

WILD & SCENIC

2014 ANNUAL
REPORT

WESTFIELD RIVER

COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY MEMBERS JOIN
WATERSHED BLITZ

SURVEY 20+ MILES OF WESTFIELD RIVER



**WILD & SCENIC
WESTFIELD RIVER
COMMITTEE**

Conservation Grants
Help Protect 420
Acres

Dam
Removed
Invasive Guide

Volunteer of the Year
Conservation Hero
Stream Teams

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Town of Becket

Mercedes Gallagher, Treasurer
Karen Karlberg, *alt.*

Town of Chester

Robert Thompson, Chair
Dave Pierce, *alt.*

Town of Chesterfield

Nancy Rich; Denise Cormier, *alt.*

Town of Cummington

Amy Pulley

Town of Huntington

Jeff Penn, Vice-Chair

Town of Middlefield

Carol Waag; Terry Crean, *alt.*;
Don Munger, *alt.*

Town of Savoy

John Tynan

Town of Washington

Roy Bryan

Town of Windsor

Jim Caffrey, Secretary

Town of Worthington

Carole Fisher; Jim Dodge, *alt.*

Additional Members:

Westfield River Watershed Association
The Trustees of Reservations
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
National Park Service

Associate Member:

Westfield River Environmental Center —
Westfield State University

OUR MISSION

To preserve, protect and enhance the special qualities and outstanding resources of the Westfield River Watershed in concert with local communities.

Front cover: Caddis fly larvae found in the river during the Watershed Blitz.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Did you know Caddisfly larvae, like the one pictured on the front cover, encase themselves in gravel, sand, twigs or other debris found in the river? Caddisflies are predators, leaf shredders, algal grazers, collectors of particles from the water column and indicators of good water quality.

Often caddisflies emerge in their flying adult forms simultaneously, also known as 'hatches' by anglers. Salmonid fish species, including trout, will eat whatever happens to emerging that day. In essence, anglers often try to mimic these flies in hopes of catching the next big fish.

These amazing critters are just some of the remarkable discoveries made by the Watershed Blitz participants who joined us in celebrating the Wild & Scenic Westfield River. We very much appreciate our many enthusiastic volunteers and partners. Our incredible Westfield State University interns also supported our projects from landowner mailings, to surveying streams, to organizing our data.

This year we welcomed several new Committee members and we send a special thank you to all the members who have served in the past.

Several projects are under contract for 2015, including a Rare and Invasive Species Inventory with the New England Wild Flower Society, a new riparian conservation project with The Nature Conservancy, and plans for additional Stream Team workdays, projects and blitzes. Stay tuned for more details!

Join us in 2015 and find an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful scenery and dazzling waters of the Westfield River.

Sincerely,

Robert Thompson, *Chair*

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For four generations the Sarafin family farmed the fields and forests overlooking the Westfield River valley in Chesterfield. With support from a Riparian Conservation Grant, the Franklin Land Trust protected over 54 acres of Maple Acres Farm under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction allowing the family to continue to mill timber, raise cattle, hay fields and maintain the long-term viability of this working landscape.

Photo Credit: Michelle Sarafin

CONSERVATION GRANTS HELP PROTECT 420 ACRES of Forests, Farmlands and Rivers

Five years ago, the Committee launched a Riparian Conservation Grant Program to encourage stewardship and long-term protection of lands important to the river. Funds provided through the program cover fees, such as title reviews, appraisals, legal fees and other closing costs, registry fees, surveys, baseline reports, monitoring plans and funds, and land protection estate planning.

The relatively unfragmented forests protected under this grant program provide critical habitat for many interior forest species and serve as a connector to other adjacent protected forestland. The streams offer some of the best coldwater habitat in Southern New England. Together these lands filter and store water that make its way downstream to over 250,000 people who count on the forests and streams of the Westfield River watershed for a dependable supply of clean drinking water and recreational opportunities. They also provide economic and agricultural opportunities to the region.

For more information about the Committee's Riparian Conservation Grant Program, visit www.wildscenicwestfieldriver.org/riparianGrants.html.

The Committee has provided

9 GRANTS

ranging from

\$3,000-\$15,000

to help protect

420 ACRES

&

9,200+ FEET OF STREAM

in

7 COMMUNITIES.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS JOIN WATERSHED BLITZ

SURVEY 20+ MILES OF THE WESTFIELD RIVER



The Newt and Frog Team found this charming American Toad along the East Branch in Windsor State Forest.

On September 27, 2014, **58 community volunteers and specialists gathered along the banks of the East Branch of the Westfield River for the first Watershed Blitz.**

Participants formed into Teams each led by a specialist and a Stream Team volunteer. Collectively these Teams walked over 20 miles of the upper East Branch and headwater tributaries. With the specialist's expertise, participants discovered what makes this watershed unique. Participants delighted in the chockfull of discoveries.

The birders listened intently as Drowned Land Brook murmured under their feet. The plant team discovered how the moist environment along the East Branch

sprouted willow trees on the bank. The forest ecology team observed how stately hemlocks bow to the power of the river on the outside



Wildlife tracks were just some of the data collected during the Watershed Blitz.

bends. The frog and newt team flipped rocks along the edges of the river uncovering redback and two-lined salamanders. The river ecology team jumped from slimy rock to riparian meadow. The odonate team dashed around the wetland searching for the elusive dragonflies and damselflies. The geology team observed how the river has carved stone masterpieces. The invasive team pondered ways to restore the riverbank and promote native vegetation. The macro-invertebrate team donned waders and kicknets to collect samples along the East Branch and Meadow Brook.

Each of the teams recorded their observations and captured digital photographs and GPS points along



Volunteers ready to survey their section with clipboards, cameras and walking sticks in hand.

their sections. Problems were noted, assets were cataloged and recommendations for priorities of action were shared.

The spirit of community and the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise among the various participants infused the day with enthusiasm and excitement.

“Thank you so much for the Watershed Blitz... it was fun, informative, challenging, engaging and inspiring (to boot)! I loved being part of the day, the spirit of which was protecting the river. I have lived on the East Branch for 25 years. I have watched its ebbs and flows. I walk and swim in it sometimes, but I love it always. Now I have a deeper appreciation for the wonders of its abundant life.”

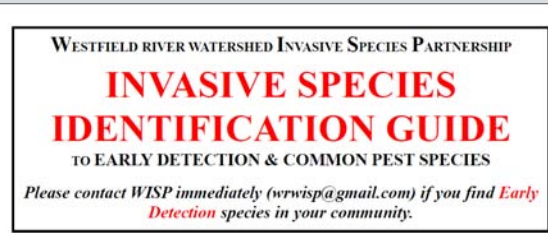
– Fran Henry, Cummington Resident

KINNE BROOK DAM REMOVED



The Committee provided funds to support removal of this small dam and the replacement of two barriers with fish-friendly culverts to restore access to 10+ miles of river habitat to Eastern Brook Trout and other resident species on this important coldwater stream.

WESTFIELD RIVER INVASIVE SPECIES PARTNERSHIP INVASIVE GUIDE



The Committee printed and delivered a packet of materials, including copies of the Invasive Species Identification Guide, to Conservation Commissions and Highway Departments in the Westfield River Watershed. Guides were also made available to Stream Team volunteers to identify invasive species along their stream segments. A limited number of copies are available to volunteers and municipal officials interested in identifying and controlling invasive species in

their communities. You can request a copy by contacting us at 413-579-3015 or by e-mail: coordinator@wildscenicwestfieldriver.org.

LETTER FROM STREAM TEAM PROJECT COORDINATOR

In my six years of coordinating workdays, activities, trainings, developing projects and overseeing volunteers I have enjoyed a learning curve that expands and changes direction much like the river itself.

I now look at a riverbank and understand why it might be collapsing or what might be holding it in place. I can recognize which animal has scampered along and which has sought food under the surface. I know the names of hatching macroinvertebrates and appreciate a well-placed culvert.

I have also gotten to know the extraordinary people who live in and around the Westfield. If you want to spend the day with some of the most interesting, generous, varied, knowledgeable and entertaining people come out to one of our trainings or Wild & Scenic workdays.

-Meredyth Babcock

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

ROAN KATAHDIN

From Stream Team volunteer, to wildlife tracker, to trip leader, Roan has served many roles while exploring the Westfield River. The Committee appreciates the contributions Roan and volunteers like her have made on behalf of the Westfield River and its resources!



I volunteer because it's fun to wade in the river, track critters in snow, and eat lunch on the rocks with good people. I volunteer because it gives me a sense of place. I can ride beside the Westfield and know where a moose has crossed or a mink explored the bank. This is my neighborhood and these are my neighbors. But mostly I volunteer because it makes me feel that I am a part of a greater community. Volunteering not only connects me to great people, but it connects me to the watershed and beyond to the earth that sustains us. And I also get a chance to stumble upon the best swimming holes!

- Roan Katahdin

CONSERVATION HERO

SUSAN MCINTOSH

The National Park Service has recognized Susan McIntosh as a "Conservation Hero" for her contributions, enthusiasm and fortitude she brings to protecting and enhancing the resources of the National Wild & Scenic Westfield River.

Enjoy the Watershed while
you help protect it.

VOLUNTEER

Contact

volunteer@wildscenicwestfieldriver.org
or 413-579-3015

Sue always brings a smile to everyone's faces whenever she arrives for a workday. She is cheerful, hard working and eager to expand and share her knowledge. We have enjoyed her company on many workdays over the last several years and welcome the opportunity to recognize her devotion to the river and trails in the Westfield River Watershed.



In addition to her involvement with the Committee, Sue serves on her local Conservation Commission and volunteers with many organizations in the Hilltowns. Her dedication to her community and the region has made this region a better place to live.

Conservation Hero Awards are made annually by the National Park Service in recognition of outstanding efforts and contributions to projects accomplished in cooperation with the National Park Service.



Dead Branch Stream Team members had the opportunity to explore new reaches of the Dead Branch and several of its tributaries. Several volunteers who surveyed sections of the Westfield River decided to recruit their neighbors and friends (including the four-legged ones!) to survey tributary streams flowing through their backyards. Each Stream Team receives training, GPS units, digital and wildlife cameras, maps, and plenty of opportunities to explore their rivers and streams!

In the past 3 years, groups have surveyed Yokum Brook (Becket), Walker Brook (Becket/Chester), Kinne Brook (Worthington/Chester), and the Dead Branch (Chesterfield/Huntington). In 2015, volunteers are launching a Stream Team on the Little River (Worthington/Huntington). If you are interested in joining one of these teams or would like to launch your own, then please contact volunteer@wildscenicwestfieldriver.org.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT *and contributions...*

Jim Arnold	Susan Gianiotis-Nappo	Bart Niswonger	Bill Warren
Judy Babcock	Linda Greenia	Kam & Tevin Osborne	Shirley Winer
Matt Barron	Bruce Hart	Peter Pachomski	Michael & Cavanaugh Wolski
Chip Bishop	Kurt Heidinger	Eric Parham	Mike Young
Craig Boynton	Daniel Hewins	Tim Parshall	
Barbara Brand	Marianne Hogue	Nancy Perman	Other Contributors:
Chet Brett	Scott Johnson	Susan Purser	Alice's Kitchen at Honey Hill Homestead
Joseph & Eric Brown	Roan Katahdin	Keith and Kevin Raftery	Big Y
Doug Bruce	Steve Koziol	Jack Rice	Chester Railway Station Foundation
Dan Call	Eliza Lake	Julie Richburg	Hilltown Artist Michael Wolski
Hannah Chamberlain	Mary Ann Laurie	Adam and Monique Rioux	The Old Creamery Co-Op
Robert & Jean Cherdack	John LaValley	Bill Rose	Price Chopper
Dave Christensen	Jane Link	Tom Rouleau	Town of Cummington
Peter Clark	David, Antigoni & Dionysus Lively	Liese Schaff	Western Massachusetts Climbers' Coalition
Russ Cohen	Roberta Lombardi	Alan Schultz	Westfield State University — Westfield River Environmental Center
Alice Cozzolino	Lindsey & Lorain Lowinski	Ruben Suddaby	Westfield River Watershed Assn.
Cindy Delpapa	Susan McIntosh	Robert Tarasuk	
Sally Dillon	Tom Marlow	Nancy Torres	
Jim Dilts	Joanne Morgan	Carol Waag	
Dorothy Ericson	Arthur Nappo	Pete Ward	
Spring Furlow		Kester Warlow-Harry	

A YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

\$439,074+ in grants, donations, in-kind and volunteer services leveraged by the Committee.

655

STREAM TEAM VOLUNTEER HOURS spent monitoring the health of the watershed and enhancing community trails.

\$399K

HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT FUNDS received by the Town of Becket with support of a Wild & Scenic Community Grant to develop preliminary designs for a flood resilient, fish friendly culvert.

150

FEET OF VEGETATION REMOVED from the Keystone Arch Bridge to preserve its historic integrity and **20 INVASIVE NORWAY MAPLES** removed from the West Branch of the Westfield River.

58

WATERSHED BLITZ PARTICIPANTS surveyed **20 RIVER MILES** and collected more than **402 PHOTOS** and **POINTS**.

5

KIOSKS AND BROCHURE BOXES are now installed at locations throughout the watershed thanks to volunteers and Committee members!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Project funding provided through the National Park Service's Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Program (except as noted).

General Expenses

General Operations *8,546

Outreach & Education

General Outreach and Education 606

Kiosks 1,140

Publications and Mailings 1,913

Resource Stewardship

Invasives 2,150

Monitoring 1,031

River Internships 3,235

Stream Team Projects 18,160

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$36,781

Additional Project Funds Under Contract: \$45,311

Program and technical assistance provided by staff at the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, Department of Fish & Game and the National Park Service's Fluvial Geomorphologist.

** A total of \$279 of these funds came from other donations.*



**WILD & SCENIC
WESTFIELD RIVER
COMMITTEE**

PO Box 393, Huntington, MA 01050

We are in the River and on the Web!

Visit our website at

www.wildscenicwestfieldriver.org

coordinator@wildscenicwestfieldriver.org

413-579-3015