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As a native Connecticutian, I've always appreciated my state's namesake river no matter which state it's coursing through. So, please allow me to comment on the Quebec Hydro FERC renewal.

Being a newcomer to the area, I was genuinely amazed at how inaccessible the Connecticut River was to passive recreation, whether it be hiking, birding, or boating. Starting in Brattleboro, it wasn't until Walpole that we saw access appropriate for us. Mostly it was weird and creepy stretches of old industry blended with new, abandoned this and that, amid eroded and/or overgrown shoreline, with suspicious pockets of possible cyanobacteria here and there.

Historically, culturally, environmentally and geographically, the Connecticut River is of the highest importance to a broad swath of wildlife and humanity.

Because the River is integral to so many lives, there's much you could and should do.

FERC-regulated rivers in Connecticut abound with fish ladders, boat launches and portage opportunities. Smaller CT watersheds have nature sanctuaries/observatories established in critical areas both protecting the ecosystem as well as bringing the community together and closer to nature. At one CT dam there is a Bald Eagle observatory - operated in coordination with state biologists and Audubon. School trips from all over southern New England come to view Eagles soaring in the thermals over unfrozen, dammed river water brimming with fish in the dead of winter.

Other CT rivers have stream level gauges installed which municipalities and organizations use to track real time water levels and flow. With that knowledge they can act accordingly and advise the public how to behave when dealing with flooding or drought effects on the river. The data can be used in a myriad of ways. Additionally websites can feature that info live for public consumption - particularly landowners and river enthusiasts.

Thank you for hearing my concerns about the Connecticut River with respect to best management practices for the environment as well as public benefit. I urge you to adopt the many specific remedies assembled by the Connecticut River Conservancy. Their detailed, thorough work holds important answers for the future of the River that a wide consortium of the public urge you to implement.

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