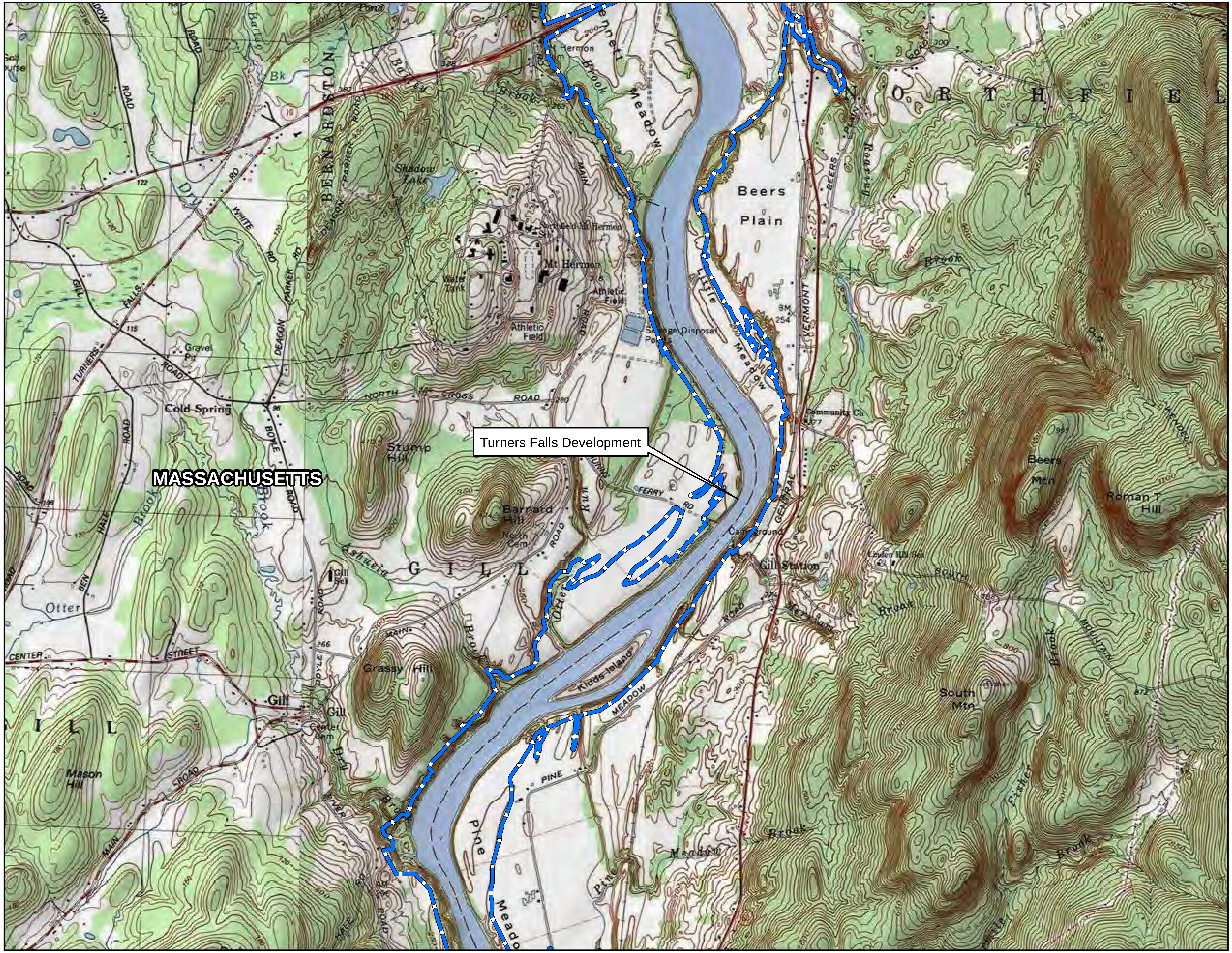

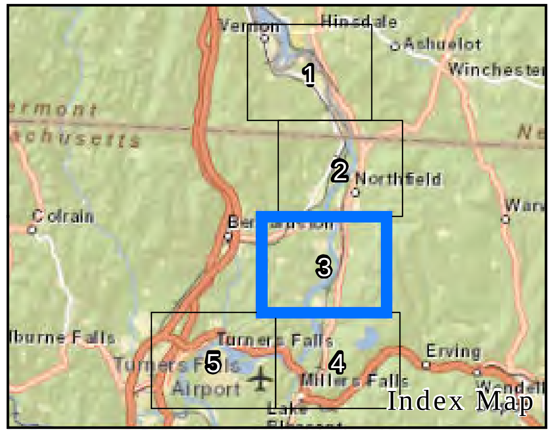

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Figure 3.3.8.1.1-1: Area of Potential Effects
Map 3

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Legend

*Area of Potential Effects**

* Final Area of Potential Effect defined by Northfield Project Boundary

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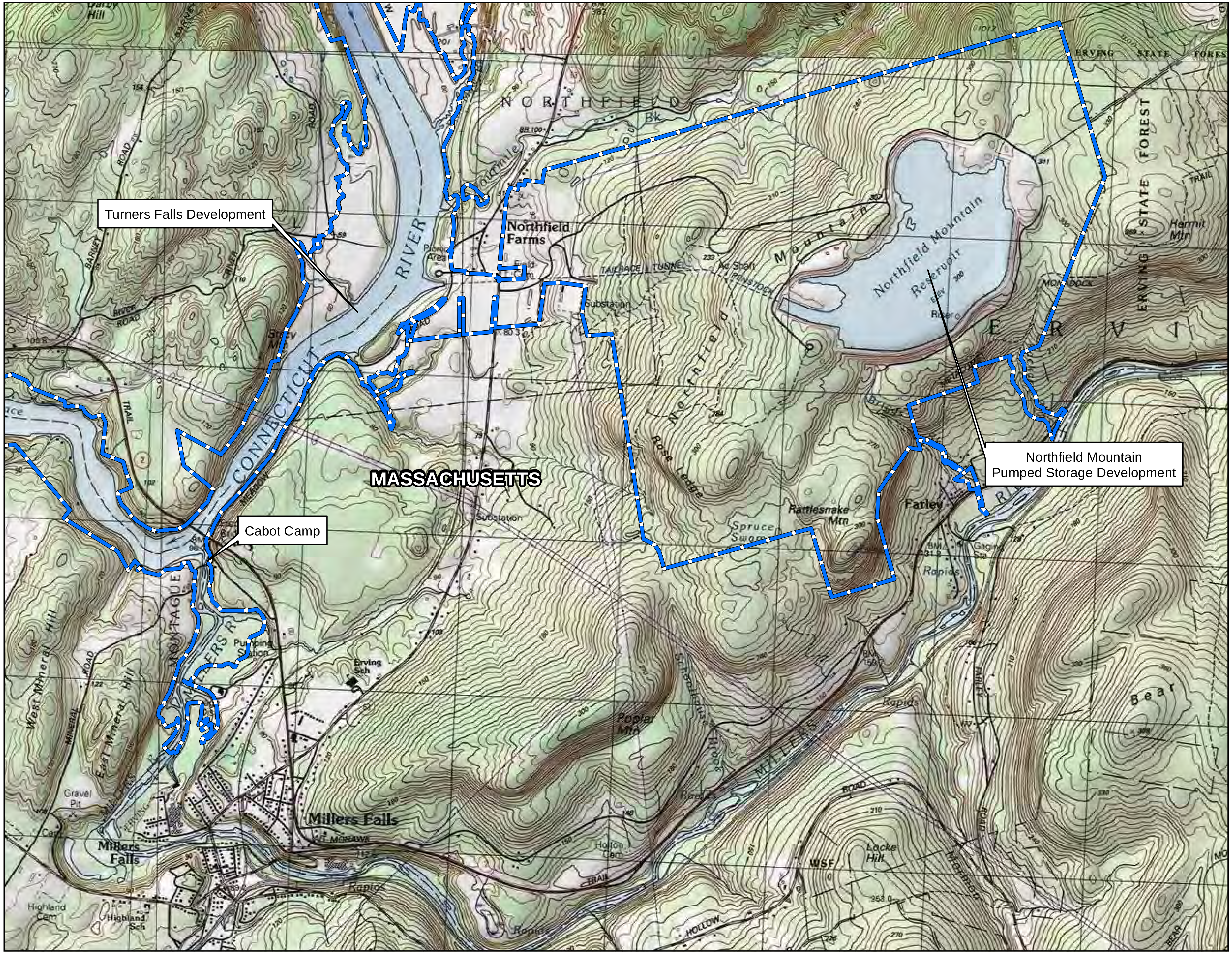

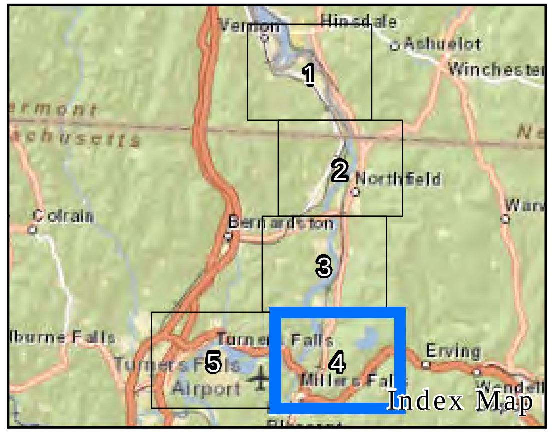

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Exhibit E
Figure 3.3.8.1.1-1: Area of Potential Effects
Map 4

Legend

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*Area of Potential Effects**

* Final Area of Potential Effect defined by Northfield Project Boundary

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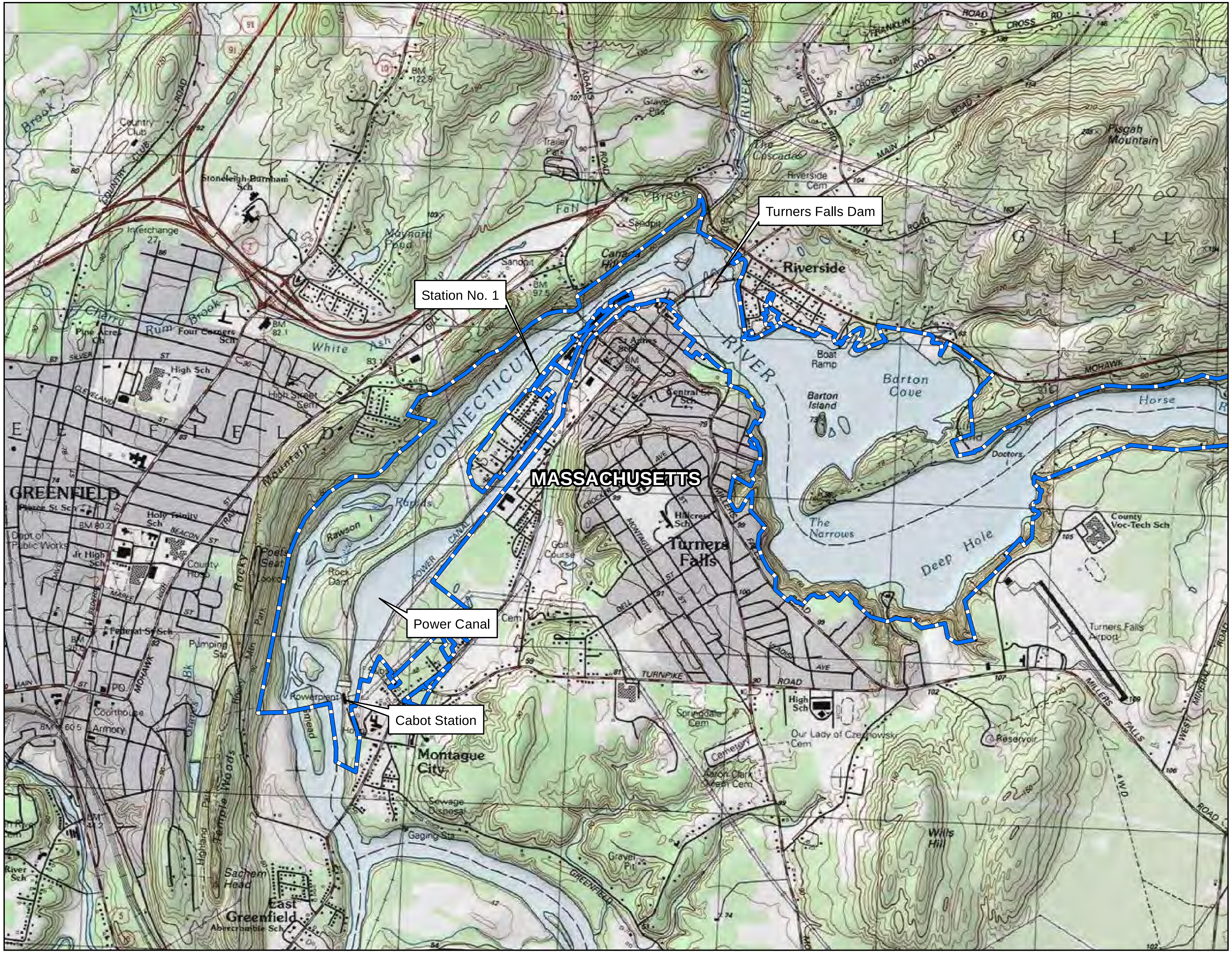

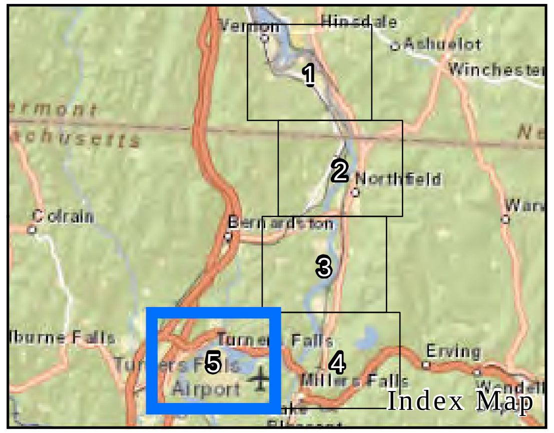

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Figure 3.3.8.1.1-1: Area of Potential Effects
Map 5

Legend

Area of Potential Effects*

* Final Area of Potential Effect defined by Northfield Project Boundary

N

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3.3.9 Aesthetic Resources

3.3.9.1 Affected Environment

3.3.9.1.1 Landscape Description

The Connecticut River valley's landscape has distinct natural beauty and classic New England farm village patterns. In the Project vicinity, historic villages and working landscapes combine with natural riverine beauty to create a scenic corridor. The region is comprised of riverside farmlands, woodlands, historic village centers founded in the late 1600s, working landscapes laid out during Colonial times, and vistas of the Connecticut River and mountain ranges. Step-like terraces and floodplains slope up to the bordering hills. The valley is framed by the Berkshire Mountains on the west and by the central uplands on the east. In autumn, the trees blaze with color (PVPC, 2012).

The corridor along TFI was designated as a scenic landscape in 1981 by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (then Department of Environmental Management). Below Cabot Station, most of the river corridor down to South Hadley is also considered a scenic landscape. Figure 3.3.9.1.1-1 depicts these scenic landscape designations as well as other aesthetic elements and scenic byways in the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development vicinity.

3.3.9.1.2 Scenic Byways and Viewscapes

Connecticut River National Scenic Byway

The roadways along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts were designated as state scenic byways in 1994, 1999, and 2000, respectively. In 2005, the Vermont and New Hampshire sections were designated as a National Scenic Byway. The Massachusetts section, which extends from the state border in Northfield down to South Hadley, was added to the Connecticut River National Scenic Byway in 2009. Scenic byway routes in the Project vicinity include Route 142 through Vernon, VT, Route 63 through Hinsdale, NH and Northfield, Erving, and Montague, MA, and Route 47 through Sunderland, Hadley, and South Hadley, MA. Designated waypoints along the byway include Northfield Mountain Tour and Trail Center and the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Figure 3.3.9.1.1-1 shows the route of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway in the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development vicinity (USDOT, 2012).

Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway

The Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway was one of the earliest scenic byways in New England, receiving its designation in 1953. It follows an east-west corridor along Route 2 from Athol to Williamstown, MA. In Erving, the Byway passes through forested areas along the Millers River with views of the Erving Cliffs (Farley Ledges) as well as of mountains in Wendell and Gill. At the Erving-Gill town line, the Byway crosses the Connecticut River on the French King Bridge with spectacular views up and down the river (see below). In Gill, the Byway has a more rural feel with views of Barton Cove, some views of the river through trees to Montague and farmsteads, and a gently rolling landscape. Near the eastern town line, a panoramic view of the Village of Turners Falls and its historic industrial landscape is visible across the Connecticut River and the power canal. The Byway then turns onto Route 2A and passes through historic downtown Greenfield (FRCOG, 2009).

Connecticut River Water Trail

The Connecticut River Water Trail is a 12-mile-long paddling trail that runs from the Turners Falls Dam to a boat access point one mile north of Hatfield Center (see Figure 3.3.9.1.1-1). It features a nearly unbroken vegetated shoreline, wetlands, high bluffs, long views, and floodplain forests. The water trail is part of the longer Connecticut River Greenway State Park, which encompasses the length of the river in Massachusetts (MADCR, 2012).

Metacomet-Monadnock Trail/New England National Scenic Trail

The Metacomet-Monadnock Trail (M-M Trail) is a long distance hiking footpath that extends from the Connecticut state line to Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire (see Figure 3.3.9.1.1-1). In 2001, the National Park Service certified sections of the trail, including those near Northfield Mountain, as a National Recreational Trail. In 2009, the trail was designated as part of the New England National Scenic Trail (NET), which also includes the Mattabesett Trail in Connecticut (collectively known as the M-M-M Trails). In Northfield, the M-M Trail traverses the open ledges of Crag Mountain, from which views of Northfield Mountain Reservoir can be seen to the southwest (see Figure 3.3.9.1.2-1) (AMC, 2010).

Connecticut River National Blueway

The Connecticut River was designated the first National Blueway on May 24, 2012 by the US Department of Interior. The federal designation comprises the entire river, as well as its watershed. The Blueway designation was intended to provide for better coordination of local, state and federal groups to promote best management practices, information sharing and stewardship. Though the National Blueway System has been dissolved, the Connecticut River maintains the designation of the nation's first and only National Blueway.

Scenic Viewpoints

Located between the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development tailrace and the Turners Falls Dam, the French King Gorge, with its 250-foot-high rocky banks, is of ecological and scenic significance. The gorge was formed thousands of years ago by glacial melt waters. The Route 2 Bridge that connects Gill to Erving, also known as the French King Bridge, provides scenic views to the north and south, where the Millers River empties into the Connecticut (see Figure 3.3.9.1.2-2). This is a popular tourist destination and some parking is provided on both sides of the road at the bridge (MADCR, 2012).

The Gill-Montague Bridge just below Turners Falls Dam provides scenic views of the dam and bypass reach for pedestrian and automobile traffic. Figure 3.3.9.1.2-3 is an aerial image showing the bridge, the Village of Turners Falls, and the landscape surrounding the lower TFI.

At more than 1,200 feet in height, Mt. Toby in Sunderland, just south of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development, looms over the middle Connecticut River valley offering outstanding panoramic views. A moderate hiking trail of about 6 miles leads to the top, and there are shorter hiking trails as well. Related geologically to Mt. Sugarloaf, Mt. Toby features cliffs, caves, waterfalls, wetlands, and open fields (MADCR, 2012).

3.3.9.2 Environmental Effects

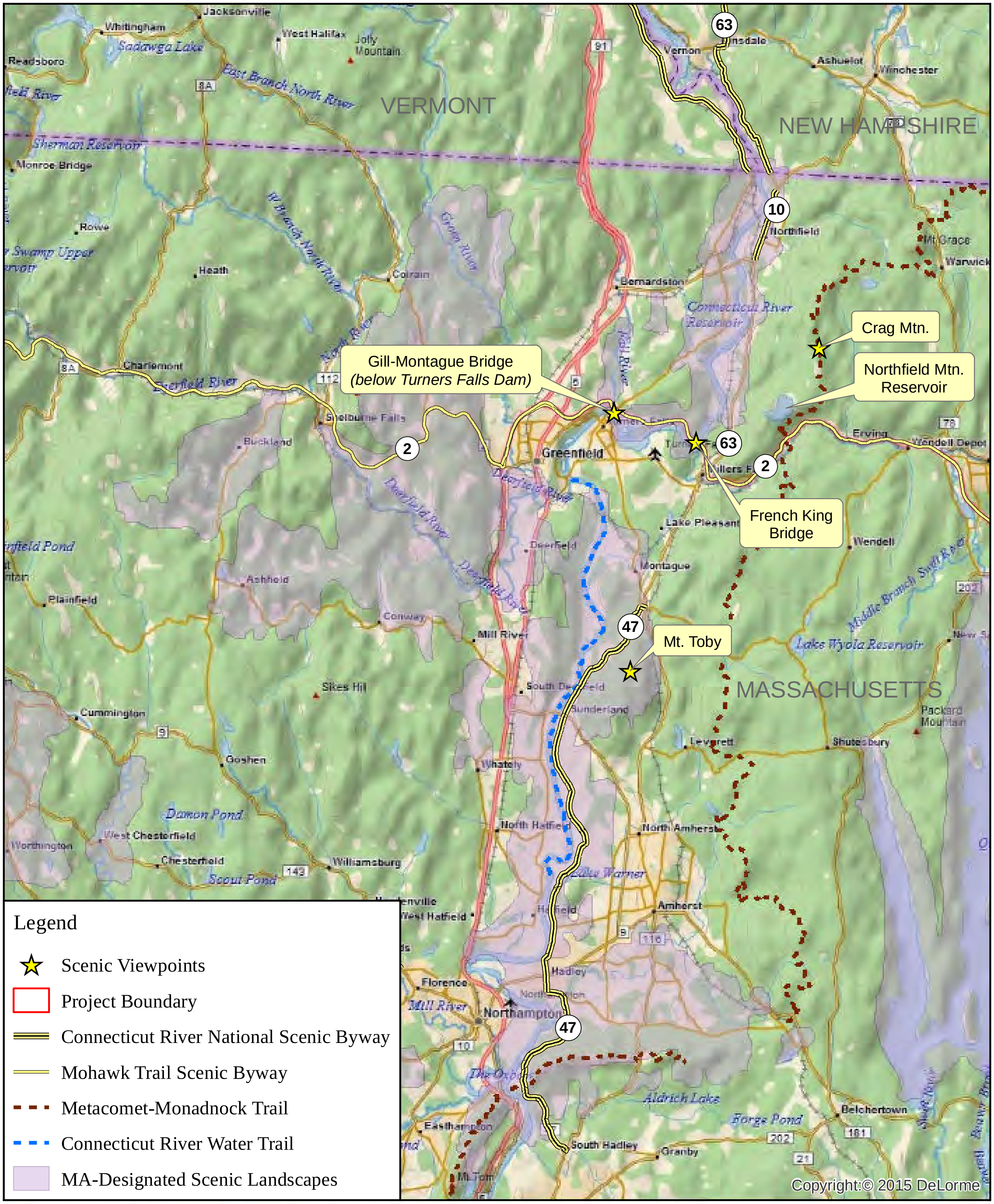
The only proposed change to Project operations is to use more of the Upper Reservoir storage capacity by increasing the storage range from the current operating range of 1000.5 feet to 938 feet to 1004.5 to 920 feet. FirstLight has requested, and FERC has approved, similar amendments to expand the Upper Reservoir operating limits to the same limit proposed during portions of 2001, 2005, 2006 and 2014. An analysis of intraday water level variations of the TFI during the 2014/2015 winter amendment period, compared to the same periods for the winters 2000-2015, showed less variability. The increase in Upper Reservoir storage is not expected to change the aesthetics of the TFI.

3.3.9.3 Proposed Environmental Measures

FirstLight is not proposing any measures to enhance aesthetic resources. Although FirstLight is proposing to use more the Upper Reservoir storage capacity, aesthetics are not expected to be affected.

3.3.9.4 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No unavoidable adverse impacts are expected on aesthetic resources.



Legend

- Scenic Viewpoints
- Project Boundary
- Connecticut River National Scenic Byway
- Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway
- Metacomet-Monadnock Trail
- Connecticut River Water Trail
- MA-Designated Scenic Landscapes

FirstLight GDF SUEZ

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Figure 3.3.9.1.1-1
Aesthetic Resources
in the Project Vicinity

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Figure 3.3.9.1.2-1: View of Northfield Mountain Reservoir from Crag Mountain

Figure 3.3.9.1.2-2: French King Bridge over Turners Falls Impoundment

Figure 3.3.9.1.2-3: Aerial View of Turners Falls Dam Area, Looking Upstream

3.3.10 Socioeconomic Conditions

3.3.10.1 Affected Environment

3.3.10.1.1 Population Patterns

The Pioneer Valley region encompasses 43 cities and towns in the Connecticut River Valley in western Massachusetts. An estimated 608,000 people live in the nearly 1,200-square-mile region, which includes the fourth largest metropolitan area in New England (Springfield). The Pioneer Valley's diverse economic base, its renowned academic institutions, and its wealth of natural resources make it a unique place to live and work. Residents live in downtown areas, suburban neighborhoods, quiet villages, historic areas, and rural homesteads. People work in downtown offices in Springfield, the region's cultural and economic center; in plants and factories in Holyoke and Chicopee, the first planned industrial communities in the nation; in academic halls in Amherst, Northampton, and South Hadley, home to venerable colleges and a flagship university; in tobacco fields in Hadley, where families have worked the land for generations; in distribution centers in Westfield, near the crossroads of two interstate highways; and in offices scattered throughout the region (PVPC, 2012).

The area immediately surrounding the Project is relatively rural in nature. Franklin County is the most rural in Massachusetts, and Greenfield is its largest municipality. Based on the results of the 2010 census (presented in Table 3.3.10.1.1-1), the estimated populations of the three counties within the Project boundary—Franklin County, MA, Cheshire County, NH, and Windham County, VT—are 71,444, 77,274, and 44,453, respectively. This translates to population densities of 99 people per square mile in Franklin County, 106 people per square mile in Cheshire County, and 56 people per square mile in Windham County. Housing densities are roughly 46, 48, and 37 units per square mile, respectively (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Table 3.3.10.1.1-2 shows that over the last decade, populations have remained relatively stable in the Project vicinity—ranging from a decline of 0.1 percent in Franklin County to an increase of 4.7 percent in Cheshire County (US Census Bureau, 2010).

The nearest major town is Greenfield, MA, which has a population of 17,610 (2010) and a town center located about 4 miles southwest of the Turners Falls Dam. Other significant population centers near the Project are shown in Table 3.3.10.1.1-3 and include Northampton (28,709 residents, 28 miles south of the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development), Amherst (37,819 residents, 17 miles south of the facilities), Holyoke (39,885 residents, 38 miles south), Springfield (152,906 residents, 48 miles south), and Hartford, CT (124,775 residents, 70 miles south). For reference, Boston is approximately 106 miles east of the Project and has about 602,609 residents (US Census Bureau, 2010).

3.3.10.1.2 Economic Patterns

Income distributions of the counties in the Project vicinity are shown in Table 3.3.10.1.2-1. Median household income in the region was lower than that for Massachusetts overall ($62,072), ranging from $47,386 in Windham County to $52,644 in Cheshire County. In 2010, 12.7% of households throughout the state earned less than $15,000; this figure was identical for Franklin County and was bracketed by Cheshire and Windham counties at 9.7% and 13.3%, respectively. Additionally, while over 29% of Massachusetts households earned more than $100,000 in 2010, only 17.2% of households in Franklin County, 17.7% in Cheshire County, and 14.5% in Windham County surpassed that amount (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Table 3.3.10.1.2-2 displays the distribution of the civilian employed population (age 16 or over) for each county and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In general, counties in the Project vicinity have a higher percentage of people employed in the natural resources, construction and maintenance sector and the production, transportation, and material moving sector than in Massachusetts overall, while less people are employed in the management, business, science, and arts sector. Additionally, unemployment rates are lower in the Project vicinity—ranging from 6.5% in Windham County, 9.7% in Cheshire County, and 10.2% for Massachusetts (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Some of the larger employers in the Project vicinity include the Greenfield Community College (300 employees in 2010), Yankee Candle in Whately (1,500 employees), Cooley Dickinson Hospital and Smith College in Northampton (1,800 and 1,000 employees, respectively), and the University of Massachusetts in Amherst (7,900 employees) (Clarke, 2011). FirstLight employs approximately 53 full-time employees at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and 12 full-time employees at the Turners Falls Development.

As summarized in Exhibit E, FirstLight pays considerable federal, state and local taxes. Based on fiscal year 2015 dollars, the local, state and federal taxes for both developments combined was $12,055,322, $827,638 and $13,793,991, respectively.

3.3.10.2 Environmental Effects

FirstLight proposed to operate the Project in the same manner in which it has been historically operated, continuing to supply low cost electricity and jobs, which benefits the socioeconomic health of the region.

3.3.10.3 Proposed Measures

Because the proposed Project would continue to have a beneficial effect on socioeconomic resources, FirstLight does not proposed any new measures related to socioeconomic resources.

3.3.10.4 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

The Project has no known unavoidable adverse effects on socioeconomic resources.

Table 3.3.10.1.1-1: Population and Housing Data in the Project Vicinity

County	Population (2010)	Housing Units (2010)	Land Area (sq. mi.)	Population Density (people/sq. mi.)	Housing Density (units/sq. mi.)
Franklin Co., MA	71,444	33,695	725	99	46
Cheshire Co., NH	77,274	34,682	729	106	48
Windham Co., VT	44,453	29,601	798	56	37

Source: (US Census Bureau, 2010)

Table 3.3.10.1.1-2: Population Trends in the Project Vicinity

County	Population (2000)	Population (2010)	Percent Change
Franklin Co., MA	71,535	71,444	-0.13%
Cheshire Co., NH	73,825	77,274	4.67%
Windham Co., VT	44,216	44,453	0.54%

Source: (US Census Bureau, 2010)

Table 3.3.10.1.1-3: Major Population Centers near the Project

Town or City	Population (2010)	Approximate Distance from Turners Falls Dam (mi)
Greenfield, MA	17,610	4
Amherst, MA	37,819	17
Brattleboro, VT	7,136	22
Northampton, MA	28,709	28
Keene, NH	23,547	36
Holyoke, MA	39,885	38
Springfield, MA	152,906	48
Hartford, CT	124,775	70
Boston, MA	602,609	106

Source: (US Census Bureau, 2010)

Table 3.3.10.1.2-1: Income Distribution for Households in the Project Vicinity

County or State	Median Household Income (2010)	Percent of Households with Incomes More than $100,000	Percent of Households with Incomes Less than $15,000
Franklin Co., MA	$50,514	17.2%	12.7%
Cheshire Co., NH	$52,644	17.7%	9.7%
Windham Co., VT	$47,386	14.5%	13.3%
Massachusetts	$62,072	29.2%	12.7%

Source: (US Census Bureau, 2010)

Table 3.3.10.1.2-2: Occupation Distribution in the Project Vicinity

County or State	Occupation					Percent Unemployed
	Management, business, science, and arts	Service	Sales and office	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	Production, transportation, and material moving	
Franklin Co., MA	37.5%	15.6%	23.3%	10.1%	13.5%	7.8%
Cheshire Co., NH	34.5%	17.3%	23.0%	9.0%	16.1%	9.7%
Windham Co., VT	39.0%	18.1%	20.2%	11.2%	11.5%	6.5%
Massachusetts	43.5%	17.4%	23.5%	6.8%	8.9%	10.2%

Source: (US Census Bureau, 2010)

3.4 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-action Alternative, the existing Project would continue to operate as it has historically operated as described in Section 2.1. The measures in the current licenses as described in Section 2.1 would continue - none of FirstLight's proposed measures or those that may be proposed by others would be required and any environmental or recreation benefits from such recommendations would not occur. The Project would continue to be of importance to recreation, generation of renewable energy, and minimization of atmospheric pollutants.

4 DEVELOPMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section analyzes the cost of continued operation and maintenance of the Project under the No Action and Proposed Alternatives. Costs are associated with the operation and maintenance of hydropower facilities, as well as the costs of providing the proposed PM&E measures. The economic analysis has been conducted using a 50-year time period.

4.1 Power and Economic Benefits of the Project

Consistent with FERC's approach to economic analysis, the value of the Project's power benefits is determined by estimating the cost of obtaining the same amount of energy and capacity using likely alternative resources available in the region. This analysis is based on current costs and does not consider future escalation of fuel prices in valuing the Project's power benefits.[50]

The Project has generation facilities associated with the Turners Falls Development—specifically Station No. 1 and Cabot Station and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development located approximately 5.2 miles upstream of the Turners Falls Dam. The first generation facility on the power canal is Station No. 1 which has a total authorized installed capacity of 5.693 MW. There are five operational horizontal Francis turbines operating under a gross head of approximately 43.7 feet and the individual turbines have maximum hydraulic capacities ranging from 140 to 560 cfs. Cabot Station is located at the downstream terminus of the power canal and has a total authorized installed capacity of 62.016 MW or approximately 10.336 MW for each of the 6 units. The vertical Francis turbines operate at a normal head of 60 feet and have a maximum total hydraulic capacity of approximately 13,728 or 2,288 cfs/unit. Under the No Action alternative the Turners Falls Development will generate an average of approximately 328,022 MWh per year (based on the period 2000-2014). For the analysis in Section 4.1.1 below, which is based on 2013 pricing data, the 2013 Turners Falls Development annual generation of 356,376 MWh was used.

The Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development contains four reversible pump/turbines operating at gross heads ranging from 753 to 824.5 feet. Three of the turbines have capacities of 291.7 MW, while the remainder has a capacity of 267.9 MW, but is currently undergoing upgrades and will have a capacity of 291.7 MW by February 2016. Historically the total station capacity was 1,080 MW, but is currently 1,143 MW and will be 1,166.8 MW after the upgrades are complete. When operating in a pumping mode, the maximum hydraulic capacity (4 pumps) is approximately 15,200 cfs (3,800 cfs/pump). Alternatively, when operating in a generation mode, the approximate maximum hydraulic capacity (4 turbines) is approximately 20,000 cfs (5,000 cfs/turbine). The licensed operating range of the upper reservoir is between 1,000.5 and 938 ft resulting in a storage capacity of 12,318 acre-feet and about 8,475 MWh of generation[51]. Under the No Action alternative the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development will generate an average of approximately 1,053,891 MWh per year while using 1,437,464 MWh per year for pumping (based on the period 2000-2009, 2011-2014). For the analysis in Section 4.1.1 below, which is based on 2013 pricing data, the 2013 Northfield Pumped Storage Development annual generation of 808,943 MWh and annual pumping 1,069,438 MWh was used.

4.1.1 Economic Assumptions

FirstLight operates the Project with the primary purpose to supply energy, capacity, regulation and other ancillary services to the ISO-NE Interconnection. In operating the Project, FirstLight ensures dam safety, provides a range of existing environmental measures and ensures capacity, peaking, reserve, and ancillary/regulation power services to the New England Power Pool. The power value at the Turners Falls

[50] Mead Corporation, Publishing Paper Division, 72 FERC ¶ 61,027 (July 13, 1995).

[51] Note that after February 2016 the FERC nameplate rating will increase to 1,166.8 MW (291.7 MW x 4 units) after the Unit 1 upgrade is completed.

Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development varies as shown in Table 4.1.1-1 due to the different timing of operation as described in more detail in Exhibit B and D.

Table 4.1.1-1: Assumptions for Economic Analysis (2013)

Assumption	Turners Falls Development	Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development	Source of Information
Average Power Value (Generation) (2013 value)	$58.185/MWh	$85.172/MWh	FirstLight
Average Power Value (Pumping) (2013 Value)	---	$40.012/MWh	FirstLight
2013 Annual Generation (MWh)	356,376 MWh	808,943 MWh	FirstLight
2013 Annual Energy for Pumping (MWh)	---	1,069,438 MWh	FirstLight
Period of Analysis	50 years	50 years	---
Net Investment (book value)	$284,970,827	$926,156,091	FirstLight
Capacity Value (67.709 MW) (2013 value)	$2,214,660	---	FirstLight
Capacity Value (1143 MW) [1] (2013 value)	---	$35,520,940	FirstLight
Locational Forward Reserve Market and Real-Time Reserves	---	$14,931,318	FirstLight
Reserve	$77,441	---	FirstLight
Ancillary Service (2013 value)	($112,592)[2]	$1,670,097	FirstLight

[1]Note that after February 2016, the FERC nameplate rating will increase to 1,166.8 MW (291.7 MW x 4 units)
[2]Ancillary includes Utility charges for electric production.

4.1.2 Annual Power Value

Table 4.1.2-1 shows the total valuation of power for the No-Action and Proposed Alternatives. For both scenarios, this assumes a 2013 annual generation of 356,376 MWh at the Turners Falls Development, 808,943 MWh at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development and 1,069,438 MWh used in pumping at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development.

Table 4.1.2-1: Valuation of the Annual Output of the Turners Falls Development and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development (2013)

	Turners Falls Development		Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development		Total	
	No Action	Proposed	No Action	Proposed	No Action	Proposed
Energy Generated at $85.172/MWh (for 808,943 MWh)	--	--	$68,899,098	$68,899,098	$68,899,098	$68,899,098
Energy for Pumping at $40.012/MWh (for 1,069,438 MWh)	--	--	($42,790,965)	($42,790,965)	($42,790,965)	($42,790,965)
Energy Generated at $58.185 (for 356,376 MWh)	$20,735,750	$20,735,750	--	--	$20,735,750	$20,735,750
Capacity Value	--	--	$35,520,940	$35,520,940	$35,520,940	$35,520,940
Capacity Value	$2,214,660	$2,214,660	--	--	$2,214,660	$2,214,660
Locational Forward Reserve Market and	--	--	$14,931,318	$14,931,318	$14,931,318	$14,931,318

	Turners Falls Development		Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development		Total	
	No Action	Proposed	No Action	Proposed	No Action	Proposed
Real-Time Reserves						
Reserve	$77,441	$77,441			$77,441	$77,441
Ancillary Service	($112,592)	($112,592)	$ 1,670,097	$ 1,670,097	$ 1,557,505	$ 1,557,505
Regulation			$3,561,234	$3,561,234	$3,561,234	$3,561,234
Total Value (Energy + Capacity Value +Reserve + Ancillary + Regulation)	$22,915,259	$22,915,259	$81,791,722	$81,791,722	$104,706,981	$104,706,981
Total value per MWh	$64.30	$64.30	$101.11	$101.11	$89.85	$89.85

NOTE: Numbers may not be exact due to rounding.

4.1.3 Project Costs under the No-Action Alternative

The total annualized current costs for the Project No-Action Alternative is $94,370,566 (Table 4.1.3-1).

Table 4.1.3-1: Summary of Current Annual Costs and Future Costs under the No-Action Alternative (2013)

Items	Annual Cost		
	Turners Falls Development	Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development	Total
Capital Costs[52]	$1,901,763	$15,308,478	$17,210,241
Local, State and Federal Taxes[53]	$6,533,061	$20,143,890	$26,676,951
Annual Depreciation and Amortization Expense[54]	$6,771,000	$28,957,000	$35,728,000
Operation and Maintenance Expenses[55]	$3,731,591	$11,023,783	$14,755,374
Total	$18,937,415	$75,433,151	$94,370,566

4.1.4 Project Costs under the Proposed Alternative

At this time, FirstLight is not proposing environmental measures as many studies are incomplete or have not been started. Thus, at this time, FirstLight has not included costs associated with added capital costs, or additional operation and maintenance costs for the Project.

4.2 Comparison of Alternatives

4.2.1 No-Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would continue to operate as it does now. In 2013, the Project generated 1,165,319 MWh (356,376 MWh at Turners Falls Development + 809,943 at Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development) and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development used 1,069,438 MWh. The 2013 power value of the Project (Table 4.2.2-1) under the no-action alternative would be $104,706,981 ($89.85/MWh). The 2013 cost of producing this power including depreciation, operation and maintenance costs, and taxes would be approximately $94,370,566 ($80.98/MWh). The 2013 net benefit of the Project would be approximately $10,336,415 ($8.87/MWh).

[52] As described in Exhibit D, Section 4.1.
[53] As described in Exhibit D, Section 4.2.
[54] As described in Exhibit D, Section 4.3.
[55] As described in Exhibit D, Section 4.4.

4.2.2 Proposed Alternative

Under the Proposed Alternative, the range of operation at the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development's Upper Reservoir would be increased from the current range of 938 and 1000.5 feet to 920 and 1004.5 feet for a total range of 84.5 feet. This added range of operation would result in an increased storage capacity of 3,009 acre-feet resulting in a total of 15,327 acre-feet of storage and an added generation capacity of 1,990 MWh. However, at the time of filing of this Draft License Application, not all of the FirstLight studies are complete. Therefore FirstLight has not finalized its proposed operation of the Project and is not proposing other operational changes or other PMEs.

Historically, FirstLight has been granted temporary license amendments to operate the Upper Reservoir at its proposed range several times in the past 15 years, most recently between December 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015. A license amendment application with a similar range of operation (December 1 to March 31) for the Upper Reservoir is also currently pending with FERC for the remainder of the license. Based on historical information, including the most recent license amendment period, pumping and generation values did not substantially change with a higher amount of storage in the Upper Reservoir. In general, the most substantial change was an increase in the reserve storage in the Upper Reservoir that could be used during emergencies associated with grid instabilities in the Northeast. While additional generation could occur based on the expanded range of storage at the Upper Reservoir, this has not historically occurred or was very limited and therefore no substantial changes in the proposed alternative are expected. Under the proposed alternative, the generation would remain at 1,165,319 MWh and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development would use 1,069,438 MWh. The 2013 power value of the Project (Table 4.2.2-1) under the proposed alternative would be $104,706,981 ($89.85/MWh). The 2013 cost of producing this power including depreciation, operation and maintenance costs, and taxes would be approximately $94,370,566 ($80.98/MWh). The 2013 net benefit of the Project would be approximately $10,336,415 ($8.87/MWh).

Table 4.2.2-1: Comparison of the Power Value, Annual Costs, and Net Benefits of the No Action and Proposed Alternatives (2013)

	No-Action Alternative			Proposed Alternative		
	Turners Falls Development	Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development	Total	Turners Falls Development	Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Development	Total
Annual Generation (MWh)	356,376	808,943	1,165,319	356,376	808,943	1,165,319
Annual Power Value:						
$ per year	$22,915,259	$81,791,722	$104,706,981	$22,915,259	$81,791,722	$104,709,981
$/MWh	$64.30	$101.11	$89.85	$64.30	$101.11	$89.85
Annual Costs:						
$ per year	$18,937,415	$75,433,151	$94,370,566	$18,937,415	$75,433,151	$94,370,566
$/MWh	$53.14	$93.25	$80.98	$53.14	$93.25	$80.98
Annual Net Benefits:						
$ per year	$3,977,844	$6,358,571	$10,336,415	$3,977,844	$6,358,571	$10,336,415
$/MWh	$11.16	$7.86	$8.87	$11.16	$7.86	$8.87

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Comparison of Alternatives

This section will compare the developmental and non-developmental effects of FirstLight's proposed Project and the No-Action Alternative when FirstLight's proposal for relicensing the Project is further developed.

5.2 Comparison of Development and Recommended Alternative

[This section will be completed by FERC in its DEIS.]

5.3 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

[This section will be completed by FERC in its DEIS.]

5.4 Consistency with Comprehensive Plans

Section 10(a) (2) of the FPA requires the Applicant to review applicable federal and state comprehensive plans, and to consider the extent to which a Project is consistent with the federal or state plans for improving, developing, or conserving a waterway or waterways affected by the Project. A list of existing FERC-approved State of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont and federal comprehensive plans was provided in FERC's Scoping Document 2, issued April 15, 2013. This list of plans is consistent with FERC's latest list of approved plans, issued December 2014. Of those listed, the Applicant identified and reviewed 23 plans. Of these, the following plans are pertinent to the Project. No inconsistencies were found.

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<u>New Hampshire</u>

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6 CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION

Throughout the ILP, FirstLight has engaged in substantive consultation with relicensing participants, and have filed all licensing materials with FERC. Names and addresses for federal, state, and interstate resource agencies, Indian tribes, or members of the public with which FirstLight has consulted during relicensing, and a comprehensive summary of all consultation activities between filing of the PSP on April 15, 2013 and submittal of the FLA will be included with the FLA.

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8 ATTACHMENT A: LETTER FROM MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800, Boston, MA 02114-2136
(617) 626-1200 FAX: (617) 626-1240

June 9, 2015

John S. Howard
Director FERC Compliance, Hydro
FirstLight Power Resources, Inc.
99 Millers Falls Road
Northfield, MA 01360

RE: Federal Consistency Certification: Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1889) and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (FERC No. 2485).

Dear Mr. Howard:

The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has completed its review of the information provided in your April 27, 2015 letter regarding relicensing of the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1889) and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (FERC No. 2485) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. These activities are located in the towns of Greenfield, Montague, Gill, Northfield, and Erving MA.

The activities associated with this project fall outside the geographical boundaries of the Massachusetts Coastal Zone as delineated in *Chapter 5: Massachusetts Coastal Regions and An Atlas of Resources, 1 June 1977* and further described in the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Plan. Therefore, these activities are not subject to federal consistency review by this office.

Thank you for submitting the information to CZM. If you have any questions regarding our review process, feel free to call me at (617) 626-1050.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Boeri

Robert L. Boeri
Project Review Coordinator