The Ashuelot River flows 64 miles from its origin at Butterfield Pond in Pillsbury State Park in Washington, NH through nine other southwest New Hampshire towns to join the Connecticut River in Hinsdale, NH.

Ashuelot River Watershed
The Ashuelot's watershed collects water from 425 square miles across 25 towns in southwestern New Hampshire and two Massachusetts towns. The watershed begins with Cherry Brook on the south slope of Mount Sunapee. The eastern border ranges south through the Monadnock Highlands, including the western slopes of Mount Monadnock and reaches Mount Grace in Massachusetts.

Hiking & Biking Trails
The Ashuelot Rail Trail follows the river from Hinsdale to Keene. The Cheshire Rail Trail crosses the watershed parallel to NH Route 12. The Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway and Metacomet Trails follow the eastern watershed boundary. There's Hiking and Biking throughout State Parks, State Forests and other Public Lands.

Flatwater Boating
Easy boating from the Cheshire Turnpike Bridge, Keene to Ashuelot Village with short portages at the Gilsum Homestead and Winchester Dams and a section of Class 2 water at Westport Village

Whitewater Boating
Class 1 - 4 from Lower Stillwater to Gilsum Stone Arch Bridge, from below Gilsum Gorge to Surry Reservoir, and from Ashuelot Village to Hinsdale. NOTE: Gilsum Gorge is treacherous for all boaters in high water!

Fishing
Spring trout fishing throughout the watershed and mainstem Ashuelot above Surry Mountain Reservoir. Year-round warm and cold water fishing in the many lakes and ponds of the Ashuelot River watershed.

The Ashuelot River and its Tributaries are part of the Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program which includes fish and habitat.
Pollution profoundly affected the River. Local libraries house “town histories” for most southwestern New Hampshire towns – fascinating the very development that disrupts the natural movement of water raises business is part, depends on clean water. Growing demand for clean water by soil beneath us. The natural environment of which each person, home and through the air we breathe, over the land we live on and through the rock and 425 square miles in southwestern New Hampshire. Water moves endlessly through the Ashuelot to ultimately join the Connecticut River in Hinsdale. It’s the same water that falls on our forests, roads and lawns.

**HISTORY**

To travel the River is to travel through time. The Ashuelot River provided power for wood and textile manufacturing for 200 years. Before that the River corridor was home to Native Americans for millennia. Villages, factories, farmsteads, dams, stone walls, bridges, and archeological sites (dating back 9,000 years) are each a link in the Ashuelot Corridor’s long history with people: Native American, European, and modern American. The natural forces of geology and ecology are little changed, but, the qualities of the landscape are irrevocably shaped by human activity, and in such lays before us a living story. Settlers colonized rounded hills for 18th-Century farming communities. Those farm centers stopped growing, or were abandoned, and new villages sprung up on rivers and brooks where homes and businesses co-located with new hydro-powered industry. Clearing forests for timber and agriculture, damming the flowing River for power, and industrial-era pollution profoundly affected the River. Local libraries house “town histories” for most southwestern New Hampshire towns – fascinating chronicles of the comings-and-goings of the individuals, families, and communities that continue today.

**PLANT & ANIMAL HABITAT**

The Ashuelot River and its riparian land are very special habitats. One of the high values of any river corridor is the unique community of plants and animals that thrives there. Several major habitat types are easily recognized by the casual passer-by: the Stream Channel itself, River Bank, Floodplain Forest, Wetlands, Upland Forest, and Farmland. The stream hosts several habitat types as well: steep rocky channels, wide flat gravel-bottomed reaches, and deep slow moving “flat water” areas. These habitat types combine in a seamless mosaic that supports an essential diversity of plants and animals from moose to hummingbirds to trout to lady slippers. Some plants and animals live only in the stream or on its banks. Many others rely on the stream and its banks as part of a larger habitat – in some cases using the river for part of their life cycle, or as one more place to find food or shelter.

Warning! Invasive plant and animal species, species not native to our area, pose a serious threat to the River’s ecology. Purple Loosestrife is the most conspicuous invasive plant, and there are many others.

**WATER RESOURCES**

The Ashuelot River is the central feature of a watershed that covers more than 425 square miles in southwestern New Hampshire. Water moves endlessly through the air we breathe, over the land we live on and through the rock and soil beneath us. The natural environment of which each person, home and business is part, depends on clean water. Growing demand for clean water by the very development that disrupts the natural movement of water raises concerns about ensuring enough clean water for all uses.

Ground Water: Stratified drift aquifers (sand and gravel buried by glaciers) are filled with water. This is a particularly rich resource in the towns of Keene, Swanzey, and Winchester. Almost ALL watershed residents rely on groundwater – it doesn’t come from somewhere else – it’s the same water that falls on our forests, roads and lawns. Surface Water: About 160 billion gallons of water drain from the watershed each year by way of the Ashuelot to ultimately join the Connecticut River in Hinsdale.

**WARNING! NON-POINT SOURCE (NPS) POLLUTION - SOIL EROSION, RUN-OFF FROM PAVEMENT, FERTILIZER, GASOLINE & OIL, HEAVY METALS, PESTICIDES, SEWAGE - is a serious threat in the Ashuelot River watershed and may also be one of the most preventable threats to the Ashuelot River. Modest changes in our daily routines at home and work can prevent most NPS pollution.**

**RECREATION**

Residents and visitors alike treasure the Ashuelot River and forested riverbanks for year-round outdoor recreation. Every popular outdoor sport has a place in the Corridor: hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, snow-mobile, canoeing and kayaking, or just sight-seeing from the car. There are opportunities for all challenge levels from a family roadside picnic to all-day mountain biking or world class white-water boating.

Remember: Most public access to the River enjoyed today is allowed by the graciousness of private land owners. Continued access depends on responsible and respectful behavior by those playing in and around the River – it’s as easy as Carry In / Carry Out.

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The Ashuelot LAC Invites You to be a Steward of the Ashuelot River.

Awareness, Appreciation, Responsibility

Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee c/o Southwest Region Planning Commission
NH Dept. of Environmental Services Rivers Coordinator 271-3503
Your Local Conservation Commission

Washington Lempster Marlow Gilsum Sullivan Surry Keene Swanzey Winchester Hinsdale