SANDWICH WATER QUALITY REPORT 2024

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RIVERS Field Sampling Parameters

Conductivity

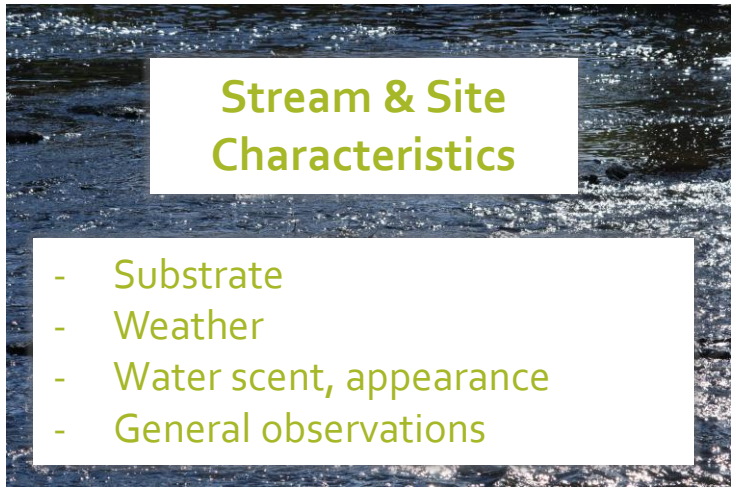
- Ability of water to pass an electrical charge
- Based on amount of charged elements [Mg+, Ca+, Cl-, NO_3-, etc.]
- Can be useful in interpreting salt loads in water bodies

Total Phosphorus

- Critical nutrient for photosynthesis and algae/plant growth
- High levels indicate elevated decomposition (including sewage inputs)

Dissolved Oxygen (DO)

- Measure of how much oxygen is available to aquatic organisms – different species require different amounts

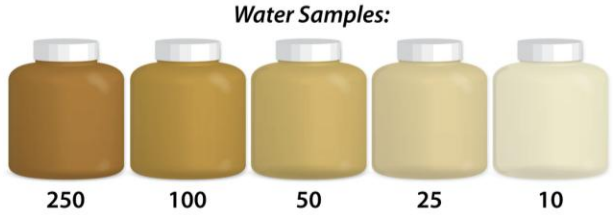


Stream & Site Characteristics

- Substrate
- Weather
- Water scent, appearance
- General observations

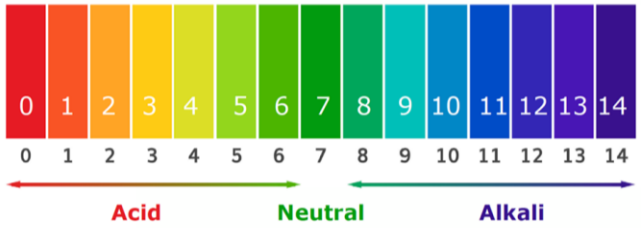
Turbidity

- Water clarity
- Determined by the amount of suspended particles and sediment



pH

- Pure water has a pH of 7, although most water in NH is closer to 6.5 (more acidic)
- The optimal range for aquatic organisms is 6.5 to 8.2



Temperature

- Influences…
  - Amount of dissolved oxygen
  - Rate of chemical reactions in water
  - Plant and algal growth
  - Activity and life cycles of aquatic organisms

Water Quality Standards & Allowable Limits

Parameter	Limit/ Standard
Conductivity	< 100 µS/cm
Total Phosphorus (TP)	< 30 µg/L
Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	6-11 mg/L , 75%-120%
Turbidity	< 10 NTU
pH	6-8, preferably close to 6.5 in NH
Temperature	No standard, but monitored for major changes

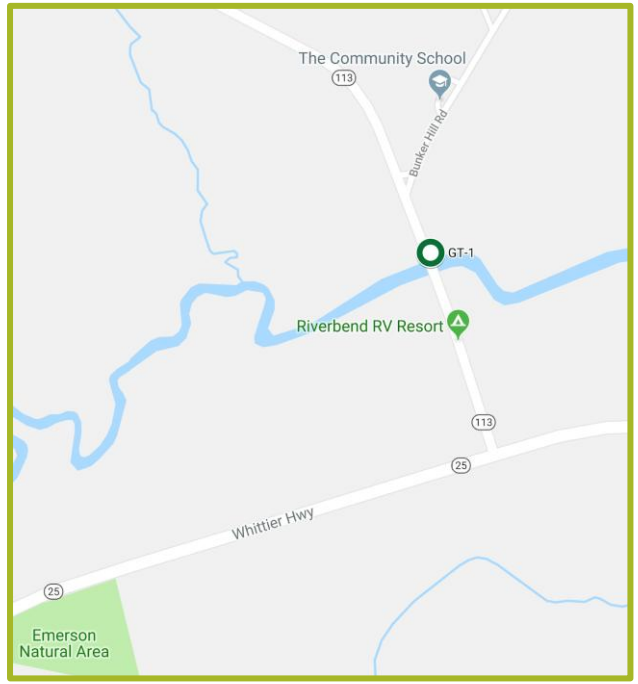
Based on NHDES and EPA Criteria

Anything above is considered "nuisance levels"

****Each site we monitor will vary in these values- a normal occurrence- due to differences in surrounding plant life, land use, infrastructure, geology, etc.**

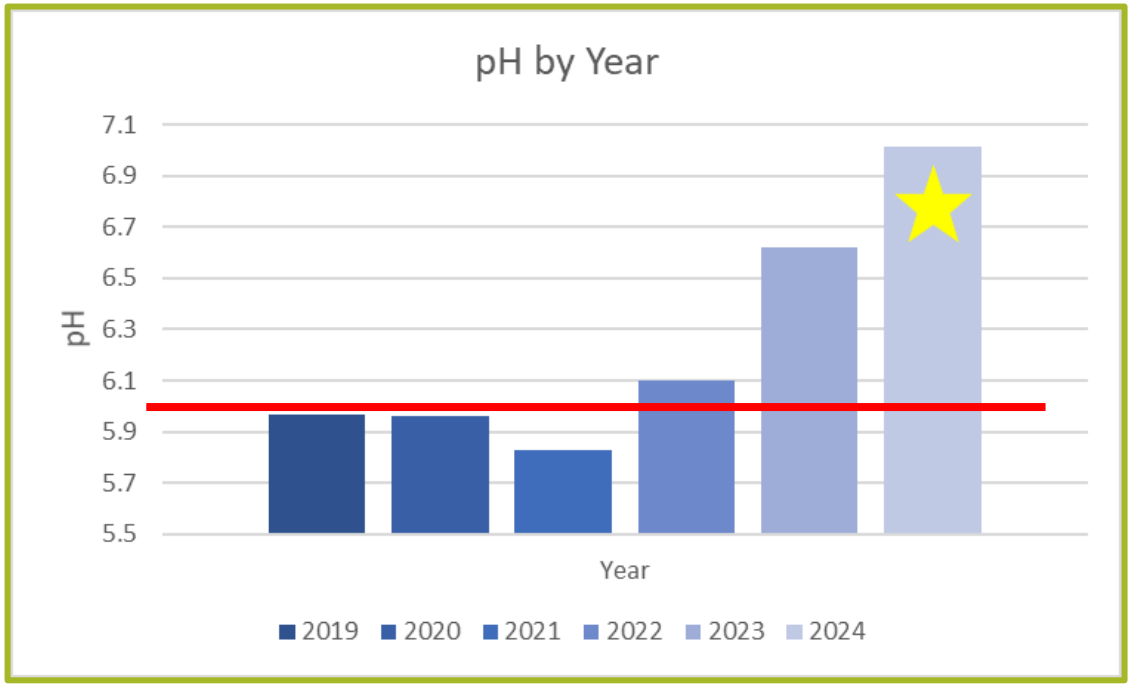
GT-1 Bearcamp River: May 2019-Oct 2024

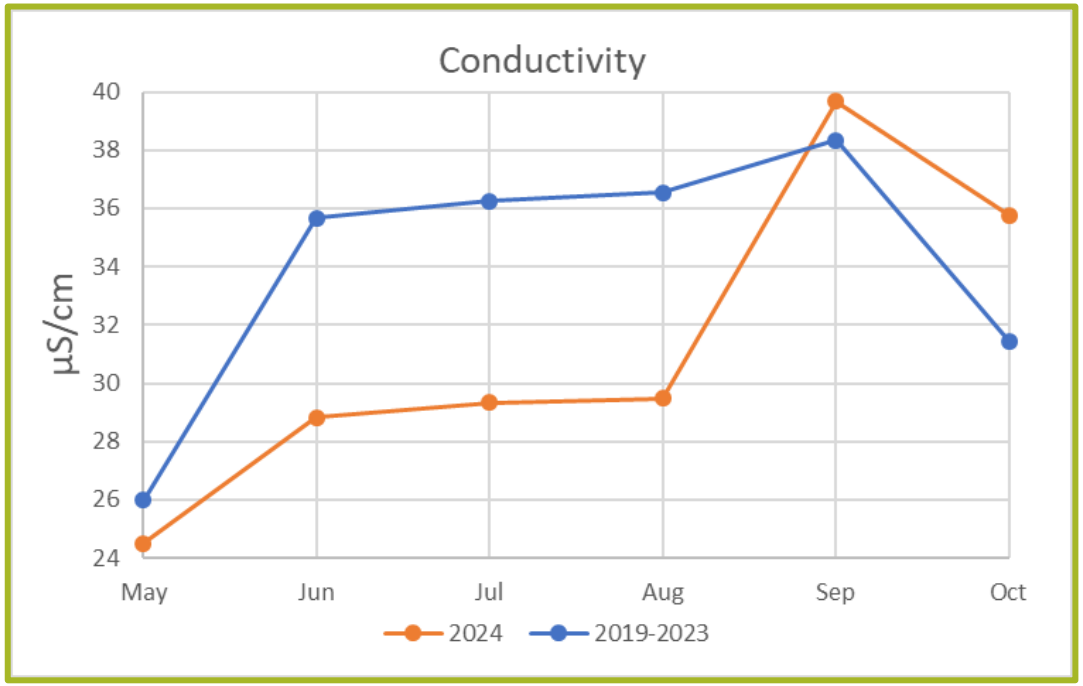
- Monitored since 2002
- Parameters measured: pH, turbidity, temperature, conductivity, DO, TP



Parameter	Status
Temp.	Stable.
TP	Stable and in range.
Turbidity	Stable and in range. 2024 median turbidity was the lowest value observed in the past six years.

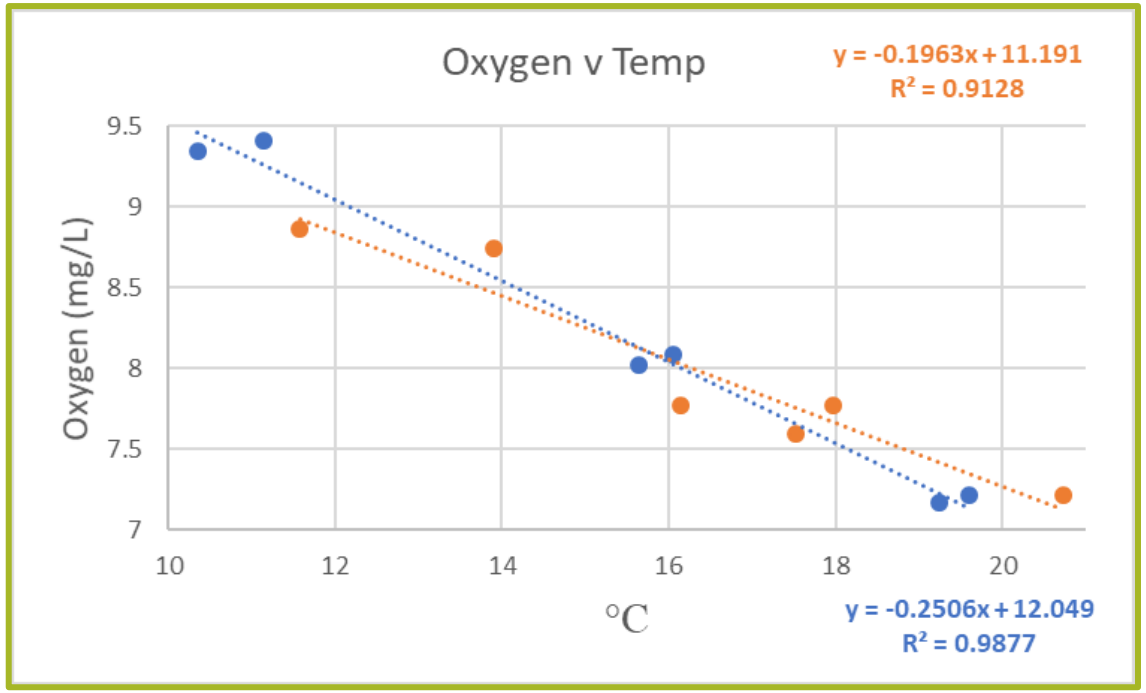
GT-1 Bearcamp River: May 2019-Oct 2024



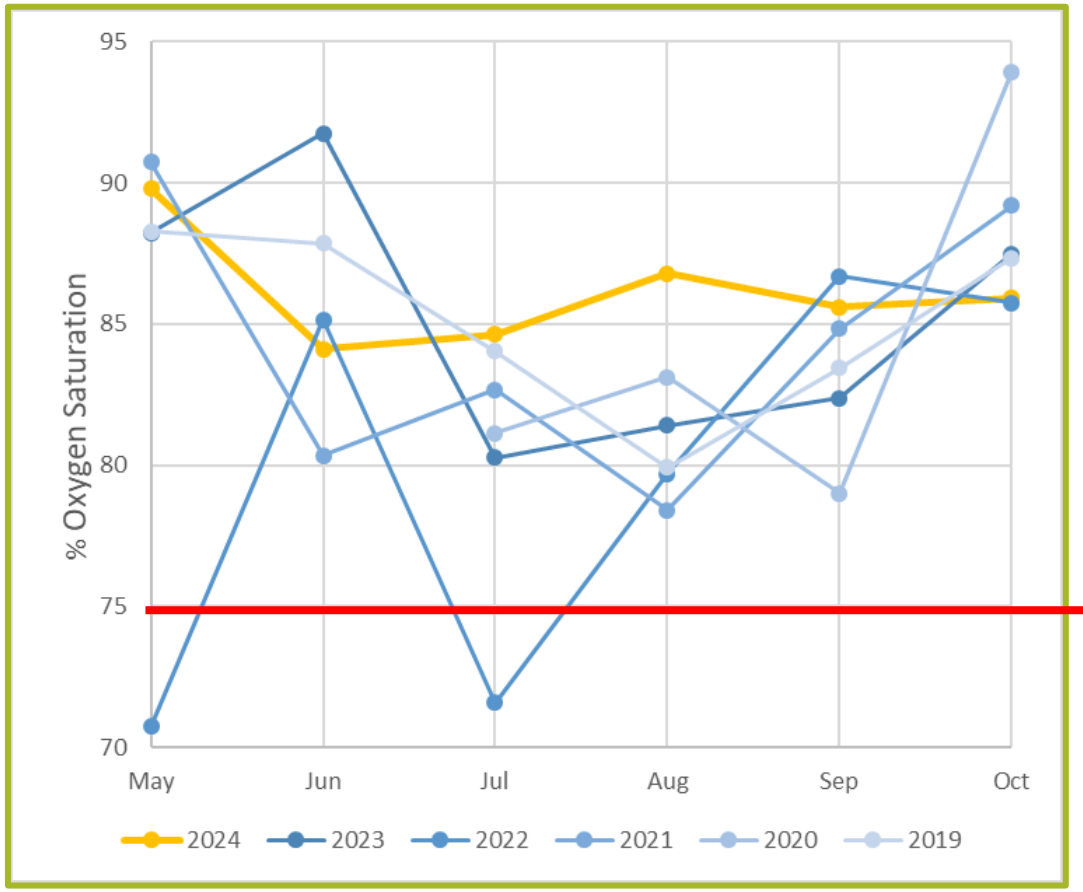


Parameter	Status
pH	pH was higher than it had been for the past five years, although pH has been within a healthy range since 2022.
Conductivity	Conductivity in 2024 was lower than combined values from 2019-2023 with the exception of September and October. All values are well within a healthy range.

GT-1 Bearcamp River: May 2019-Oct 2024



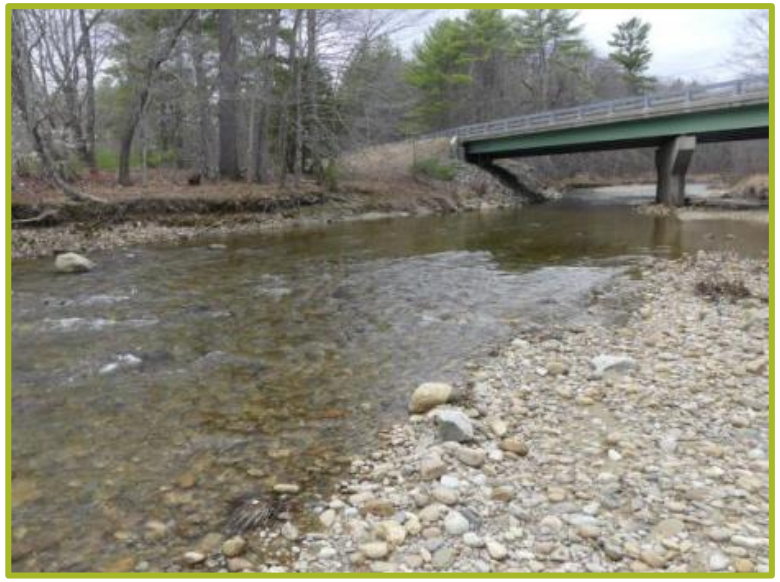
DO should have an inverse relationship with temperature- colder water can dissolve more oxygen.



Parameter	Status
DO (mg/L)	The R^2 value from 2024 (orange) was similar, although slightly lower than the R^2 value from 2019-2023 (blue) which indicates a consistent relationship between parameters at this site. All values were within a healthy range.
DO (%)	In 2024, DO % was often on the higher end of values from the past six years, and was the highest value recorded in July and August. Only in 2022 were values outside of a healthy range.

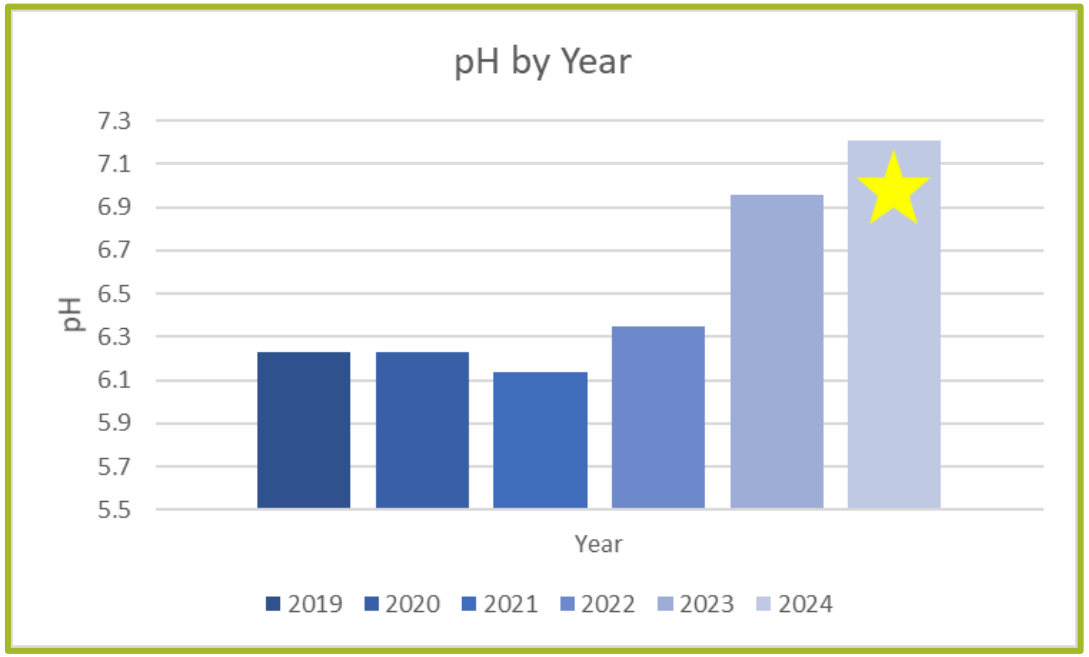
GS-1 Cold River: Jan 2019-Dec 2024

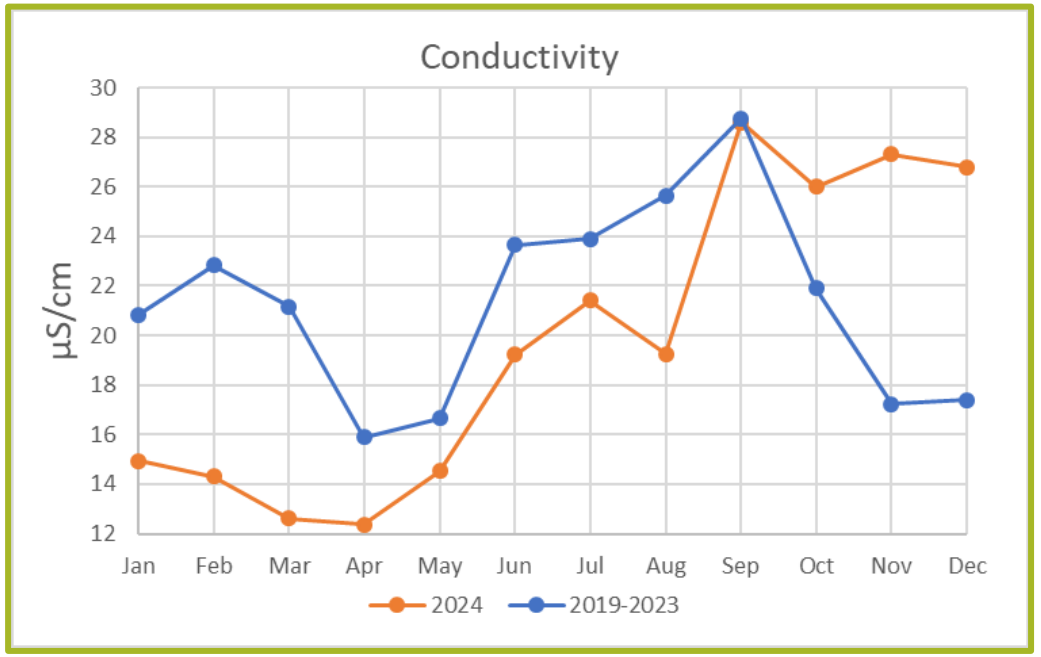
- Monitored since 2002
- Parameters measured: pH, turbidity, temperature, conductivity, DO, TP, LL



Parameter	Status
Temp.	Stable.
TP	Stable and in range.
Turbidity	Stable and in range. Lowest median value since 2020.

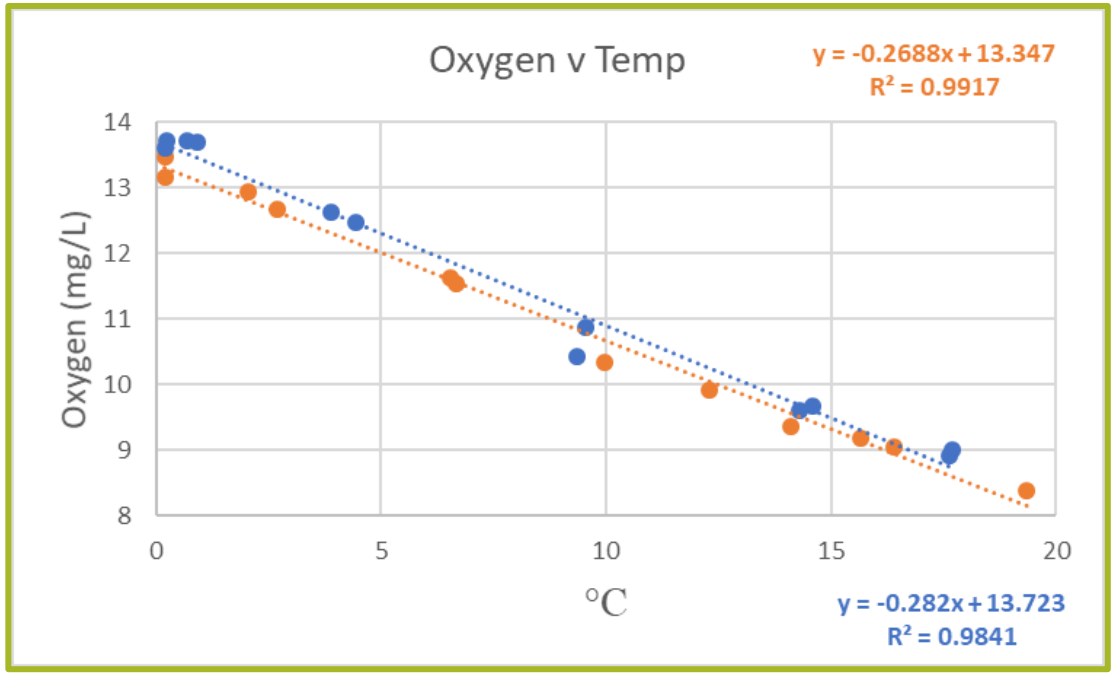
GS-1 Cold River: Jan 2019-Dec 2024

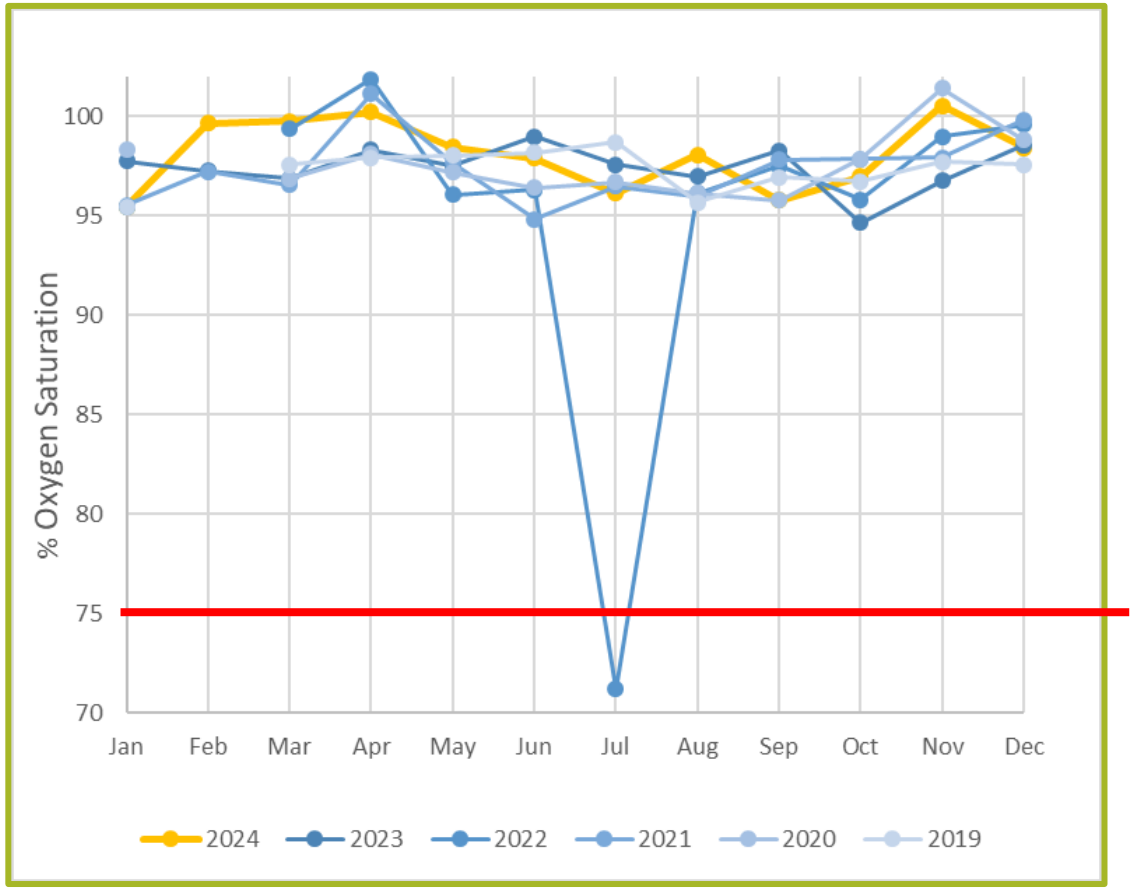




Parameter	Status
pH	pH was higher than it had been for the past five years, although all were within a healthy range.
Conductivity	Conductivity in 2024 was lower than combined values from 2019-2023 for all 12 months of the year. All values were well within a healthy range.

GS-1 Cold River: Jan 2019-Dec 2024





Parameter	Status
DO (mg/L)	The R^2 value from 2024 (orange) was similar to the R^2 value from 2019-2023 (blue) which indicates a consistent relationship between parameters at this site. DO (mg/L) in 2024 was slightly lower than combined values from 2019-2023, although all values were within a healthy range.
DO (%)	In 2024, DO % values were similar to those from 2019-2023, and all values except for July of 2022 were within a healthy range.

GS-1 Cold River *2024 only

Parameter	Months Sampled	Typical Pristine Surface Water Concentrations	Status
Ammonium	Feb-May, Aug-Oct	< 200 µg/L	In range
Orthophosphate	Jan-May, July-Dec	< 10 µg/L	Exceeded in Apr, Aug, Sept and Oct. Oct value is of acute concern
Dissolved Organic Carbon	Jan-May, Aug-Oct	1-10 mg/L	In range
Total Dissolved Nitrogen	Jan-May, Aug-Oct	< 0.5 mg/L	In range
Dissolved Organic Nitrogen	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	n/a	In range
Nitrate	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	< 0.05 mg/L	Exceeded in Mar, Apr, and Oct
Chloride	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	< 10 mg/L	In range
Sulfate	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	< 80 mg/L	In range
Sodium	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	< 50 mg/L	In range
Potassium	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	< 10 mg/L	In range
Magnesium	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	1-100 mg/L	Below 1 mg/L every month sampled
Calcium	Mar-May, Aug-Oct	< 15 mg/L	In range

Overview of Findings

The majority of parameters tested fell within the acceptable limits for surface waters set by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and/or the Environmental Protection Agency. Our findings do not indicate any trends or incidences of immediate concern.

At **GS-1**, nitrate exceeded pristine surface water standards in March, April, and October. Notably, none of these heightened values neared concentrations that would be of acute concern for ecosystem/ human health.

Across **all sites visited**, pH was higher in 2024 than in the previous five years. While there were no instances of pH values exceeding the healthy range, the trend is nonetheless worth paying attention to.

At **GS-1**, orthophosphate exceeded pristine surface water standards in April, August, September and October. Notably, the October value exceeded 50 µS/cm- the recommended limit set by the EPA for rivers discharging to lakes. This may indicate excessive nutrient loading in Cold River.

What steps can Sandwich take to protect its waters?

At Home

- Encourage residents to get their septic systems regularly checked and maintained
- Use Best Management practices (BMPs) for proper disposal of chemicals and waste materials

On Roads

- Reduce salt application on roadways, especially near bodies of water and sensitive habitats, like wetlands
  - Consider brining: an equally effective and more environmentally conscious method for keeping roads clear

In Town

- Monitor the effectiveness of culverts, and work to replace those posing as safety and environmental hazards (frequent flooding, erosion of surrounding earth, partial collapse, etc.)
- Maintain riparian areas(aka Streamside Management Zones) and monitor habitats near bodies of water for major changes

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

AmeriCorps

GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GROUP

Report respectfully submitted by:
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