

White River Partnership (WRP) – 2021 White River Water Trail Recap

2021 was another great year for the White River Water Trail. WRP saw increased use throughout the watershed with much of the recreating occurring at water trail sites!

In many ways, the WRWT was developed as a “spur” trail to the Connecticut River Paddlers’ Trail, over the years though, the WRWT has grown to be a unique and amazing resource for people recreating in the White River watershed. The WRWT comprises of over 40 river access sites across the White River watershed. The White River Partnership is working to create broad access to WRWT sites across the watershed. This work includes creating increased opportunities to access the White River and making sure our WRWT sites have proper signage, parking, and safe access to the river. In recent years, WRP has created a map of the sites on the WRWT and launched a seasonal volunteer based stewardship program. Our stewardship activities have grown and we are excited to share some of the highlights of our 2021 season with you all!



WRP Volunteers in Stockbridge Vermont load their truck before disposing Green Up Day trash

WRP kicked off the stewardship season with our “Green Up the White” event. On Vermont’s Green Up Day (May 1, 2021), WRP coordinated volunteers to visit river access sites across the watershed as well as roadways along the White River. Our volunteers spread out over the White and collected trash to be disposed of at town coordinated Green Up Day drop off locations. This event allowed WRP to get a head start on cleaning up our sites before a heavy season of use!

After our “Green Up the White” event, WRP launched into our seasonal stewardship program that includes over 20 volunteers who visit sites across the White River. Each volunteer pledges to visit their adopted site at least once a month to collect trash and report back any issues. These volunteers are the heart of our stewardship program and help to keep our most popular access sites clean. WRP is always looking for new stewards to adopt a site along the White River, if you interested in stewarding a site please visit our website: <https://whiteriverpartnership.org/water-trail-sites/> to see available sites and contact our Program Coordinator Christian Pelletier (christian@whiteriverpartnership.org) with any questions or to sign up!

This year was WRP’s 25th Anniversary, as part of celebrating 25 years of serving the White River watershed, we wanted to address some larger stewardship related projects. We decided to tackle removing as many tires as we could from the White River and to remove some of the large scale trash dumps that volunteers identified across the watershed. WRP was able to collect over 225 tires from the White



Some of WRP's youngest volunteers are shocked at all the trash they removed during the "Green Up the White" Event



Tires collected during an event with the Tunbridge Conservation Commission

River from May to September. WRP hosted events in conjunction with the Tunbridge Conservation Commission, local volunteers in Stockbridge, and with multiple other volunteers to collect these tires which constituted 6,000 pounds of rubber removed from the watershed! Another

highlight event of the stewardship season was a 3 day clean up that 25 juniors and seniors from the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center participated in which resulted in over 1,500 lbs. of trash, metal, and tires being removed from the banks of the White River in Hartford, VT. In addition to this event, WRP partnered with workers from LTK Hatch, the Randolph Rotary, member of the Greater Upper Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Cub Scout Pack 202 to collect an additional 1,000 pounds of trash from the White River.



Students from the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center proudly pose with the trash they removed from one of the steepest banks in the watershed!

WRP also had the chance to implement a large scale recreation improvement project this summer at a river access site in Stockbridge, Vermont. The site in the village of Gaysville is a popular local destination for swimming, tubing, fishing, and spending time along the river. The Gaysville River Access property underwent the FEMA buyout process and ever since a committed group of local volunteers have been working to sustainably develop the site. WRP was awarded a grant through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) by Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation to create a river access trail, stone steps to the river, and a parking lot at the site. These improvements were implemented in the Fall of 2021 with Hermit Woods Trail Builders doing an amazing job bringing the town's vision to life! These improvements represent the first steps in development at the site to meet the town's vision for the property, next season will see informational signage created at the site.



The stair case and trail created by Hermit Woods Trail Builders at the Gaysville River Access Site

Our stewardship season wrapped up on September 11, 2021 with our end of season trash collection event in conjunction with the Connecticut River Conservancy's Source to Sea Clean Up. Volunteers came out to collect trash, enjoy some snacks and refreshments, and pick up their volunteer stewardship shirts! This event is a great way to make sure our WRWT sites ended the season on a high note and were largely clear of trash before they are covered in snow! WRP staff and board members, local volunteers, site stewards, and a large group from Vermont Law School joined together to remove hundreds of more pounds of trash from the White River. Overall WRP is proud to report that our stewardship efforts removed over 10,000 lbs. of trash from the White River in 2021!

This year also included lots of planning for the future! Multiple projects are under way in Sharon and Bethel, VT and lessons learned over the past few years of stewardship are being applied to our program to keep improving river access across our watershed and the state. The White River Partnership is happy to share any tips and tricks we have learned and always appreciates hearing from partners! If you have any questions or want to connect with WRP please reach out to us (christian@whiteriverpartnership.org)! But most importantly, please come and enjoy the WRWT and all the beauty of the White River!



Is there anything better than a perfect day on the White?!