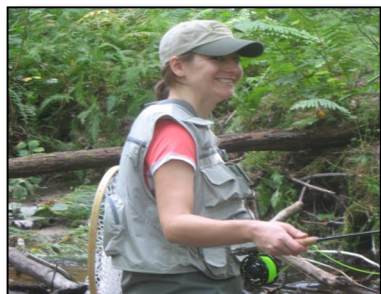


FRIENDS OF THE WINOOSKI RIVER

Winooski River Watershed Public Access Inventory and Assessment



Prepared for



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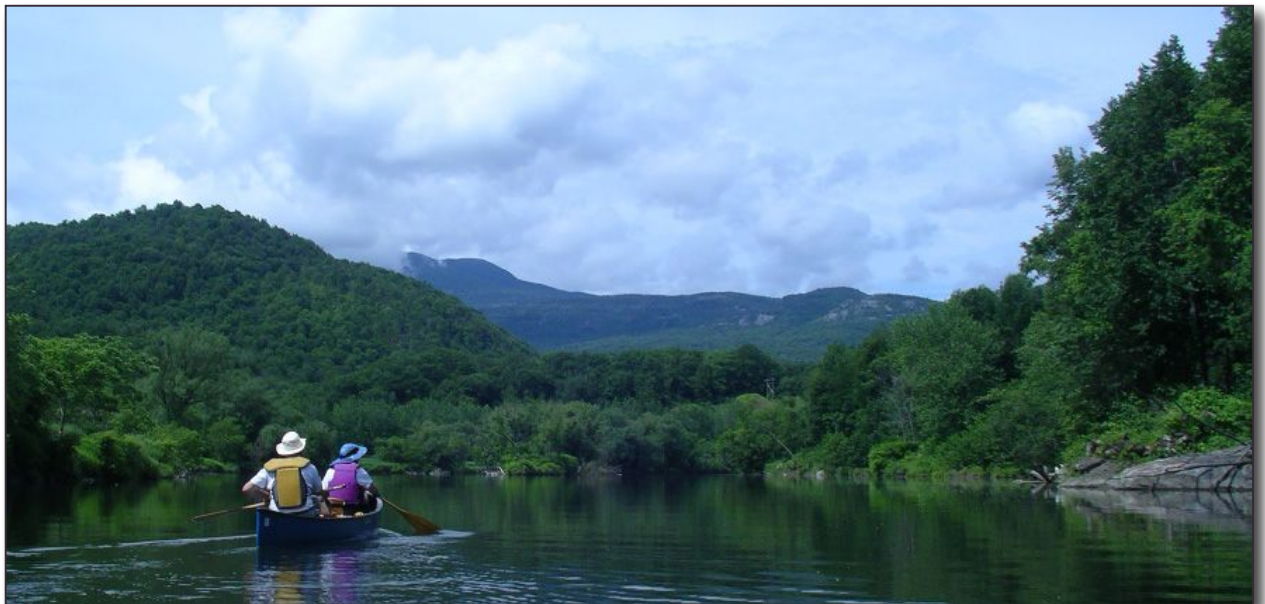
April 11th, 2012



*Funding provided by the Vermont Watershed
Grants program*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Report Background.....	3
Study Goals	3
Study Methodology	3
Access Point Inventory, Gap Analysis, and Stewardship Needs	5
Winooski River: Overview	5
Winooski River: Marshfield To Plainfield.....	5
Winooski River: Plainfield to Montpelier	7
Winooski River: Waterbury to Jonesville	9
Winooski River: Jonesville to North Williston.....	11
Winooski River: North Williston To Winooski	11
Winooski River: Winooski To Lake Champlain	13
The Mad River: Overview	14
Mad River: Warren to Waitsfield.....	14
Mad River: Waitsfield To Moretown.....	15
Mad River: Moretown to the Winooski River.....	17
Little River	18
Huntington River.....	20
Dog River	21
North Branch of the Winooski	23
Jail Branch.....	25
Priority Projects, Partner Organizations, And Next Steps	26
Priority Projects	26
Partner Organizations	26
Appendix A: Access Point Inventory And Assessment Metrics	29



Introduction

Report Background

The Winooski River watershed provides ample opportunities for recreation. Yet despite a growing interest, significant sections of the main stem and its primary tributaries have insufficient adequate public access. Instead, paddlers and fisherman rely largely on informal access points lacking long-term protection or the infrastructure necessary to ensure safety, accessibility, and to minimize damage to the environment. Furthermore, in many cases portage trails around dams and rapids have not been developed or are in need of revitalization.

Since 1998, the Friends of the Winooski River has been dedicated to protecting and restoring the watershed by reducing pollution, improving habitat, increasing river stability and encouraging passive and sustainable enjoyment of the river. It is now undertaking an initiative to improve public access within the watershed. This inventory and needs assessment serve as the initial step in this process.

Study Goals

This study builds upon previous efforts completed by the Friends of the Winooski to develop a Paddling and History Guide for the Winooski River and to lead annual river trips. It incorporates new field research, analysis, and insights gleaned from two focus group meetings of river enthusiasts. Its goals are to:

- ▶ **Develop a GIS database** of existing and potential access points and portage trails, containing information on ownership, site history, geographic location, and stewardship needs;
- ▶ **Assess site conditions** at access points;
- ▶ **Conduct a gap and stewardship priorities analysis** using data compiled in the GIS database, insights from focus group meetings, and field visits;
- ▶ **Identify partners** which could be engaged in a collaborative effort to improve access and provide recommended next steps to guide future actions.

Study Scope

This study focuses on the main stem of the Winooski River and its major navigable tributaries: the Mad River, the Little River, the North Branch of the Winooski, the Jail Branch, the Huntington River, and the Dog River.

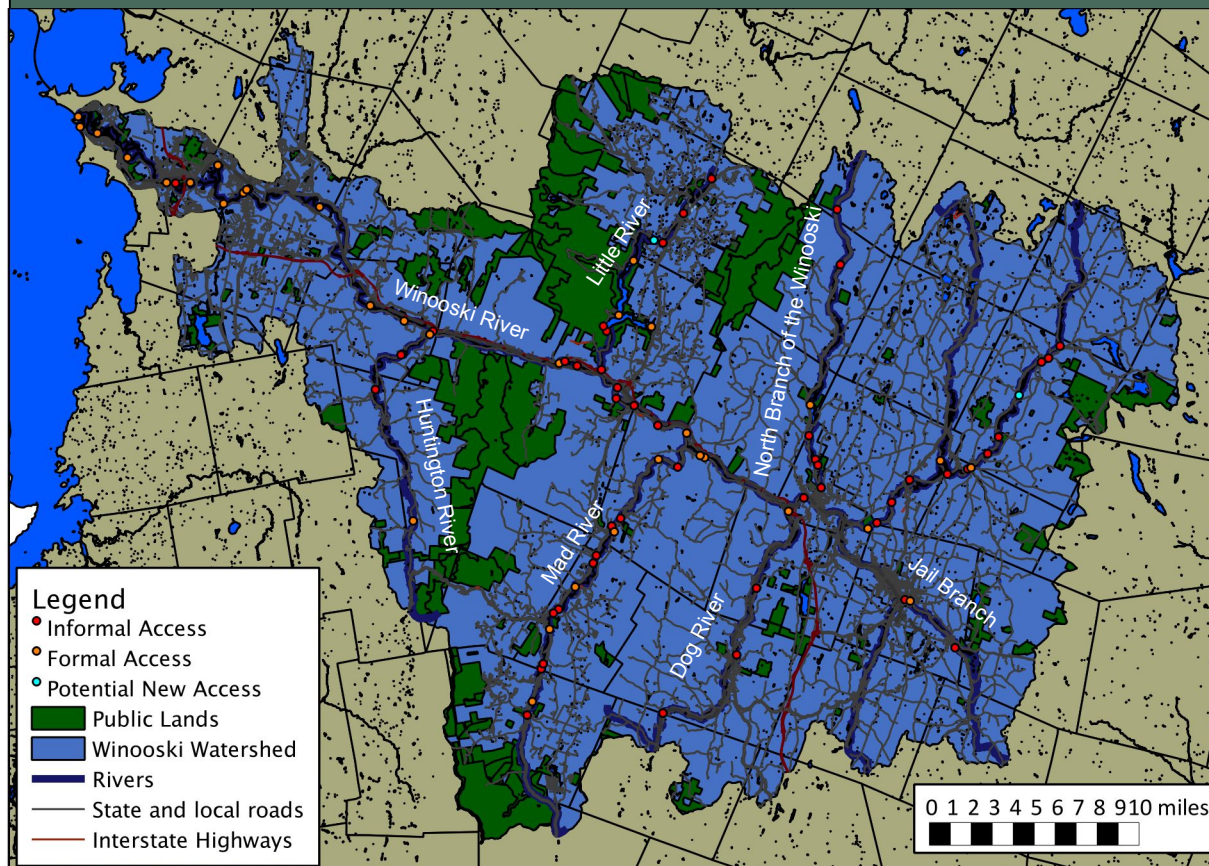
As a wide range of users frequent these waterways, completing a comprehensive public access inventory and assessment for all user groups was beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, this project primarily addresses the public access needs for flat-water paddlers, with whitewater paddlers and bank/wading fishermen identified as secondary user groups.

In this assessment, river access points were classified as one of three types:

- ▶ **Formal Access:** Access on public land (or private land protected with a public access easement) where water-access has been intentionally developed;

- **Informal Access:** Locations where paddlers and fishermen access the river in unimproved locations, often on private land, near bridge abutments, or by dry hydrants;
- **Potential Access:** Locations not currently used by paddlers, but which could potentially be developed to address access gaps.

FIGURE 1: WINOOSKI RIVER WATERSHED OVERVIEW



Access Point Inventory, Gap Analysis, and Stewardship Needs

Winooski River: Overview

The Winooski River flows for over eighty miles from its headwaters near Cabot to its outlet on Lake Champlain. It offers a wide variety of paddling experiences, from spring outings on the winding upper reaches, to tranquil year round paddling through floodplain forests and productive farmlands in its lower stretches.

Winooski River: Marshfield To Plainfield (11 miles)

The headwaters of the Winooski River is a narrow channel that traverses the rolling hills of eastern Washington county. Access has not been formally developed in this stretch of the river. While whitewater kayakers can potentially put in at the **Marshfield Hydroelectric Facility**, most open boats seek to launch from the village. Access is possible via the fields at **School Street Commons**, where ample parking is available, but steep banks and the lack of eddies make launching somewhat challenging.

The seven mile stretch between Marshfield and the Twinfield Access is one of the longest gaps in access to the river. It may be possible to develop an access near the **Blackthorne Forge**. Designated parking would be necessary to avoid the risk of paddlers blocking a dry hydrant. In addition, steep banks would require a set of timber or rock stairs.

The **Twinfield Access**, also a location of a dry hydrant, has steep banks that could benefit from a set of rock stairs. Adequate parking is available nearby. One mile downstream is the site of **Martin's Bridge Park**. While no formal boat launch facilities have been developed at this site, it is a good candidate for improvements. The best location for a launch area is immediately upstream of the bridge, on river right. The installation of a rock or timber stairs is recommended.

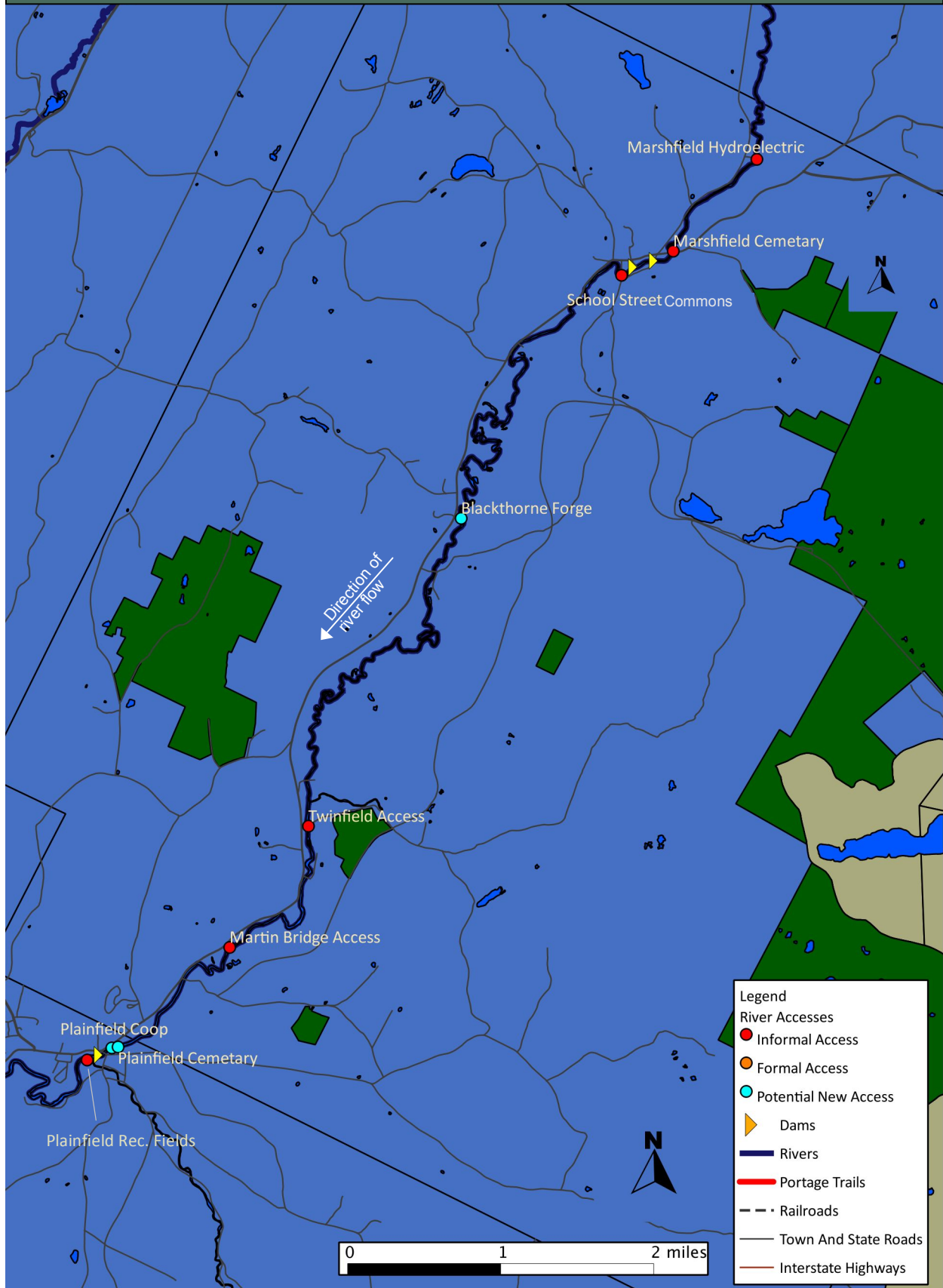
Exiting the river is mandatory in Plainfield due to the presence of a dam. However, no take-out or portage trail has been developed. There are several potential locations for establishing an access, including on property owned by

the **Plainfield Co-op** (Figure 2) or town-owned property adjacent to the **Plainfield Cemetery**. Due to steep banks, a seasonally removed timber ladder or set of timber-cribbed stairs would be necessary at either location. In addition, a signed portage route through town, terminating at the Plainfield Recreation Fields access, would aid paddlers seeking to carry on downstream.

FIG. 2: PLAINFIELD CO-OP POTENTIAL ACCESS



FIGURE 3: THE WINOOSKI RIVER (MARSHFIELD TO PLAINFIELD)



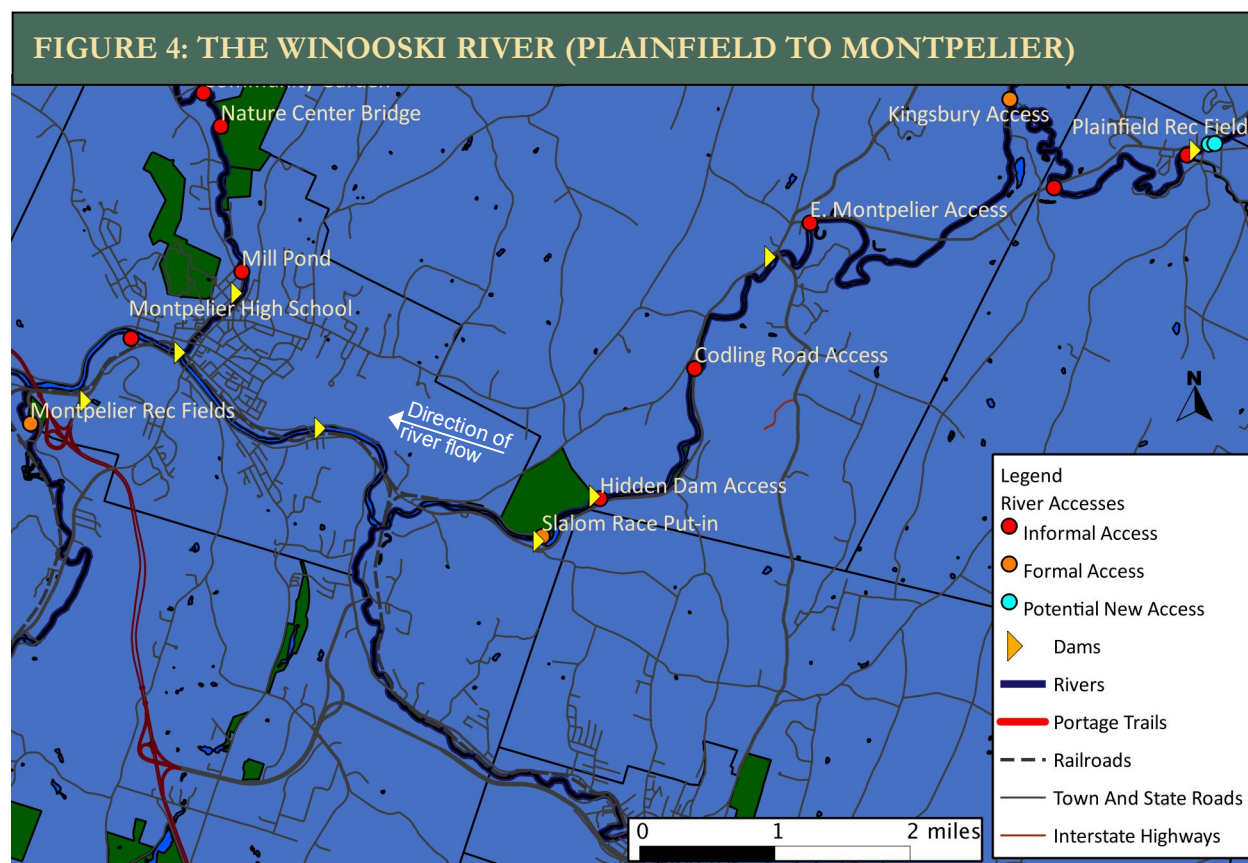
Winooski River: Plainfield to Montpelier (15 miles)

Below the dam in Plainfield, access is possible at the **Plainfield Recreation Fields**. It is a 200 foot walk across a field to a point near the mouth of Great Brook, where a gravel bar provides easy launching. Access is also possible 1.75 miles downstream at the **Route 2 Bridge**. The ownership of this popular launch site, which has a large parking area, is unknown. 1.8 miles below this site is the **Kingsbury Access**, established by the Vermont River Conservancy. It is located on the Kingsbury Branch, just upstream of the confluence with the Main Stem.

In East Montpelier, the **East Montpelier Access** is an informal and inadequate launch point where a steep trail descends to a small muddy beach. Down river, better access is possible at an informal launch point near **Codling Road**.

While not developed, the **Hidden Dam**, on land owned by Vermont Fish and Wildlife, has been identified as a priority location for establishing a formal access and is a popular fishing spot. It would benefit from a designated parking area, access trail, and portage trail. Establishing access at this location would allow flat-water paddlers to avoid the Class II rapids that follow, as well as improve accessibility for area fishermen. The Cross Vermont Trail Association also seeks to develop a walking and cycling trail here.

Further downstream, a portage trail (“**The Slalom Race Put-in**”) has been developed around a hydroelectric facility east of Montpelier. However, there is no easy place to exit the river before the partly breached “Montpelier No. 3” or the “Bailey” dams near downtown. Further reconnaissance is necessary to determine a potential portage route for through paddlers.



Winooski River: Montpelier to Waterbury (13.1 miles)

The Winooski widens past Montpelier, with several ledges requiring attention. This section features the picturesque Middlesex Gorge, as well as Class II Hugo and Junkyard Rapids.

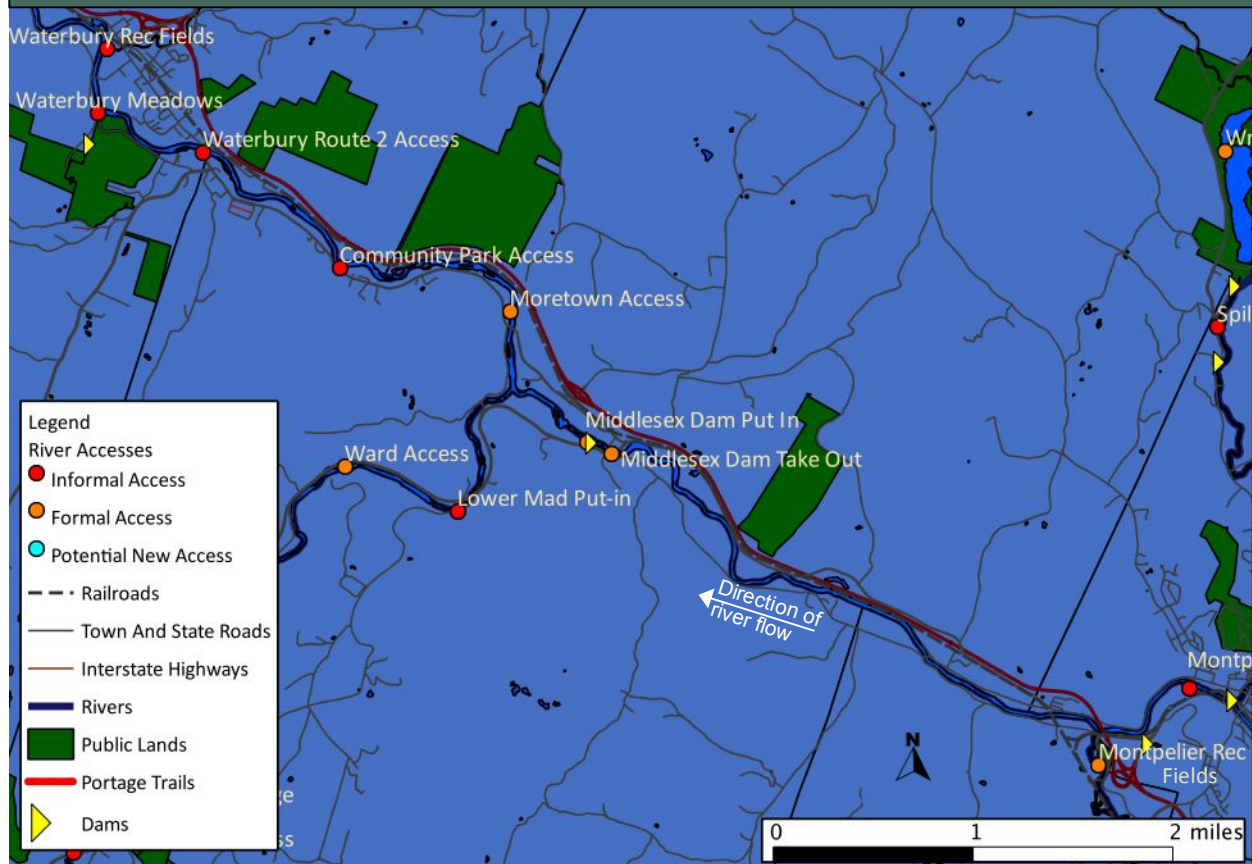
Paddlers seeking a short trip can take out 6.2 miles below Montpelier at the **Middlesex Dam Takeout (Figure 5)**. The trail up to Rt. 100B is well marked but steep and in need of erosion control measures, such as stone stairs and check-dams. The **Middlesex Dam Put-in**, which also serves as the second half of the portage, has adequate parking, is well marked and is in better condition than the take-out.

The Vermont River Conservancy helped conserve and develop the **Moretown Access**, situated just below the confluence with the Mad River. Informal access is possible at the **Community Park**, a small picnic area close to Majestic Auto outside of Waterbury. However, banks are very steep and subject to erosion. While no formal access has been developed in Waterbury, paddlers often exit the river near the Route 2 bridge (**Waterbury Route 2 Access**) and at the **Waterbury Recreation Fields** near the mouth of Thatcher Brook.

FIGURE 5: MIDDLESEX DAM TAKE-OUT



FIGURE 6: THE WINOOSKI RIVER (MONTPELIER TO WATERBURY)



Winooski River: Waterbury to Jonesville (10 miles)

A steady current flows through this section of the river, which is primarily flat-water as it passes through a cut in the Green Mountains.

While access is adequate via the Waterbury Recreation fields or adjacent to the Route 2 bridge, paddlers seeking to explore this section have limited places to take out (Figure 8). There is a need for a better take-out for paddlers seeking to end their trip in the vicinity of the Bolton Dam. Umiak outfitters has developed special arrangements with a local landowner to retrieve customers (**Umiak Access**). This access may be worth further developing or protecting. Otherwise, paddlers can exit via the **Bolton Dam Portage Trail**, three miles below Waterbury, either by following the designated portage trail over a rise and down to a formal recreation area, or walking along a gated road out to River Road. The portage trail (Figure 7 inset map), which has several steep grades, is in need of revitalization. An active rail line that follows the south side of the river in this corridor creates a significant barrier to formalizing access on the south side of the river in this stretch.

For those seeking to put-in below the dam, formal access (**The Bolton Dam Access**) has been developed in an official recreational area managed by Green Mountain Power. Downstream, a bridge in Jonesville marks the spot of an informal takeout at **Bombadier Meadow**, a property recently conserved by the Richmond Land Trust. Protected in part because of the boating access, it is an excellent site to improve by adding parking, signage, and regrading the river access trail.

FIGURE 7: THE WINOOSKI RIVER (WATERBURY TO JONESVILLE)

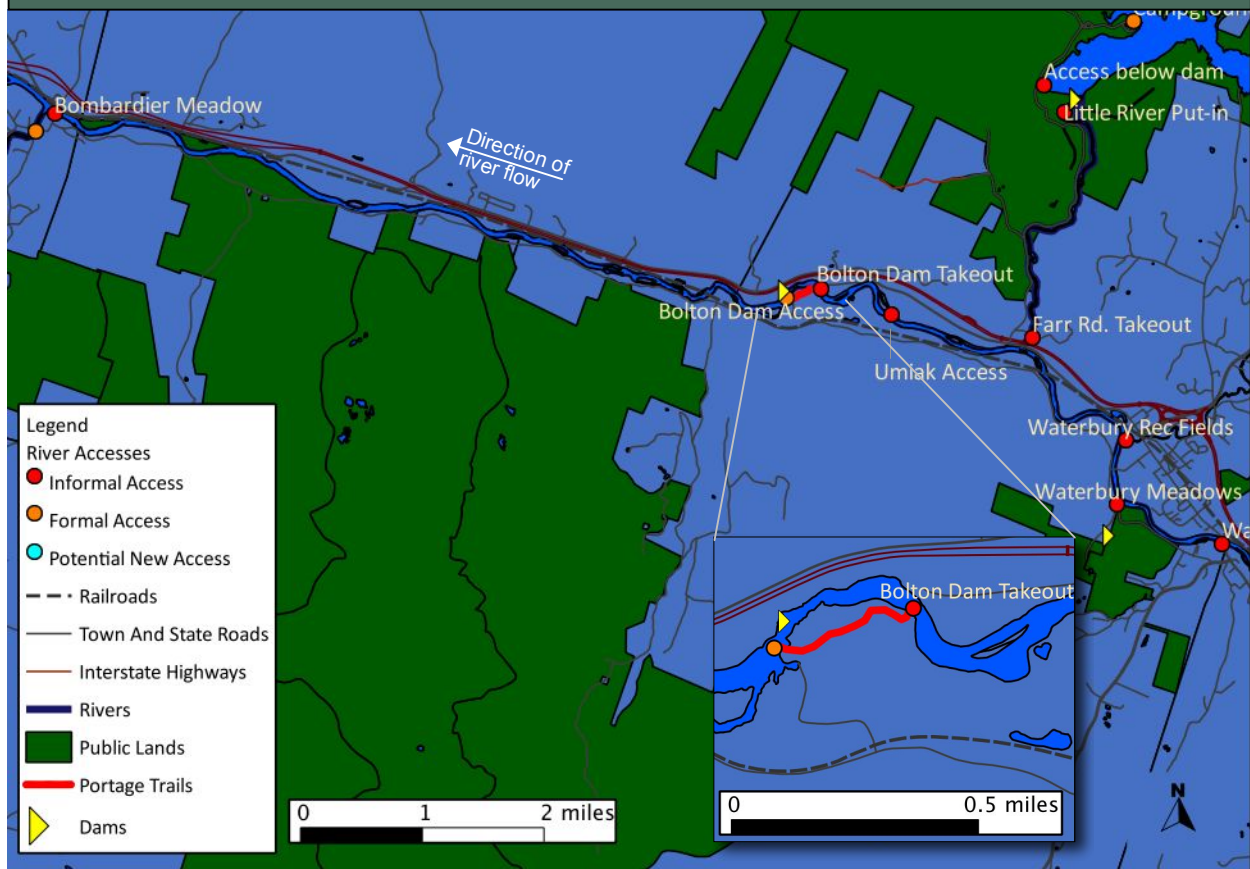


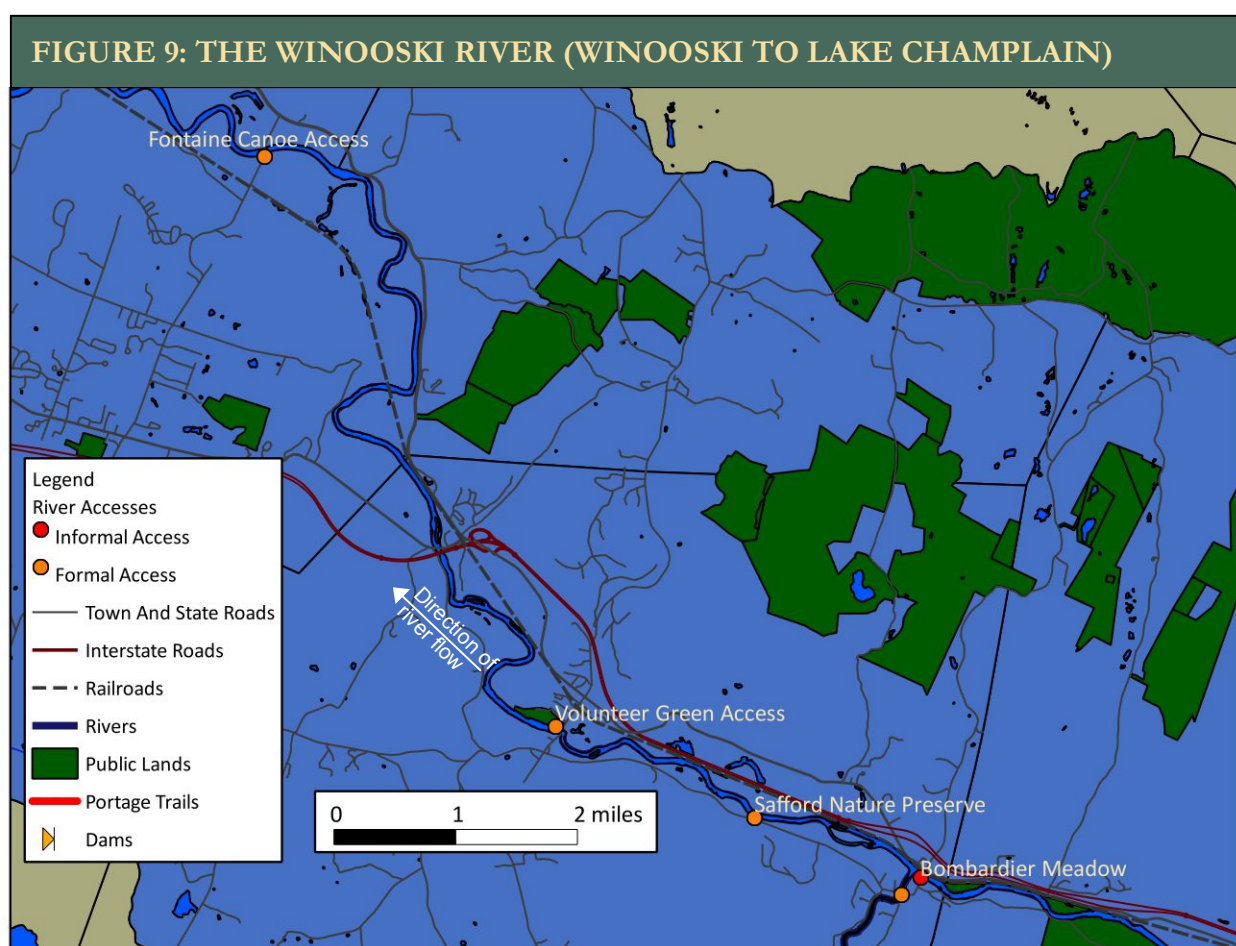
FIGURE 8: BOLTON DAM TAKE-OUT



Winooski River: Jonesville to North Williston (11.2 miles)

The Winooski River winds through wetlands, farmland and woodlands in this tranquil section, well suited for families and beginning paddlers.

In addition to the **Bombardier Meadow** access in Jonesville, there are several formal access points in Richmond. The **Safford Nature Preserve**, a floodplain forest protected by the Richmond Land Trust, has good parking and easy access to the river. As it is somewhat difficult to spot, signage for paddlers seeking to exit here would be beneficial. Paddlers can also access the river via the **Volunteer Green Access** in Richmond. Due to steep banks on some locations on this parcel, signage would help direct paddlers to the best location for launching. 7.7 miles below Richmond is the formal **Fontaine Canoe Access** owned by the Town of Williston. Here, parking, the access trail, and signage is all sufficient.



Winooski River: North Williston To Winooski (13.3 miles)

The Winooski begins passing through urban and suburban areas in this section of the river, where dams create the largest obstacles for paddlers. Five miles below the Fontaine Access is **the Green Mountain Power Essex Impoundment Access**, situated above the Essex Dam. This formal takeout has a gradual grade and ample parking but could use better signage from the water. Those seeking to portage the dam take out slightly downstream and follow a formal portage route, developed by the Vermont Conservation Corps in 1998. This trail is in need of rehabilitation. In

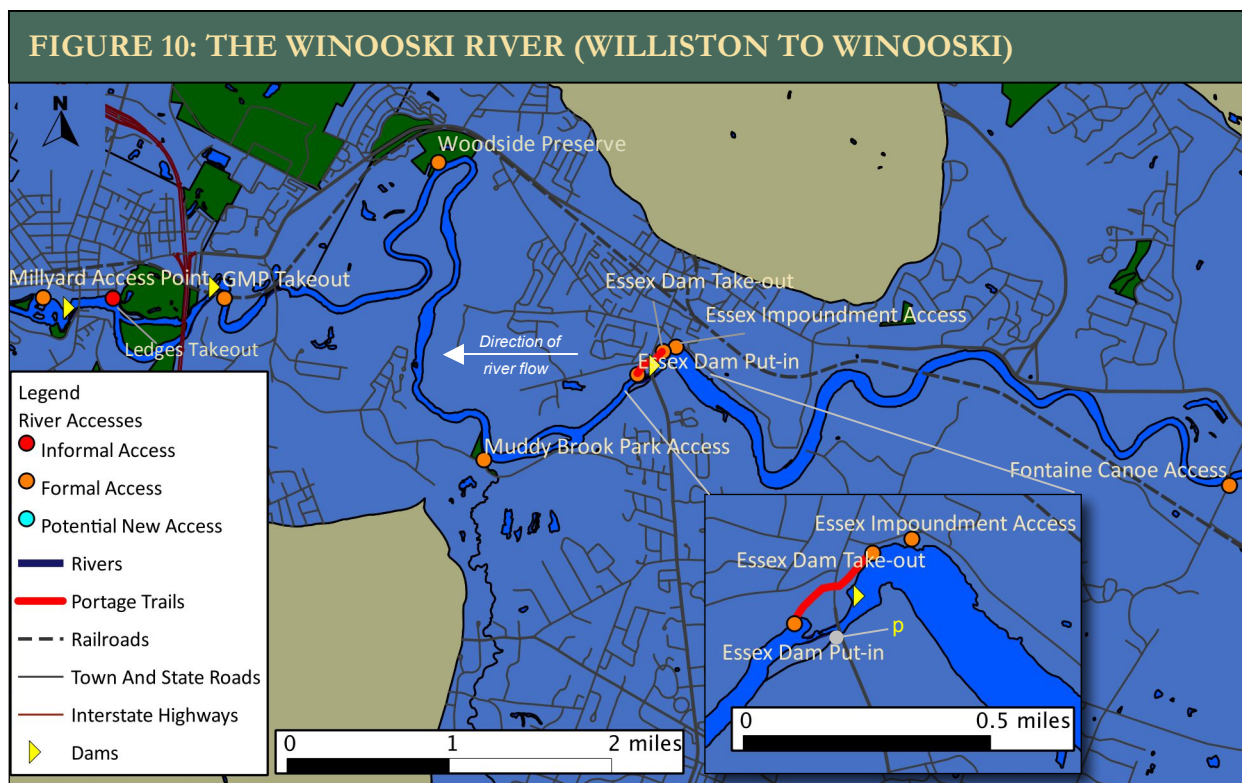
particular, exiting the river requires scrambling onto a steep ledge. The trail would benefit from some additional stairs and side-hilling.

Paddlers seeking to put in below the dam can do so at **the Essex Dam Put-in**. This launch is less than ideal as the access road is gated at 3:00 PM each day, requiring afternoon paddlers to park across the bridge at Overlook Park.

There are two formal access points between Essex and Winooski, both developed by the Winooski Valley Park District. The **Muddy Brook Park Access** allows paddlers to avoid rapids below the Essex power station, and has adequate parking and provides easy access. The **Woodside Nature Preserve** is also a formal river access. A 0.2 mile walk leads to a short but steep hill and a concrete ramp.

All paddlers must exit the river upstream of the Winooski Gorge Dam. A formal take-out trail has been developed (**GMP Takeout**) which leads up to Berard Rd. However, no official portage trail has been developed for paddlers seeking to continue downstream. The steep gorge walls create a significant obstacle for a southern route. Further investigation is needed to explore the feasibility of create a designated portage route on the north side of the gorge.

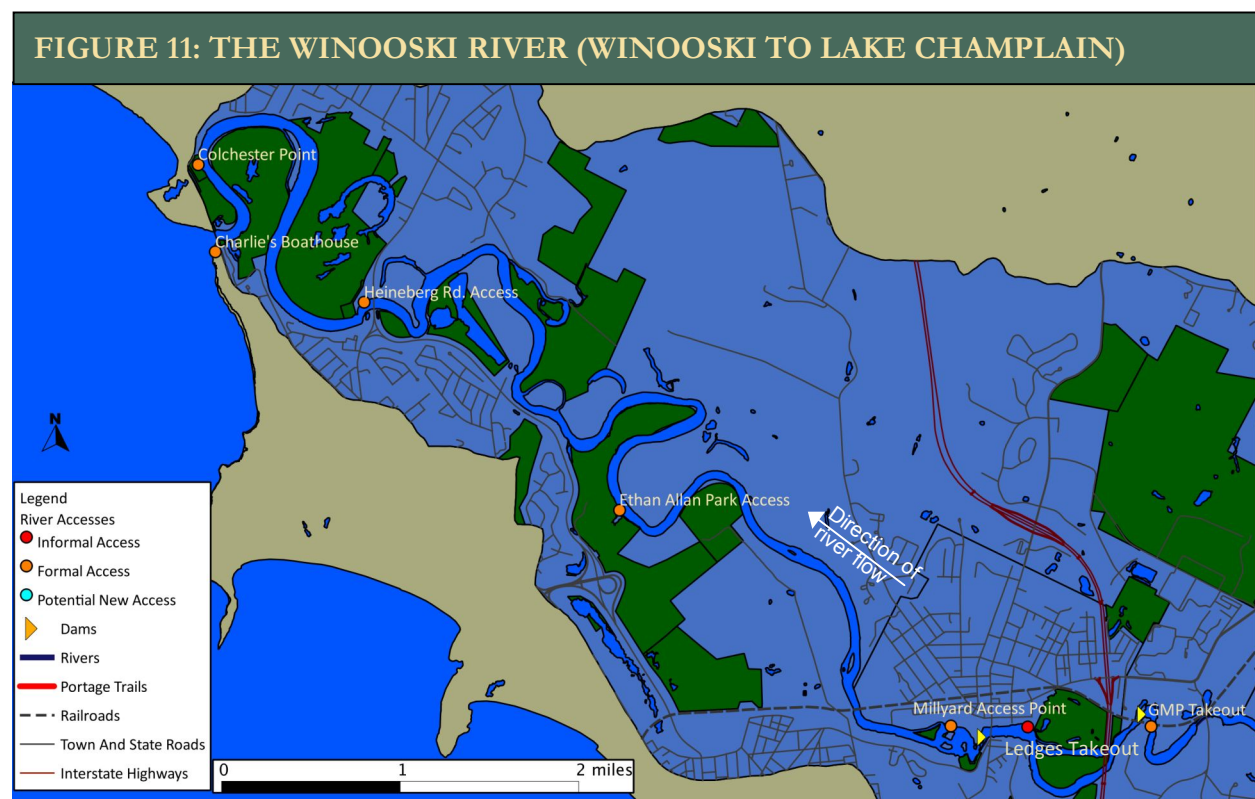
Thanks to a waterfront revitalization project, access is easy above Chase Mills (**Ledges Takeout**), just upstream of the Winooski I dam. Whitewater paddlers lap these Class III rapids as a short practice run.



Winooski River: Winooski To Lake Champlain (10 miles)

In this stretch, the river flows placidly to its mouth on Lake Champlain as it meanders in a surprisingly bucolic reach bordered by farmlands, wetlands and forests.

The **Millyard Canoe Access**, an official access developed by the Winooski Valley Park District, has been improved with timber stairs. Those seeking a short trip can takeout at the **Ethan Allen Park Access**, or at the Half Moon Cove Fish and Wildlife Access off **Heineberg Dr.** in Colchester. Both are official access points with adequate infrastructure, although erosion appears to be a problem at Heineberg Rd. Closer to Lake Champlain is the well developed **Colchester Point Fish and Wildlife Access** and **Charlie's Boathouse**. As the boathouse was damaged significantly during the spring of 2011, the future of this access is uncertain.



The Mad River: Overview

The Mad River provides about twenty miles of paddling from its headwaters west of Warren to its confluence with the Winooski in Middlesex. Clear waters and sculpted bedrock outcrops make for a scenic paddling experience. While most of the river is best paddled during high water in the spring, the lower 1.3 mile stretch is a popular whitewater section that can also be paddled after rain in the summer and the fall.

Mad River: Warren to Waitsfield (6.5 miles)

A challenging upper gorge in Warren is followed by quick water, occasional Class I rapids, and two Class III ledge drops that often require portaging in open boats. Whitewater enthusiasts can access the upper gorge via the **Warren Park and Ride**. Those seeking to skip this rapid put in at one of two **informal access** points located about one mile below town; the first is a pull-off by an electrical substation, the second is a larger roadside pull-off that requires crossing a field owned by a local farmer. Formal access is needed in this area. One option for developing a formal access is at the town owned **Riverside Park**, about two miles below Warren.

The first significant rapid, 3 miles below Warren, is known at the **Punchbowl**. For open-boaters, there is a short portage trail around this popular swimming hole, located on private land that is currently for sale. It is worth exploring conservation options to protect public access to this valued spot. A third of a mile downstream is the **Butternut Hill Rd. rapid**, which is popular with kayakers but usually portaged by open-boaters. An informal access trail leads up to Butternut Hill.

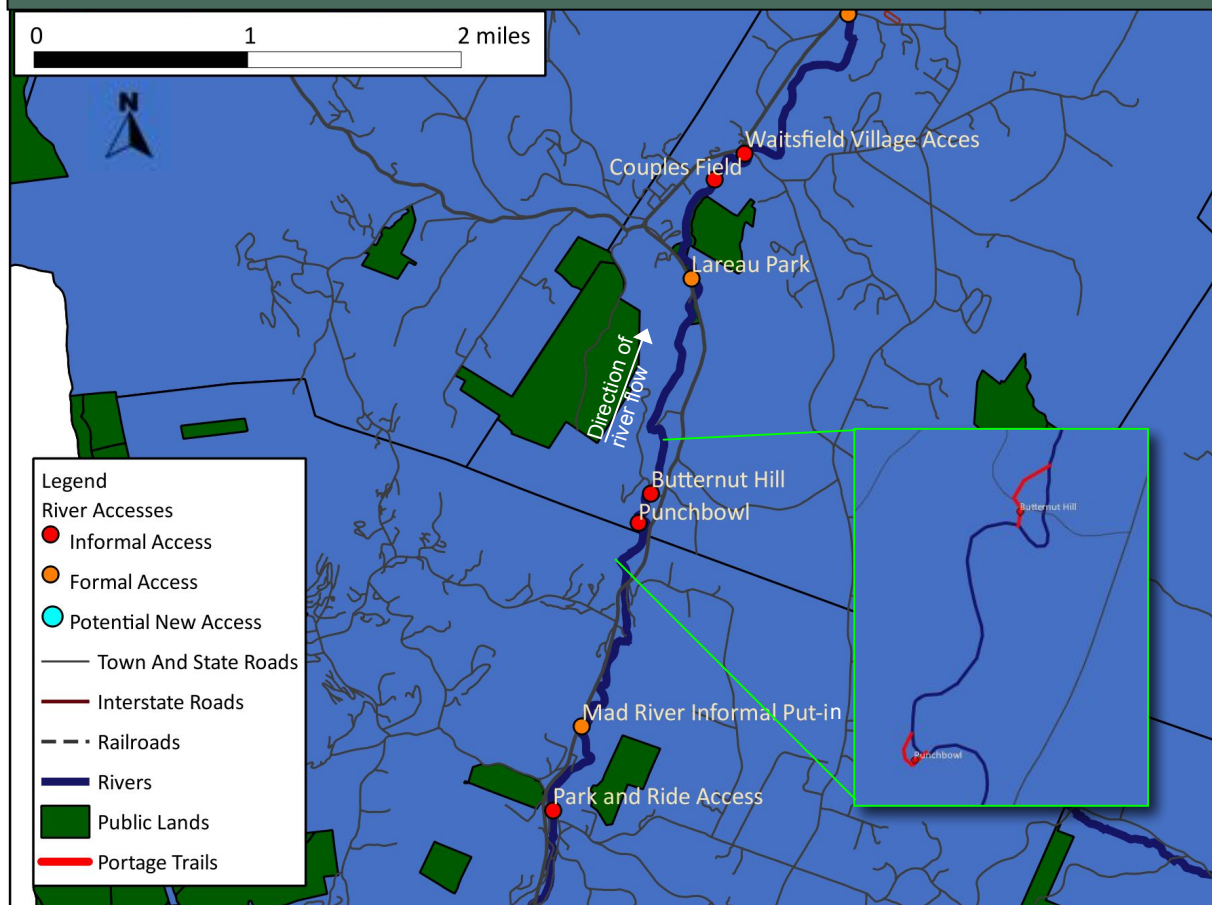
Unfortunately re-entering the river requires crossing private property and skirting the edge of a home. While the current out-of-state resident has not posted his property, its future security remains in question.

Five miles below Warren is **Lareau Park**, one of the most popular launch points on this stretch of the river. This town owned park has been improved with stone steps leading down to river. Others choose to access the river via the privately owned **Couple's Field** (0.5 miles south of Waitsfield village) or via the **Waitsfield Village access**, where parking is adequate and river access is easy.

FIGURE 12: BUTTERNUT HILL PORTAGE AND RAPID



FIGURE 13: THE MAD RIVER (WARREN TO WAITSFIELD)



Mad River: Waitsfield To Moretown (7 miles)

This stretch is similar in character to the upstream stretch, but has less challenging rapids. 1.75 miles below the Waitsfield Village access is the **Pines Picnic** area which has ample parking and provides easy river access. Access is also possible via a parking area developed for the Mad River Path near **Meadow Rd**, but the banks are steep and the currents challenging. 4.5 mile below Waitsfield is a farm field which the **Sugarbush Triathlon** has obtained permission to use during their spring race. Most paddlers continue downstream to the **Pony Farm Road access**, (Figure 15) recently conserved by the Vermont Land Trust, where both parking and access is adequate. This site would benefit from the installation of way-finding signage from both the river and from the road. Strategically located, this parcel provides a place for paddlers to exit the river before the Moretown gorge that soon follows.

FIGURE 14: THE MAD RIVER (WAITSFIELD TO MORETOWN)

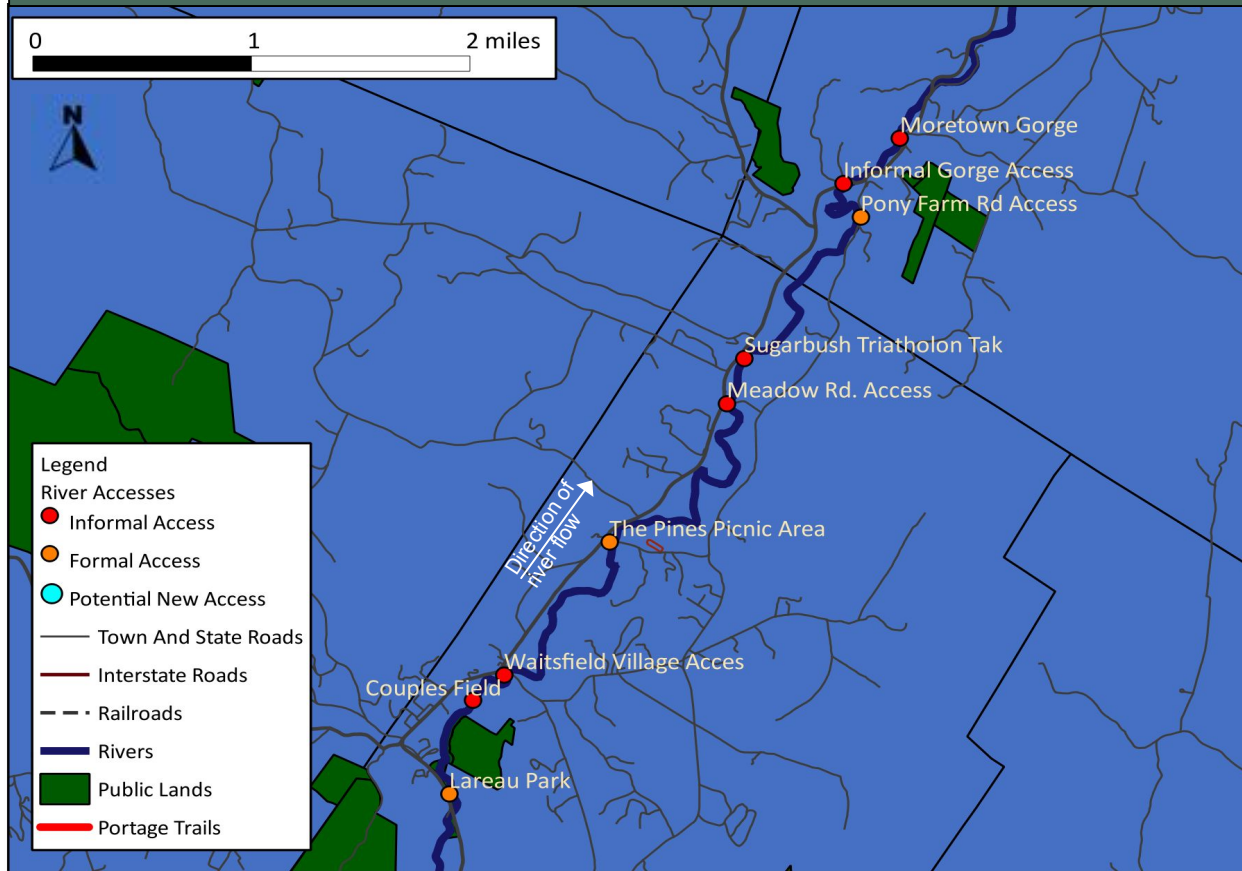


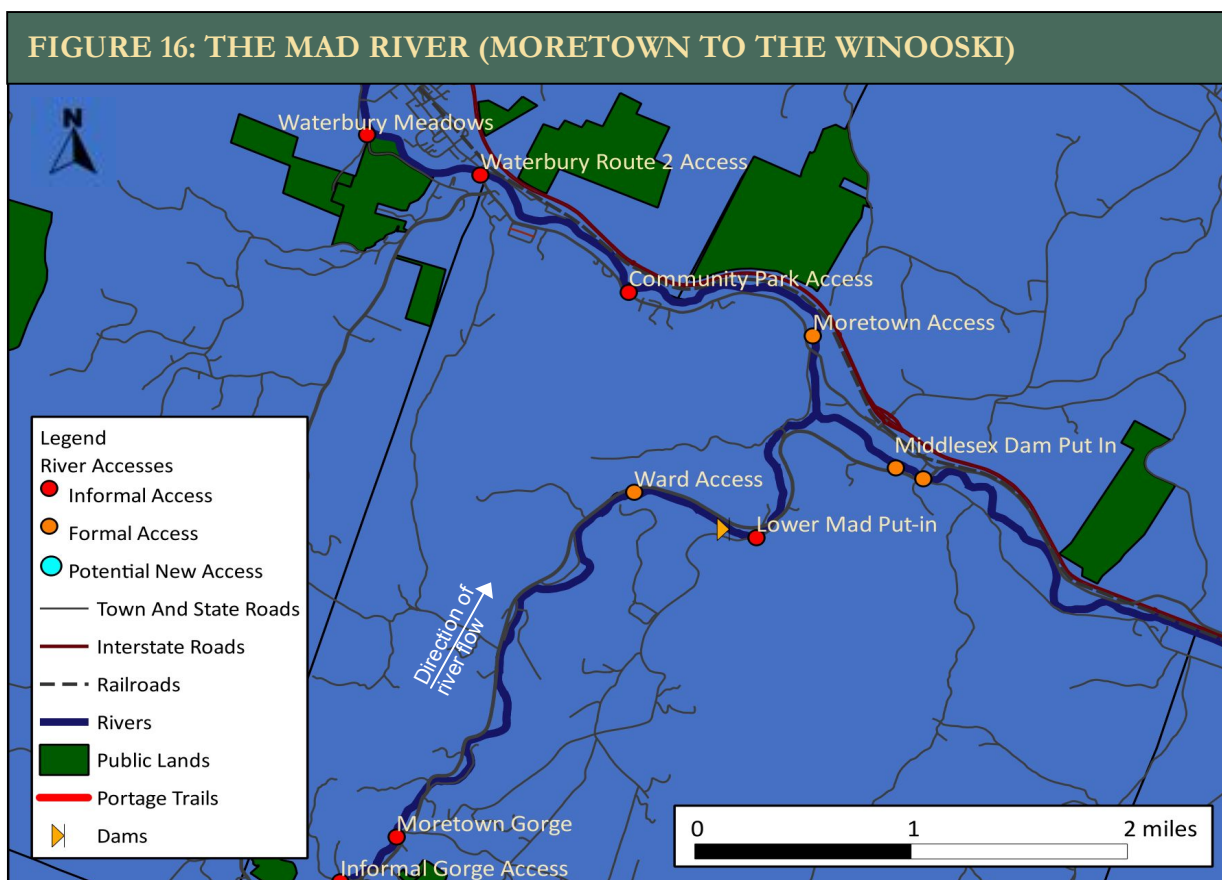
FIGURE 15: PONY FARM ROAD ACCESS



Mad River: Moretown to the Winooski River (7 miles)

The final seven miles of the river includes two sections frequented by whitewater enthusiasts and a flat-water stretch created by an impoundment. It begins with the Moretown gorge, a short Class III stretch. Paddlers typically access this stretch by parking on a side road and scrambling down the river bank upstream of the Route 100B bridge. The best take-out below the gorge is at the next Route 100B road crossing (by Dickerson Road), where steep banks are a challenge.

4.5 miles below the gorge is the formal **Ward access**, which provides swimming, fishing, and flat-water fishing opportunities at the start of an impoundment. There is no formal portage trail around the dam, nor is there formally developed access for the final stretch of the river. Instead, whitewater paddlers typically access the river via a trail on private land off Moretown Common Rd. Protecting public access here is a clear priority. The **Moretown Access** on the Winooski River serves as a formal takeout for this popular, 1.5 mile class II-III (IV) run.



Little River

The Little River has three distinct sections frequented by paddlers. Divided by the Waterbury Reservoir, they collectively provide about 16 miles of paddling. A 10 mile upper stretch is an interesting but largely undiscovered quick-water to Class II high water run. The 4.5 mile lower section is a popular beginner whitewater run, thanks to recently established regular dam releases.

In the upper section, paddlers can put in as far up the river as **Tansy Hill Rd**, north of Stowe, at an informal access adjacent to a bridge. It is more common to put in below a dam near the village center, at **Tubbs Mill**. However, while parking is available and access is straightforward, this informal access is posted. As an alternative, access may be possible on property that houses the Stowe Cooperative Nursery.

Paddlers must portage around a dam 1.6 miles below the closed **Tubbs Mill** (Figure 17). It is possible to take out at a dry hydrant in Moscow. No portage trail has been developed for this dam, but it is possible to reenter the river by walking up Adam's Mill Rd., crossing a small overgrown field, and then descending a rocky ledge on river left.

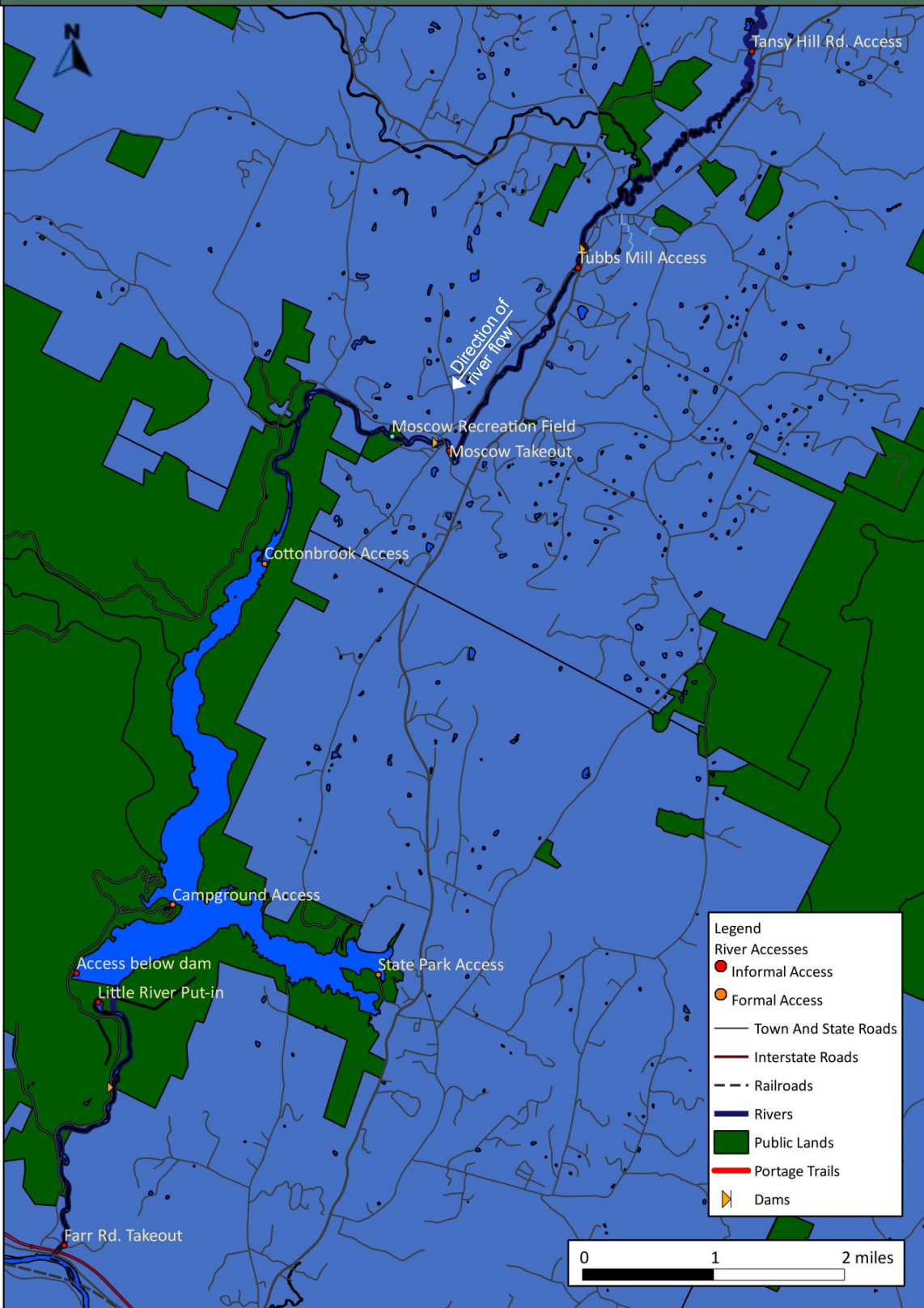
The **Moscow Recreation Fields**, one mile below the dam, provide easy access and ample parking. This park was protected by the Stowe Land Trust in 1998 and is owned by the Town of Stowe. It is a 2.25 mile paddle to the **Cottonbrook Access**, a formal access within the Mt. Mansfield State Forest, which is situated at the beginning of the four mile long Waterbury Reservoir. There are several formal launching facilities on the reservoir within Little River State Park.

Downstream of the reservoir, paddlers can put in immediately below the dam, but must soon portage a weir that creates a dangerous hydraulic. Reentering the river after this weir is somewhat difficult. Most paddlers exit the river at a bridge over **Farr Rd**, although much of this land is posted as private property.

FIGURE 17: POSTED ACCESS; TUBBS MILL (LITTLE R.)

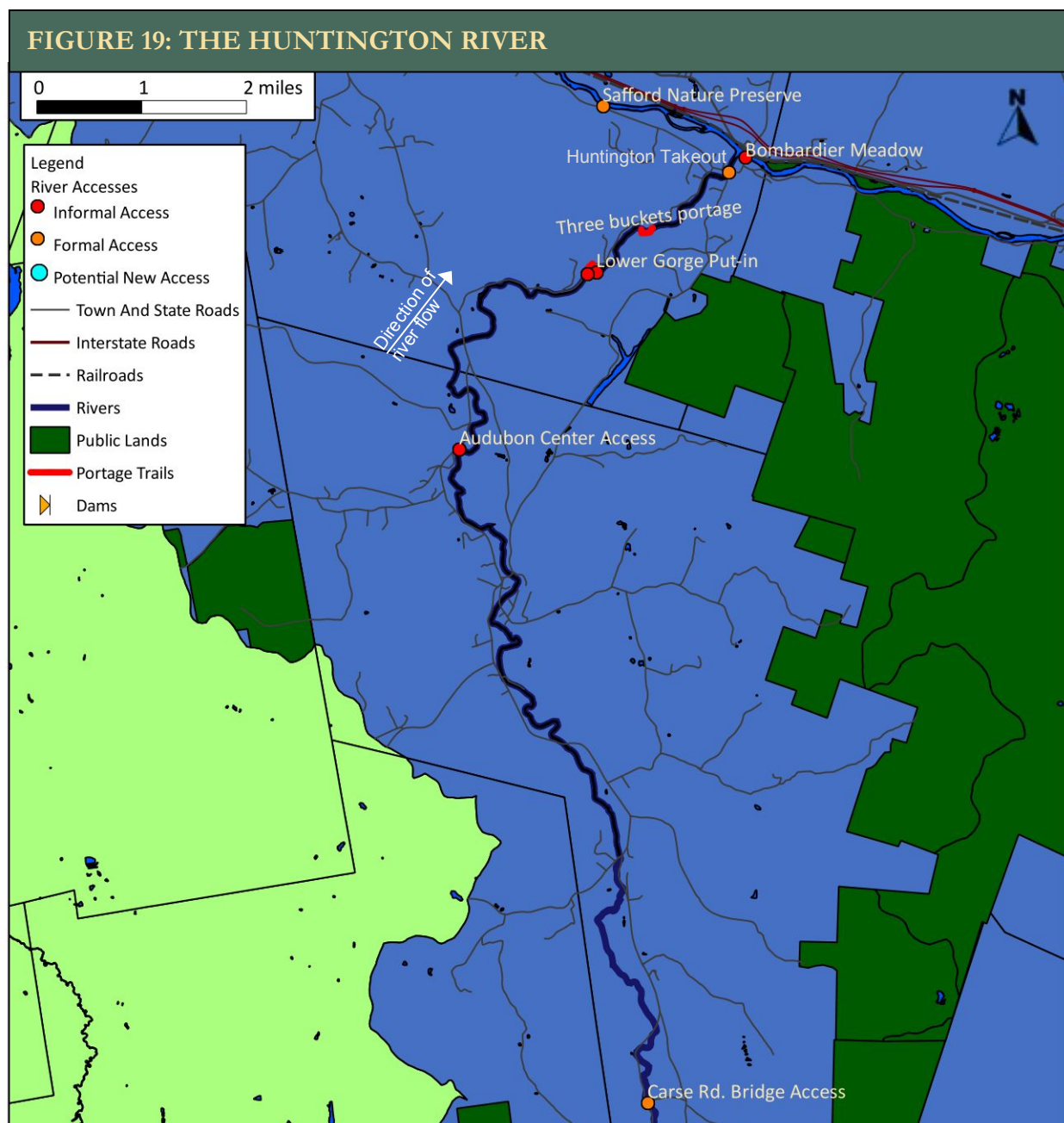


FIGURE 18: THE LITTLE RIVER



Huntington River (14 miles)

The Huntington River is a classic spring run, providing a provide a mix of quick water and Class I-II rapids frequented by both open boaters and kayakers. Paddlers typically put in upstream of Huntington Center at the informal **Carse Rd. access**, which provides good access and a couple of parking spaces, or eight miles lower at the **Audubon Center**, which has a large parking area and a good eddy to launch from. The most common spot to end a trip is four miles below the Audubon Center at the **Huntington Gorge**, where parking and access is adequate. The lower gorge, however, is a real gem for those willing to first portage the Upper Gorge and then complete a steep, difficult, and undeveloped carry around the **Three Buckets Gorge**. Exiting the river is easy at an informal access just upstream of **Cochran Rd**, where there is a small parking area. It is likely this lower stretch would be run more frequently if a portage trail were to be constructed.



Dog River

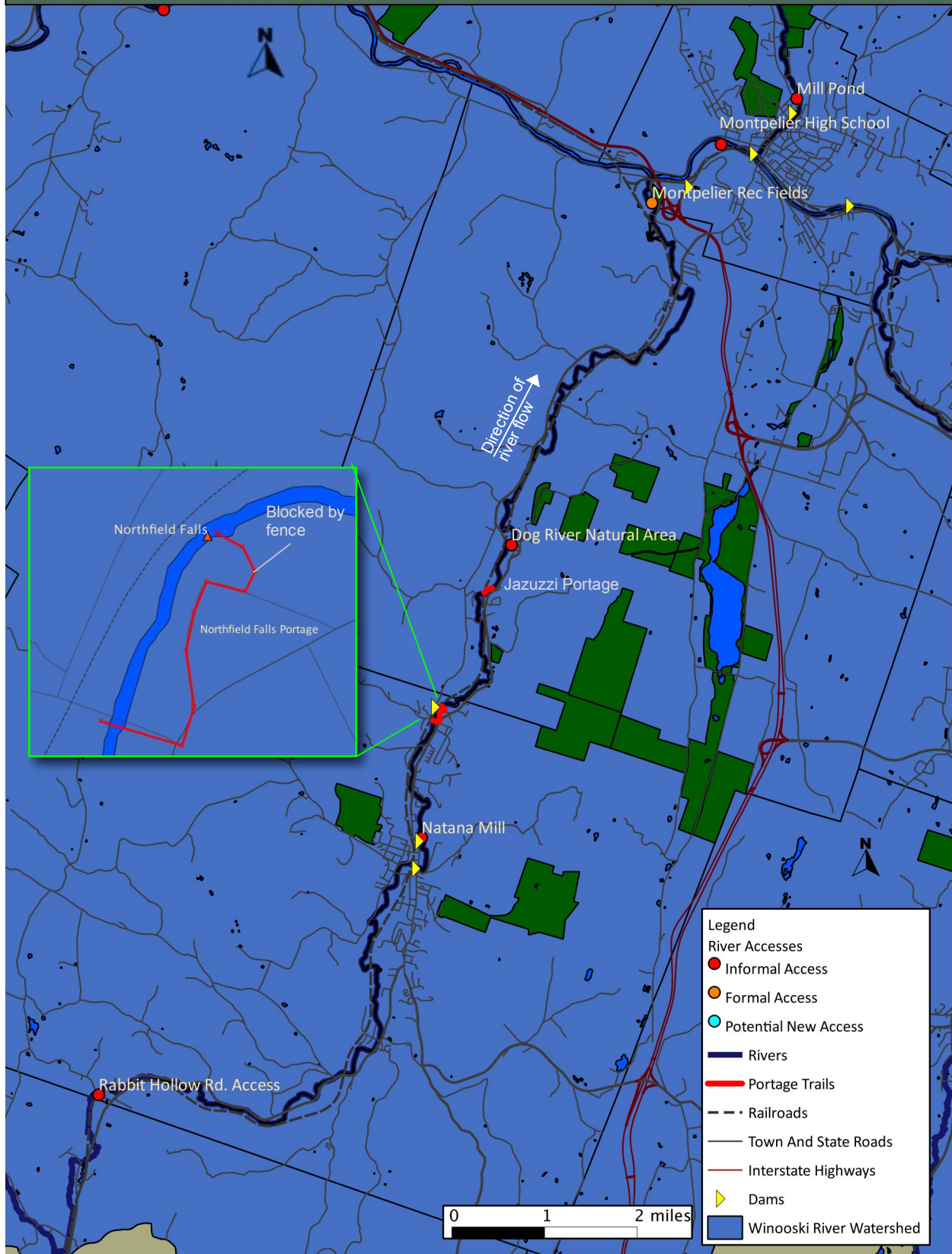
The Dog River flows south from Northfield to Montpelier and is best explored during spring high water. Those seeking to paddle the upstream stretches of the river can put in at an informal access adjacent to the Rabbit Hollow Road, sixteen miles above its mouth. However, two dams in Northfield can be difficult to portage. Therefore, paddlers typically put in below the **Natana Mill** dam at a steep, undeveloped access. From here it is a 0.6 mile paddle to the first significant rapid, a Class II-III ledge, easily portaged on river left on land owned by the Dogwood Glen housing complex. One mile downstream is **Northfield Falls and dam** for which no portage has been developed (Figure 20). Paddlers typically take out on river left at a covered bridge, walk through town, and reenter the river below an old mill building currently occupied by Black Bear Wood Products. However, due to asbestos contamination, a chain link fence blocks access below the mill, forcing paddlers to walk through the backyard of an adjacent landowner.

1.75 mile below Northfield Falls is another significant rapid (**Jacuzzi**) with a strong hydraulic. An informal path used by fishermen and swimmers serves as an adequate portage. The first formal access on the river is the **Dog River Natural Area**, located behind Riverton Fire Department. This small park, owned by the Town of Berlin, has been improved with a picnic table and benches. A river path has been improved with timber stairs. Easy rapids continue for six miles to Montpelier, where it is easy to take out at the **Montpelier Recreation Fields**.

FIGURE 20: NORTHFIELD FALLS AND PORTAGE



FIGURE 21: THE DOG RIVER



North Branch of the Winooski

The North Branch of the Winooski has three distinct sections for paddlers: a three mile section of Class IV+ whitewater for kayakers, the Wrightsville Reservoir, and a lower four mile section of quick water more suitable for open boats.

Whitewater kayakers access the upper stretches of the river via an informal access point next to a Route 12 bridge. An old road bed and small parking area serves as the takeout. Both locations are on property conserved by the Vermont River Conservancy. This stretch (Figure 22), while providing excellent paddling, runs very infrequently.

The Wrightsville Reservoir has a formal access suitable for all boat types. No access has been developed below the reservoir. Those seeking to explore the lower sections of the river during the high water in the spring can do so by bushwhacking down from a road leading to the base of the spillway. **Mill Pond**, 3.7 miles below the spillway, serves as the best takeout and is improved with stairs and parking. Paddling through Montpelier itself is difficult due to a dam just upstream of the confluence with the Winooski (Figure 23).

FIGURE 22: THE NORTH BRANCH OF THE WINOOSKI (UPPER SECTION)

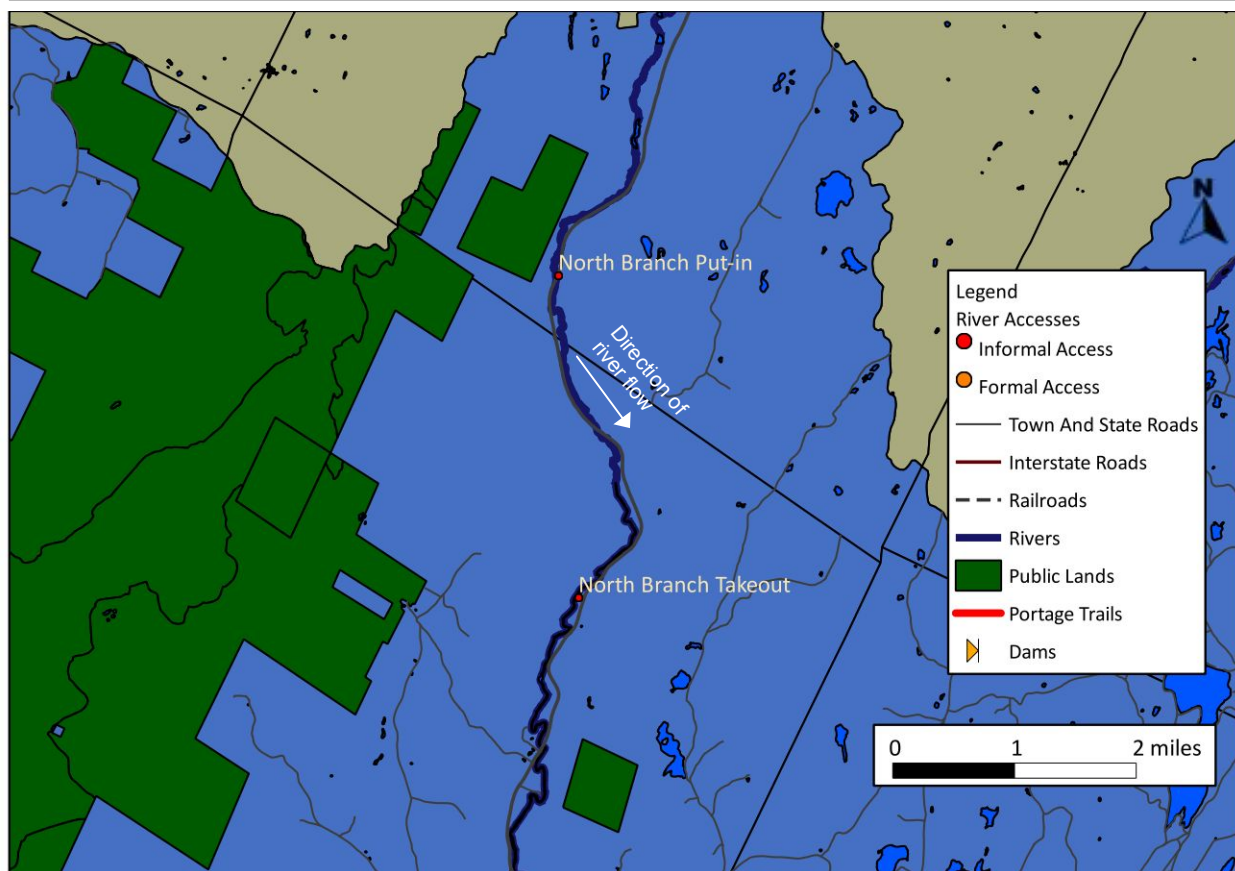
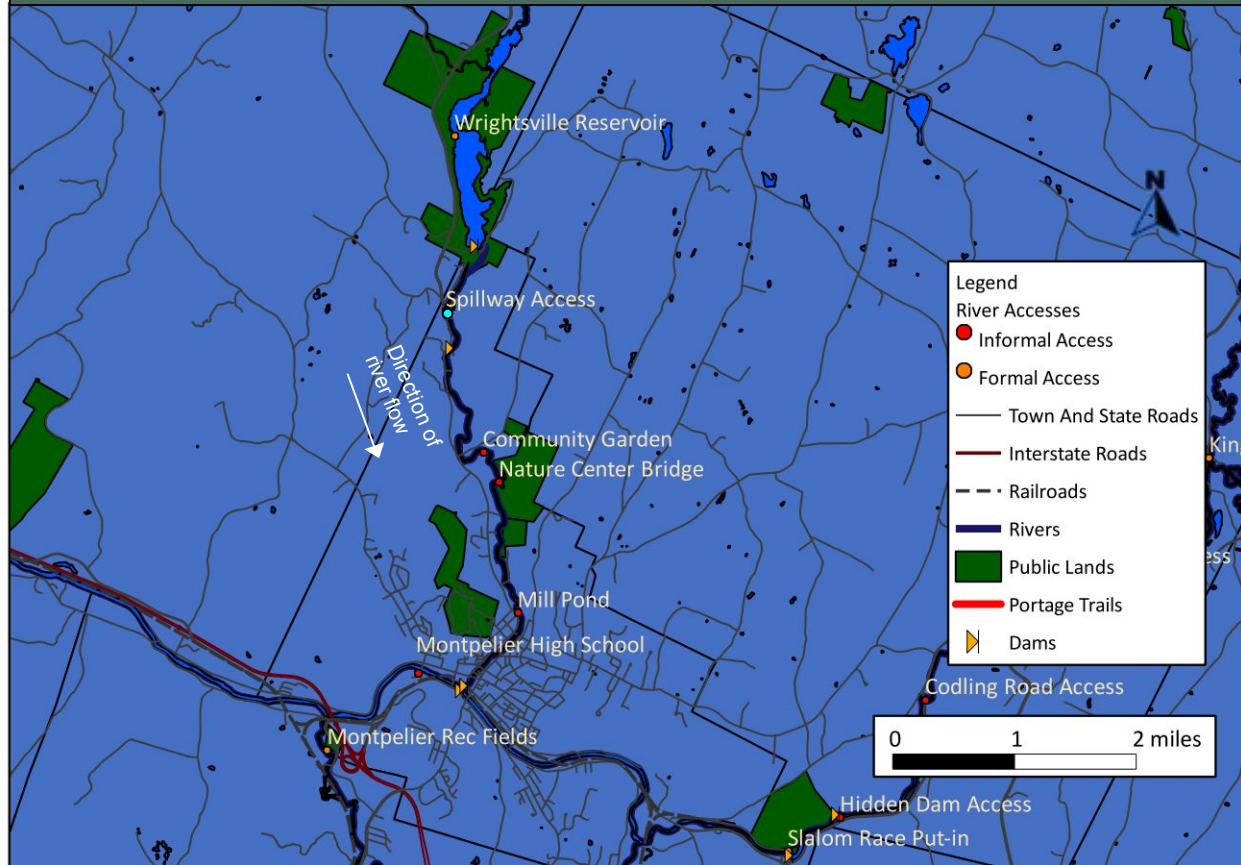


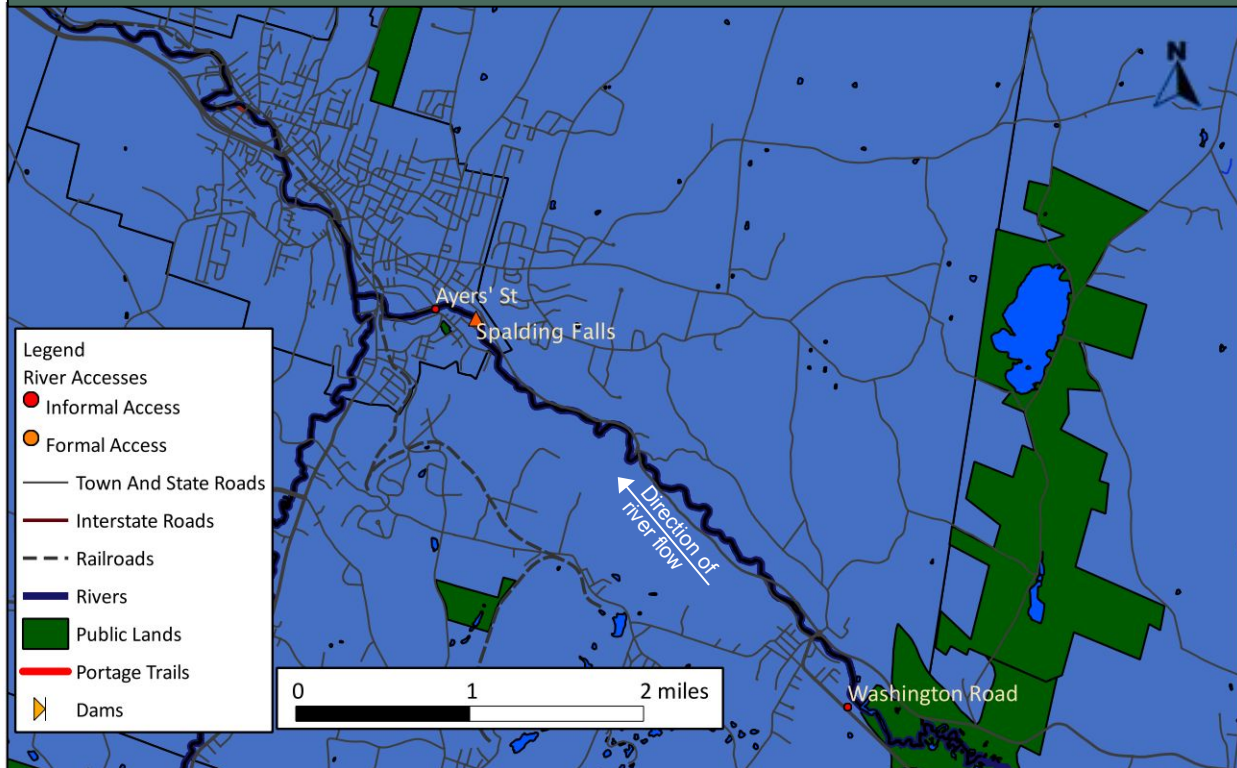
FIGURE 23: NORTH BRANCH OF THE WINOOSKI (LOWER SECTION)



Jail Branch (4 Miles)

The Jail Branch is an infrequently run river that has a small section of Class III-IV rapids upstream of Barre. The waterway is often obstructed by wood. Access is possible via an informal access off **Washington Road**. 3.8 miles downstream is 80 ft. high **Spalding Falls**. Portaging is difficult due to steep banks. A quarter mile past Spalding Falls is the **Ayer's Rd.** crossing which is used as a take-out.

FIGURE 24: THE JAIL BRANCH OF THE WINOOSKI



Project Priorities And Partner Organizations

The improvement of public access within the Winooski River watershed is an overdue project. Thanks to good relationships with river enthusiasts and local landowners, the Friends of the Winooski is well suited to play a leadership role in promoting a coordinated approach to conservation and public access development. This section of the report outlines priority conservation and access improvement projects for consideration by area communities and land managers, potential partner organizations who could assist with this effort, and recommended next steps.

Priority Projects

Drawing on insights from conversations with stakeholders, field visits, and a quantitative assessment summarized in Appendix A, Table 1 presents a list of identified priority **conservation** and priority **access improvement projects**. Conservation priorities were identified based on quantification of the **current or potential use** and **risk of the public losing access**. Access improvement projects were identified based on an index taking into account the **current or potential use** and **current conditions at the site**.

TABLE 1: PROPOSED CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES		
	Conservation Priorities	Improvement Priorities
Winooski River	Plainfield Dam Portage	Plainfield Take out and Dam Portage
	Umiak Access	East Montpelier Village Access
	Route 2 Bridge Access (Plainfield)	Hidden Dam Access
		Bombadier Meadows (Jonesville)
		Volunteer Green Access
		Bolton Dam Portage
		Essex Dam Portage
		Winooski Gorge Portage
Mad River	Moretown Gorge Takeout	Upper Map Informal Put-in
	Lower Mad Access	Lower Mad Access
	Upper Mad Access	
Dog River	Northfield Falls	Natana Mill Access
		Northfield Falls Portage
Little River	Tubbs Mills Access	Farr Rd. Take-out
	Farr Rd Take out	Mill Dam Portage

Partner Organizations

The implementation of access improvement would be best served by a collaborative effort that brings together state and local partners to both complete on the ground projects and ensure ongoing maintenance and site stewardship. Potential partners include:

Youth Conservation Corps: In particular, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and the Barre Technical Center run programs that engages area high school students in conservation efforts. Their crews could be enlisted to complete larger projects, as well as help with maintenance tasks.

Local Volunteers: Waterway work trips, similar to those run by the Northern Forest Canoe Trail and the Vermont River Conservancy, are good ways to enlist locals in access improvement projects.

Conservation Commissions: A worthwhile goal would be to have a formal access in every town. Conservation commissions can play an important role in project planning, implementation fundraising, and long-term stewardship.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources: There are several staff members who could support this effort, including Karen Bates, the Winooski River watershed basin planner, Mike Wichrowski, who oversees state-owned launches in Vermont, and Sherry Winnie, who administers the Vermont Recreation Trails Grant Program.

Green Mountain Power (GMP): GMP owns many of the dams on the Winooski River and is responsible for ensuring adequate public access. They may be willing to support collaborative access improvement efforts that leverage a mix of private and public dollars.

The Cross Vermont Trail Association (CVTA): CVTA has been working to develop a 90 mile path connecting Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River. As the trail corridor follows the Winooski River, there many be opportunities to develop multi-purpose trailheads providing access to both river and land-based recreational opportunities.

The Vermont River Conservancy (VRC): The VRC has played a leadership role in protecting several accesses in the watershed, and is well suited as a partner to hold easements ensuring perpetual public access.

The Richmond Land Trust: (RLT): The RLT is an active conservation partner in the watershed and has already undertaken several conservation efforts which include public river access provisions.

The Vermont Land Trust (VLT): VLT, another active regional conservation partner, has successfully incorporated public access provisions into its easements throughout the state.

The Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD): Not only is the WVPD a manager of several regional parks that provide river access, WVPD is a good example of a collaborative approach to managing recreational resources.

Friends of the Mad River: This organization has historically played a role in helping protect public access, including the conservation of Warren Falls. While their focus today is primarily on restoration of the river and conservation planning, they may be interested in engaging in a collaborative effort. In particular, they could enlist their cadre of volunteers on site improvement projects and annual maintenance tasks.

Trout Unlimited: The development of improved river access may increase boat traffic on the river and increase user conflict. A proactive approach is needed to ensure access is developed in manners compatible with a variety of users' goals. Trout Unlimited can help serve as a bridge organization and partner on projects of mutual benefit to paddlers and fishermen.

Next Steps

The Friends of the Winooski must be mindful of the work that has been completed in the watershed, and should work with these organization as it moves forward with its efforts. This is not a trivial undertaking, and comes with long term responsibilities for site monitoring and maintenance. Recommended next steps include:

- ▶ Hold a meeting to discuss the results of this assessment, and establish a loose collaborative of partners guided by a shared vision who can plan collective efforts and ensure long-term site maintenance;
- ▶ Create a multi-year plan to complete identified priority access improvement and conservation projects;
- ▶ Develop uniform way finding signage for all public launches;
- ▶ Create a website to serve as the central location for visitors seeking to find information on paddling in the Winooski River watershed;
- ▶ Unify these efforts by developing a series of both printed and online maps for visitors;
- ▶ Conduct fundraising efforts to support the development and management of this project.

Through this important effort, the Friends of the Winooski has the opportunity to take a leadership role in improving recreational opportunities within the watershed, and in helping facilitate stewardship of this valuable recreational resource for generations to come.

Appendix A: Access Point Inventory And Assessment Metrics

Table 2 presents the metrics used to assess conservation and improvement priorities. Table 3 presents an inventory of formal, informal, and potential access points for paddlers seeking to explore the river.

TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT METRICS			
Metric	Color	Value	Description
Use		Low	Never likely to be highly used
		Medium	Likely to be used by users infrequently or only during high-water
		High	Likely to be a popular launch spot
Risk		Low	Already on conserved or public land
		Medium	On private land, but not posted, for sale, or any signs of conflict
		High	Posted property, conflicts reported, land for sale
Site Condition		Good	Access is well developed
		Adequate	Access is adequate, but could benefit from some improvements
		Poor	Needs significant work to increase safety and minimize impacts

TABLE 3: ACCESS POINT INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY							
River	Site	Distance To River Mouth (miles)	Access Point Type	Ownership	Use	Risk	Condition
Huntington	Access						
	Carse Rd. Bridge Access	14.2	Informal	Private			
	Audubon Center	6	Formal	Conserved			
	Huntington Gorge	2.2	Formal	Private			
	Cochran Rd. Takeout	0.2	Informal	Private			
	Portages						
	Huntington Gorge	2.2	Private	Private			
Dog River	Three buckets	2.0	Private	Conserved			
	Access						
	Rabbit Hollow Rd.	18	Informal	Private			
	Natana Mill	11	Informal	Private			
	Dog River Preserve	6.75	Formal	Public			
	Montpelier Rec Fields	0.4	Informal	Public			
	Portages						
	Northfield Falls	14	None	Private			
	Ledges	15	Informal	Private			
	Jacuzzi		Informal	Private			

TABLE 3: ACCESS POINT INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

River	Site	Distance To River Mouth (miles)	Access Point Type	Ownership	Use	Risk	Condition
North Branch	Access						
	North Branch Put-in	16.7	Informal	Conserved			
	North Branch Takeout	13.7	Informal	Conserved			
	Wrightsville Reservoir	5.9	Informal	Conserved			
	Bellow Wrightsville Dam	4.6	Informal	Private			
	Nature Center Garden	2.5	Informal	Conserved			
	Nature Center Bridge	2.2	Informal	Conserved			
	Mill Pond Takeout	0.9	Informal	Conserved			
Jail Branch	Access						
	Washington Rd.	0.6	Informal	Private			
	Ayer St.	4.62	Informal	Private			
	Portage						
	Spalding Falls	0.83	Informal	Private			
Little River	Access						
	Tansy Hill Rd. Access	16	Informal	Private			
	Tubbs Mill Access	11.6	Informal	Private			
	Moscow Take out	10	Informal	Public			
	Moscow Recreation Field	9	Formal	Public			
	Cottonbrook Access	6.85	Formal	Public			
	Campground Access	4	Formal	Public			
	State Park Access	4	Formal	Public			
	Access above dam	3.25	Formal	Public			
	Access below dam	3	Informal	Public			
	Farr Rd.	0.1	Informal	Private			
	Portages						
	Mill Dam	9.75	Informal	Private			
	Waterbury Reservoir Dam	3	Informal	Public			
	Weir	2.75	Informal	Private			
Mad River	Access						
	Park and Ride Access	20.2	Formal	Public			
	Mad River Informal Put-in	19.3	Informal	Private			
	Upper Mad Access	19.25	Informal	Private			
	Riverside Park	18.3	Potential	Public			
	Punchbowl	17.3	Informal	Private			
	Butternut Hill	17	Informal	Private			
	Lareau Park	15	Formal	Public			
	Couples Field	14.2	Informal	Private			
	Waitsfield Village Access	13.75	Informal	Public			

TABLE 3: ACCESS POINT INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

River	Site	Distance To River Mouth (miles)	Type	Ownership	Use	Risk	Condition
Mad River	The Pines Picnic Area	12	Informal	Public			
	Meadow Rd. Access	9.6	Informal	Public			
	Sugarbush Triathlon Take out	9.24	Informal	Private			
	Pony Farm Rd Access	7.6	Formal	Conserved			
	Moretown Gorge Access	6.9	Informal	Public			
	Moretown Gorge Takeout	6.8	Informal	Private			
	Ward Access	2.4	Formal	Public			
	Lower Gorge Put-in	1.37	Informal	Private			
	Portages						
	Punchbowl	17.3	Informal	Private			
	Butternut Hill	17	Informal	Private			
	Horseshoe Falls	.3	Informal	Private			
Winooski River	Access						
	Marshfield Hydroelectric	83.6	Informal	Private			
	School Street Access	82.0	Informal	Public			
	Twinfield Access	75.0	Informal	Public			
	Martin Bridge Access	74.0	Informal	Public			
	Plainfield Coop	72.8	Potential	Private			
	Route 2 Bridge Access	72.8	Informal	Private			
	Plainfield Rec Fields	72.6	Formal	Public			
	Kingsbury Access	69.0	Formal	Conserved			
	E. Montpelier Village	66.0	Informal	Private			
	Codling Road Access	64.0	Informal	Private			
	Hidden Dam	62.5	Potential	Public			
	Slalom Race Put-in	61.9	Formal	Private			
	Montpelier High School	57.6	Informal	Public			
	Middlesex Dam Take Out	51.4	Formal	Private			
	Middlesex Dam Put In	51.0	Formal	Private			
	Moretown Access	49.8	Formal	Public			
	Community Park Access	48.0	Informal	Public			
	Waterbury Route 2 Access	46.4	Informal	Private			
	Waterbury Meadows	45.0	Potential	Private			
	Waterbury Rec Fields	44.5	Informal	Public			
	Umiak Access	42.0	Informal	Private			
	Bolton Dam Access	41.2	Formal	Public			
	Ledge- possible takeout	40.0	Potential	Private			
	Bombardier Meadows	34.5	Informal	Conserved			
	Safford Nature Preserve	33.0	Formal	Public			

TABLE 3: ACCESS POINT INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

River	Site	Distance To River Mouth (miles.)	Type	Ownership	Use	Risk	Condition
Winooski River	Volunteer Green Access	31.0	Formal	Public			
	Fontaine Canoe Access	23.3	Formal	Public			
	GMP Essex Impoundment	18.8	Formal	Public			
	Essex Dam Put-in	18.3	Formal	Public			
	Muddy Brook Park Access	16.8	Formal	Public			
	Woodside Preserve	14.4	Formal	Public			
	Winooski Gorge Take Out	11.8	Formal	Public			
	Millyard Access Point	10.0	Formal	Public			
	Ethan Allan Park Access	7.0	Formal	Public			
	Heineberg Rd. Access	2.8	Formal	Public			
	Colchester Point Fishing Access	0.6	Formal	Public			
	Portages						
	Plainfield Dam	72.6	Potential	Private			
	Hidden Dam	62.5	Informal	Public			
	Montpelier #4 Dam	61.9	Formal	Private			
	Shaw's Dam	58.0	None	Private			
	Middlesex Dam	51.0	Formal	Private			
	Bolton Dam	41.0	Formal	Private			
	Essex Dam	18.5	Formal	Private			
	Winooski Gorge	10.0	None	Private			