



Burlington Fire Department



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Section: 04 - Special Operations	
SOG Number: 04.05	Effective Date: June 24, 2020
Subject: Water Emergencies on the Winooski River	
By Order of Fire Chief Steven A. Locke	

I. Purpose:

To establish an operational guide for water related emergencies on the Winooski River.

II. Scope:

This document applies to all operational personnel of the Burlington Fire Department. It has been developed in conjunction with our mutual aid partners who have been identified as critical to the incident, including: Winooski Fire Department and Colchester Technical Rescue.

The United States Coast Guard has reviewed this document, yet were unable to provide comment as they are not trained in swift water rescue (as defined by the USCG as water moving faster than 1 knot).

As with any emergency situation, it may be necessary to deviate from this guide in order to effectively mitigate a life-saving rescue.

III. Definitions:

River Left: Oriented looking down stream, the left side (Burlington Side) of the river.

River Right: Oriented looking down stream, the right side (Winooski Side) of the River.

IV. Guidelines:

A). Dispatch of Resources

1. A report of an emergency on the Winooski River will be dispatched with the most appropriate call type given the information provided. The Burlington Fire Department computer aided dispatch (CAD) Incident type will determine the resource assignment for the incident. Sample incident types and their resource allocation include:
 - a. Water Rescue
 - (1) 2 engines, 2 ambulances, Tower 1, Shift Commander
 - b. Ice Rescue
 - (1) 2 engines, 2 ambulances, Tower 1, Shift Commander
2. There may be incident types that cannot be captured by the CAD, including situations such as persons threatening to jump from a bridge. Resource deployment to these incidents should mirror the water rescue assignment above and include the appropriate law enforcement response. Responding units shall exercise caution on approach to not escalate the situation through the use of lights or sirens and by staging in strategic areas.
3. In addition to the BFD resources assigned, the CAD will identify the need for mutual aid resources or special call apparatus, including Rescue 1, Winooski Fire Department, Police, and Colchester Technical Rescue. These mutual aid agencies will need to be requested by Dispatch.

B). Incident Command

1. The first arriving unit shall establish command and follow the guidance outlined in the appropriate standard operating guideline (i.e. SOG 04.08 Swiftwater Rescue and/or SOG 04.01 – Water Rescue).
2. Upon the arrival of the on-duty Shift Commander or Winooski Chief Officer, a Unified Command post shall be established.

C). Unified Command Post Locations

1. Utilizing lessons learned from previous events, all agencies acknowledge the value of a Unified Command post. Unified Command will ensure an accurate relay of information, sound Incident Action Plan Development, and safe operational coordination and mitigation. Each situation may dictate the need to deviate from some of these established locations.

2. For incidents which occur below the **Winooski One Hydro-electric Dam**, in the area known as the **Salmon Hole**, a unified command post should be established on River Right (Winooski Side) regardless of the patient location. See location “CP-1” on the attached map. Figure 1 shows the view from the Winooski One Hydroelectric Plant.
 - a. Visibility is increased on the Winooski side.
 - b. Boat access is more easily achieved on the Winooski side.
 - c. Vehicular access is easier on the Winooski side.



Figure 1: View from Winooski One Hydroelectric Dam

3. For incidents which occur downstream, in the area of the railroad bridge (locally known as the “**Blue Bridge**”) a unified command post shall be established at the City of Winooski Wastewater treatment plant, accessed from West Allen Street, Winooski. The view from the Winooski Wastewater Treatment Plant may be seen in Figure 2. See location “CP-2” on the attached map.



Figure 2: View from the Winooski Wastewater Treatment Plant

4. For incidents which occur upstream, between the Winooski One Hydro-electric dam and the Winooski Falls, a unified command post shall be established in the parking lot of the **Chase Mill**. See location “CP-3” on the attached map. The view from the Chase Mill parking lot may be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3: View from Chase Mill Parking Lot

5. For incidents which occur upstream, between the Winooski Falls and the City line with South Burlington, the Incident Commander shall exercise their discretion on the location of the command post. Suggestions include, the Winooski River Walk, accessed off **Abenaki Way** in Winooski, or **Chase Street** in Burlington. The view from Abenaki Way may be seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4: View from Abenaki Way in Winooski

D). Communications

1. Once the Unified Command post is established, the operational radio frequency will be moved to UTAC 41 (this is a deviation from BFD SOG 06.26 – Use of Tactical Channels).
2. Incoming Units will hail the incident Commander on UCALL 40. *Of note, at the time of publication the Burlington Fire Department Dispatch center does not have the ability to transmit or monitor UCALL or UTAC frequencies.*
3. Communications with Burlington Fire Dispatch will occur on BFD Channel 1.

E). Access Points to the Winooski River

1. Site #1 – Winooski One Hydro-electric Dam – West Canal Street.
 - a. Access can be made to areas above and below the hydro dam. There is very limited area to support vehicles larger than an ambulance or command SUV.
2. Site #2 – 100-110 West Canal Street, Winooski, Millyard Condominiums.
 - a. Access to the river via small boat and canoe launch. This access is currently in disrepair and steep. It provides an access point to go back to the east and west to include the three islands in the Salmon Hole.

3. Site #3 – 236 West Canal Street, Winooski – Private Residence
 - a. This is a very good access point to the river to go both east and west. There is a road that runs from Canal Street down to the river; however, it is limited to 4 x 4 vehicles.
4. Site #4 – West Allen Street, Winooski Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - a. This area provides a good access point to the east to 236 West Canal Street and to the west at the railroad bridge (Blue Bridge) and points beyond.
5. Site #5 – Gardner Supply Company, 128 Intervale Road, Burlington
 - a. This area provides foot access downstream of the railroad (Blue) bridge. Close to the river’s edge with about 20 feet of wooded slope to the water’s edge.
6. Site #6 – Salmon Hole, Burlington, foot access
 - a. This area provides access to the Salmon Hole hiking trails. The trail is wide and maintained. Stairs provide access down from the Riverside Avenue parking area.
7. Site #7 – Chase Mill Parking Lot, Mill Street, Burlington.
 - a. This area provides quick access to River Left between the Winooski One Hydro-electric dam and the Winooski Falls. This is the only access that provides for a rapid deployment of a swift water boat.
8. Site #8 – 90-102 Chase Street, Burlington, Private Residence.
 - a. This site affords a good access upstream of the Winooski Falls to the area below the interstate and the Winooski Gorge. The back yard has a slight grade that affords easy boat access.
9. Site #9 – Abenaki Way, Winooski
 - a. This site affords grade level access above the Winooski Falls, upstream to the Interstate Bridge.

F). Staging area for resources

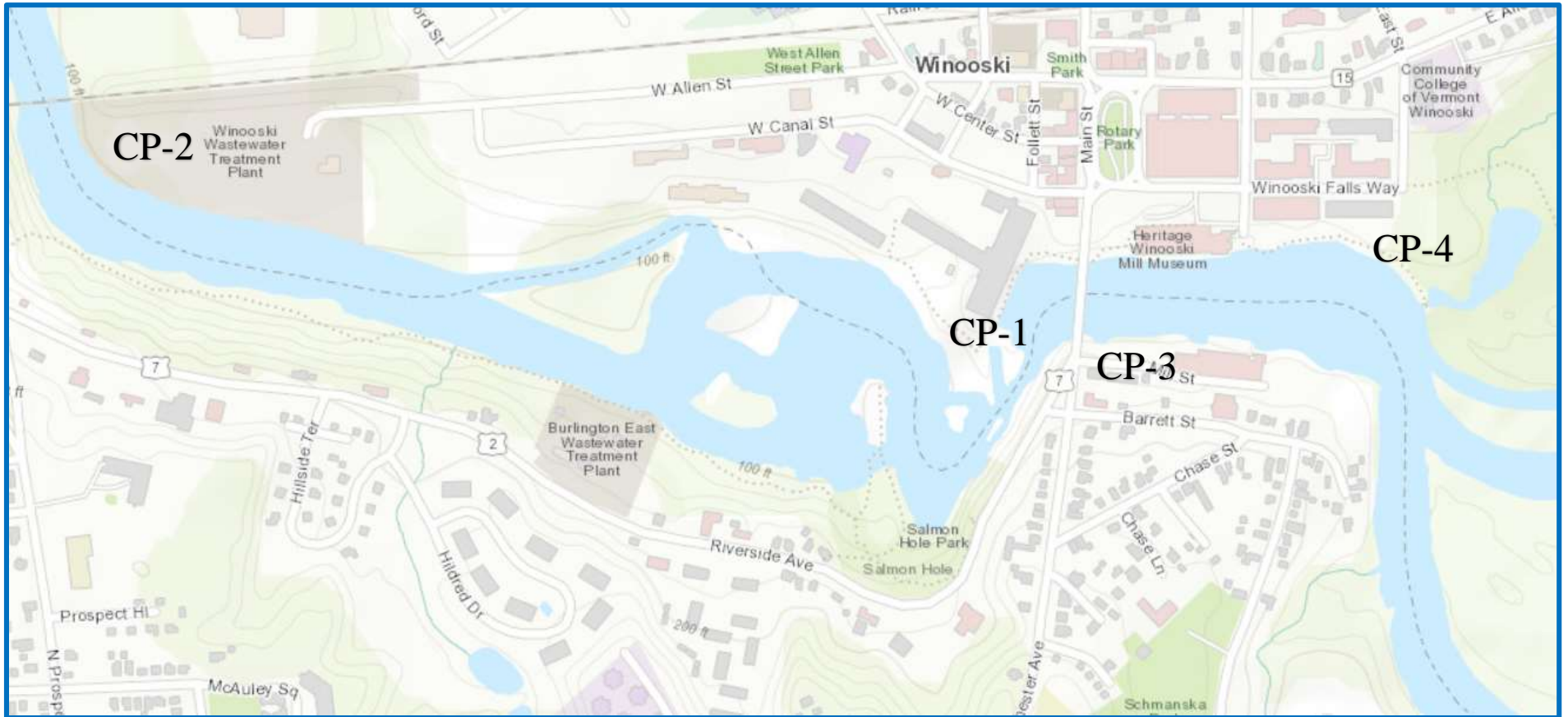
1. Each incident will dictate the variety of resource needs. The incident commander should consider utilizing level II staging for resources not actively assigned a task. Level II staging areas include:
 - a. West Canal Street, Winooski
 - b. Winooski Falls Way, Winooski
 - c. Riverside Avenue, Burlington
 - d. Barrett Street, Burlington

V. Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of all members to read, understand and follow this Standard Operating Guideline

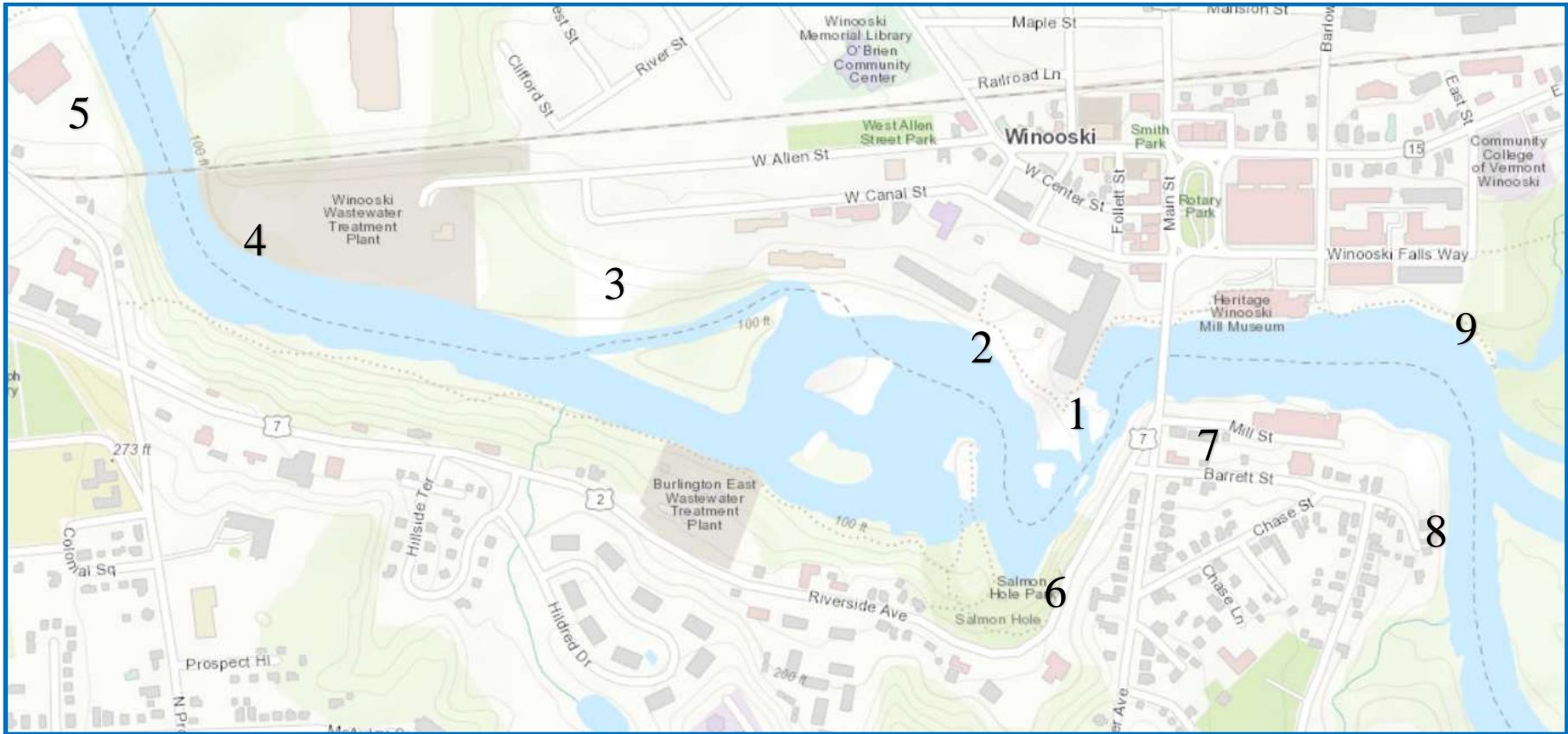
Revision History			
Revision Date	Section	Summary	Principal Author
A	TBD	TBD	DC Collette

Command Post Locations



Command Post Locations - May 2020

Access Point Locations



Access Point Locations – 2020

Access Point 1 – Winooski One Hydro-electric Dam – First left on W. Canal Street, Winooski, Vermont

Access Point 2 – 100-110 West Canal Street, Winooski (Millyard Condominiums)

Access Point 3 – 236 West Canal Street, Winooski. Private residence.

Access Point 4 – Winooski Wastewater Treatment Plant, West Allen Street, Winooski.

Access Point 5 – Gardner Supply Company, 128 Intervale Road, Burlington.

Access Point 6 – Salmon Hole foot paths, Riverside Avenue, Burlington.

Access Point 7 – Chase Mill Parking area, Mill Street, Burlington.

Access Point 8 – 90-102 Chase Street, Burlington. Private residence.

Access Point 9 – Abenaki Way, Winooski.