



## RARE PLANT SURVEY

### Rail Trail - Rare Aster Survey

### Connecticut River, MA

New England Environmental, Inc. (NEE) completed a survey for a rare aster prior to the construction of a bike path crossing along the Connecticut River. The species involved is a small plant, when found in Central Massachusetts. This species is more common north of Massachusetts, where it grows to a much larger size. A healthy population of the species was identified near, but not within, the proposed area of bikeway construction. NEE botanists followed Natural Heritage & Endangered Species protocols during the survey, and had to differentiate the rare species from two very similar white aster species typical for the area.



Rare aster located on the shore of the Connecticut River.



Rare aster in flower.



Senescent plant on water's edge of the Connecticut



View of the former rail road track as it crosses the Connecticut River, and the location of the proposed bike path where the survey was conducted.

#### NEE Survey:

- NEE's botanist performed a rare plant survey successfully locating approximately 150 plants, of the subject species near the proposed bike path. None were located within the proposed construction area.
- The subject species was distinguished from two smaller but similar white aster species present at the site.
- Plants bloomed and senesced within a one month period.
- Many of the plants were visible only as basal whorls.
- NEE provided recommendations to the client to prevent impact to the species by those using the bike path.
- None of the plants needed to be transplanted as part of the bike path construction.

