

## **Local Watershed Council Activity Reports –May 2017**

Taken from: RI Rivers Council Meeting Minutes, May 10, 2017

**Kickemuit River Council** – as reported by Robin Hagan Aguiar:

KRC participated in Earth Day activities in the Town of Warren, displaying the poster and brochures of the fish ladder. And it was represented at the RI March for Science " Earth Day Everyday"! As the KRC is a small part-time watershed committee our busy season is coming up. The KRC will be meeting to discuss other projects and funding resources.

<http://www.kickemuitriver.org/>

**Narrow River Preservation Association** – as reported by Mr. Grant:

*Narrow River Salt Marsh Restoration Project – Planting Phase*

NRPA is scheduling volunteers to plant 35,000 cordgrass and seagrass seedlings (plugs) into the areas where dredge material was deposited as a part of the Salt Marsh Restoration Project. On May 4, USFWS Staff Charlie Vandemoer and Ben Gaspar took NRPA Board Members on a tour of the restoration project and the areas to be planted. Both USFWS and NRPA welcome this increased collaboration in support of the Narrow River Watershed.

Volunteers will schedule their planting session online or by phone with NRPA, then meet USFWS and Save the Bay staff on site. Planting shifts last 2-3 hours and volunteers of all ages are welcome. Planting starts May 11 and continues throughout the month.

The NRPA website ([narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org)) contains planting information including planting dates and times, number of volunteers needed (updated daily), types of grasses to be planted, a map of the planting areas and links to sign up to plant.

Inviting volunteers to do the planting engages local residents in the well being of the river. We are pleased to have many groups signed up to plant, including school groups, a home school group, employees of local businesses, Rhody Fly Rodders, RI Saltwater Anglers Association, URI Men's Rowing Team and others.

*River Watch*

As we begin our 26<sup>th</sup> season of River Watch, returning and new volunteers have been trained and assigned to our 14 testing sites.

*Boys and Girls Club of Newport County – Camp Grosvenor*

In our ongoing effort to connect with neighbors in the watershed, NRPA Board President Richard Grant and Program Coordinator Alison Kates recently met Jake Crowell, Director of Camp Grosvenor. Jake provided a walking tour of the 95 acre day camp, which is entirely in the Narrow River Watershed and has a large beachfront on Narrow River's Upper Pond. NRPA plans to work with Jake to bring our 'What Lives in the River' program to the campers and to provide educational materials about the watershed and its inhabitants. The camp is required to perform annual water testing as part of Department of Health swimming area regulations and Jake

shared this water testing data with NRPA for our data library. We look forward to working with Jake and the Boys and Girls Club this summer and going forward.

#### *Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum Spring Fair*

NRPA Board Members greeted guests at the recent Spring Fair at Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum in North Kingstown, which sits at the top of the watershed. We provided information to interested visitors, including river life coloring pages for children. The event was well attended and we intend to have a presence there in upcoming years.

#### *Watershed Friendly Activities Outreach*

With the aim of minimizing pollution in Narrow River, the NRPA Board is developing an outreach plan to minimize resident use of toxins in lawn care, pest control and other activities. A subcommittee was formed to research regulations, guides and resources designed to minimize use of pollutants. Once research is complete, the subcommittee plans to develop an outreach plan to educate local residents.

Any input on this topic from RIRC and member Watershed Councils is welcome. Ideally, our outreach plan would be shared with other watersheds to minimize pollutant use throughout Rhode Island.

#### *NRPA upcoming summer events*

-30<sup>th</sup> Annual Narrow River Road Race – May 20

-What Lives in the River – June 17

-12<sup>th</sup> Annual Turnaround Swim – June 24

-10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle – July 21

-Art on the River – August 5

-What Lives in the River and Marsh Walk in concert with 'Gansett Days – September 16

-In addition, NRPA will have a presence at these local fairs:

- Eco-Fair on Saturday, May 20 at Compass School in Kingston, RI
- Environmental Awareness Day – Saturday, July 15 at Narragansett Town Beach

[www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

#### **Pawtuxet River Authority and watershed Council** – as reported by Mr. Horbert:

The Fish Passage restoration Feasibility study for Blackamore Pond in Cranston and Cranberry Pond in Warwick has been completed, and has identified many challenges. It is likely that introducing or improving fish passage to Cranberry Pond is not feasible or advisable. There are definitely options available to restore or improve fish passage into Blackamore Pond, but some options (such as culvert replacement) could be expensive (\$100,000 plus). Spawning habitat is available in Blackamore pond, but spawning success could be affected by poor water quality and the existence of contaminants in the substrate.

We have been approached by a few individuals and companies regarding the unfinished dock at

Randall Pond, and there has been interest by companies and civic leaders in finishing this project. The PRAWC may explore funding the remainder of the project costs with donations rather than pursuing another grant. This idea is just being explored for the time being.

A number of cleanups were accomplished in April and the first weekend of May. Cleanups were completed at our Pontiac Canoe Launch; our Harris to Phenix Riverwalk; Tongue Pond; along the South Branch Pawtuxet (as part of a larger effort by the Town of Coventry); our Arkwright to Harris Riverwalk; and at Pawtuxet Falls. This coming weekend will be another large-scale cleanup along the Pawtuxet River with the Town of Johnston and other groups.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting a family fishing derby again at Tiogue Lake in conjunction with Coventry Recreation.

We hope to pursue a Section 319 grant for a stormwater retrofit project on Libera Street at Randall Pond in Cranston. This will require getting the City of Cranston on board as well as our adjacent neighbor. This could be an involved and expensive effort requiring engineering designs and advanced construction techniques.

<http://www.pawtuxet.org/>

**Salt Ponds Coalition** – as reported by Ms. Eichinger:

SPC hosted Pond Watcher Training and bag distribution. Monitors are all set for the year, except at Potato Point where Claire and I plan to fill in until another monitor is found.

We are still processing memberships from our 2017 membership drive, but so far response has been good. Board member Ann Manion and I are working to update some of our membership materials in the hopes of gaining new members over the summer season.

SPC attended a meeting at CRMC to discuss permitting under the post-Sandy resiliency grant for both Quonochontaug and Winnapaug. Also to discuss their application for funds to actually do the dredge/restoration in Quonochontaug Pond.

SPC in coordination with Save the Bay and CRMC is recruiting volunteers to help plant marsh grass in the marsh near the breachway in Ninigret Pond. (Art, Claire, and I will be out there planting grasses on Friday!)

[www.saltpondscoalition.org](http://www.saltpondscoalition.org)

**Ten Mile River Watershed Council** – written report submitted by Ben Cote:

The Ten Mile River Watershed Council is continuing with our fish counting at the Hunts Mills Fish Ladders. Members have received permits to lift herring over an obstacle below the falls. On April 8th, we conducted a cleanup in Slater Park in Pawtucket. Members went deep into a swamp to remove trash that had been collecting for decades. More work needs to be done. On

April 22nd, we took part in a Pawtucket Citywide cleanup, working in the Ten Mile River Reservation. We are continuing to move forward with our hiking guide to the Watershed. Trails are being explored and we continue to look for proper funding. Later this month, we will be joining the city of Attleboro for their annual river cleanup and we will be joining the Canoe and Kayak Association for a paddle on the Bungay River to continue to raise awareness of our plan for a wild and scenic designation.

<http://www.tenmileriver.net/>

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association** as reported by Ms. Torello:

#### *Water Quality Monitoring*

Due to budget constraints, WPWA was forced to suspend the sponsorship of 15 medium priority water quality monitoring sites in the watershed. WPWA will spend 2017 focusing on securing sponsors for each site so that they can be restored in 2018. Thankfully five sponsors have already been secured allowing those sites to be monitored this year. WPWA will also be focused on finding sponsors for its 30 high priority sites. Of these 30, four now have sponsors.

2017 funding from the Bays River and Watershed Coordination Team, through the RIRC, is building a critical bridge to allow WPWA to preserve the high priority sites in 2017 and allow us time to conduct targeted fund raising. We are very appreciative of Veronica, Sue, Rachel and all of the RIRC members and RIDEM staff's efforts to allow the BRWCT stormwater funding to be programmable to URI's Watershed Watch to support water quality monitoring throughout RI.

We will be retrieving, downloading, cleaning, and re-deploying our ten conductivity meters this Friday, and are eagerly looking forward to analyzing the data.

#### *The John "Jay" Cronan Access Area Rehabilitation Project*

The John "Jay" Cronan access area on the Pawcatuck River is nearly ready to be re-opened to the public. The only construction hurdle that needs to be overcome is the installation of curbing on the fishing pier to ensure wheelchairs cannot roll off into the river. Throughout construction, WPWA has been approached by many members of the public who are appreciative of the rehabilitation project and the addition of universal access to the river. These comments make the long and expensive road to final completion worthwhile. We were pleased that the stormwater containment systems and the river banks that were permanently fortified protected the site from damage during the several spring flood watches.

#### *Fish Passage*

We were pleased to see masses of river herring gathering at the new fish ladder at Horseshoe Falls on the upper Pawcatuck. Volunteer fish counters saw an average of 75 fish per hour moving up the ladder on their way to spawn in Worden Pond. WPWA is so very thankful to all its project partners who made fish passage at three dam sites in Richmond and Charlestown a reality. Restoring spawning access to the state's largest natural freshwater pond after centuries of obstruction is truly an historic event.

### *Membership*

May marks the time for the WPWA annual meeting and membership renewal drive. This year members will not only have unlimited access to canoes and kayaks, but we have also added angler kayaks and paddleboards to our fleet. Please consider joining WPWA for its slimmed down annual meeting on May 18th from 6:30-8:30pm at WPWA. And be sure to visit [www.wpwa.org](http://www.wpwa.org) to join so that you too and a guest can have unlimited access to canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards at no cost all year long.

### *Paddle Programs for Underserved Youth*

Thanks to a grant from the RI Trail Advisory Committee to conduct up to 10 paddle programs for underserved youth, eight programs are already booked.

### *Wild and Scenic Rivers*

The website with detailed information about the project is now on-line at [wpwilddrivers.org](http://wpwilddrivers.org). The Study Committee is sponsoring a photo contest in conjunction with watershed land trusts, conservation commissions, and historic societies. Details will be available on the website.

### *Flood Resilience and Management Plan (FRMP)*

The consultants are still finishing the draft of the final plan. It will include sections for each town that provides any concerns for flooding found in the town and specific recommendations for remedial projects. WPWA will also take part in the workshop next week for the Narragansett Watershed Assessment.

<http://www.wpwa.org/>

**Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council** – as reported by Doug Stevens, written report submitted by Kassi Archambault:

*Educational Programs:* WRWC will be leading an environmental and historical activity for Narragansett Bay Commission education program final celebration. River Adventurers middle school program is off to a good start and field trips for biking and kayaking are scheduled. The Environmental Leaders high school program is coming to a close with projects. Fish in the Classroom, our elementary program, is being taught by Environmental Educator Sara Canuel. We are presently reaching about 85 students. We are looking for a volunteer photographer for our Fish Release Celebrations the week of June 6th. Please contact Kassi if you or a friend is interested, (401)861-9046 [KArchambault@wrwc.org](mailto:KArchambault@wrwc.org)

*WRWC Education Director Kassi Archambault received the Emerging Environmental Leader Award from Clean Water Action at their Breakfast of Champions Event “for [her] dedication to community outreach, education, and engagement and [her] excellent work involving urban youth in programs and projects that make our communities cleaner, greener, and more resilient.” –John Berard Clean Water Action State Director.*

*Red Shed and Bike Camp:* Our April Vacation Girls Bike Camp was a success! Girls learned about

the environment, plus how to ride and fix bikes. The girls were very proud of themselves and each other. Summer camp registration is open, there are less than 50 spaces left already!! This summer, your child can learn to fix their bike, gain safe riding skills, and go on great group rides every weekday for a week. Plus, each child gets a **bike, helmet and lock to keep!!**

**Bike Camp is held @ The Red Shed Bike Shop:**

Riverside Park, 50 Aleppo Street, Providence, RI

\* For youth ages 8-13 years old \*

\* Monday-Friday 9am - 3pm \*

\* Lunch is provided \*

Go to [WRWC.org](http://WRWC.org) to register!

*River Rangers:* Senior and Junior River Rangers have now been hired and demonstrated teamwork and skills on events and projects. All community Clean Days on the Greenway events for the season are on [WRWC RI Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WRWCRI) and [WRWC.org](http://WRWC.org)

We have begun to track the yearly clean up metrics on the Greenway. Here's how much has already been done this year, January through last week.

We've removed from the Greenway & River:

- 83 bags of litter
- 80 cubic yards bulky debris & general garbage (um - whoa!)
- 0 large tires
- 14 small tires
- 39 small graffiti tags removed (under 2 sq ft)
- 58 large graffiti tags removed (over 2 sq ft)

WRWC has already been busy on the Greenway!

*San Souci Clean Day:* The Greenway Team is excited to promote the coming changes to *San Souci Dr.* with cleanups & projects on May 12, including a temporary pop-up protected bike lane in partnership with Recycle-A-Bike, RI Bike, and the East Coast Greenway. Join WRWC River Rangers and United Way RI, our Clean Day project co-host, as we continue our boots on the ground improvements in preparation for bigger changes! Activities include: bike wheel art installation, painting projects graffiti knockouts, mulch mobs, invasive plant management litter sweeps, river cleanups. Friday, May 12th, 2017, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

*Urban Fish Monitoring:*

- *Water Quality Monitoring:* Has begun for the season! Contact Doug Stephens for more.
- *Herring Return Count:* Herring have returned in record numbers, the data coming in shows much larger raw counts this year than ever before. Contact John Hake to volunteer!  
[jhake@wrwc.org](mailto:jhake@wrwc.org)

*The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council has been nominated for four Olneyville Ovie Awards!* Voting closes Friday, May 26th at 4pm. To vote, please keep a lookout for our email blast or social media and click on the link!!

We are being recognized in the following categories:

- Best in Youth Programming: Red Shed Bike Camp
- Best in Community Health Impact
- Best in Collaboration: (w/ Manton Avenue Project)
- Best Community Event: Clean Day on the Greenway

*Upcoming Events:*

*Clean Days on the Greenway*

San Souci Clean Day

May 12th, 1-4p @ San Souci Dr

Meet at **United Way Rhode Island parking lot** 50 Valley Street, Providence RI 02909 (additional parking - Church of the Master, across the street)

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Contact Nicole to join | 401-861-9046 [nvance@wrwc.org](mailto:nvance@wrwc.org)**

[www.wrwc.org](http://www.wrwc.org)

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Note: May 2017 Activity Reports were not available from:

- Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone
- Buckeye Brook Coalition
- Friends of the Moshassuck