

WATERSHED NEWS

Finding ways to keep our water pure and plentiful

Serving the Community Since 1999

Fall / Winter 2016-17

Teaching the Next Generation of Watershed Stewards

Science has long been at PRWC's core, but education is our hallmark. This October, we continued our legacy of teaching the next generation of stewards how to care for our shared water resources with two very special programs.



(LEFT) Mr. Nate and his fourth grade students from the Children's Community School of Waterbury searched for signs of animal life in and around the Woodbury Reservoir during an October field trip with PRWC. (RIGHT) Carol Haskins leads the Long Island Sound in a Jar activity to help Woodbury's seventh graders learn about sources of pollution that can affect Connecticut's water resources.

First, PRWC facilitated a field trip to the Woodbury Reservoir for third through fifth grade students from the Children's Community School of Waterbury. The trip was organized in partnership with the After School Arts Program (ASAP!) as one component of Metamorphosis, a school-based experiential learning program. During the field trip, students learned how limited and precious our freshwater resources are while visiting the site of the former water supply for Woodbury and rotating through three activity stations. The activities -- Awesome Aquifers, Animal Signs Scavenger Hunt, and Tie-Dying -- emphasized how plants, animals, and people all rely on water to survive and thrive. This learning was further integrated through other activities lead by an artist serving a two-week long residency at the school as part of ASAP's Metamorphosis program.

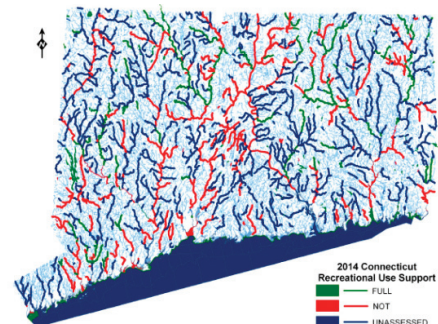
A few weeks later, PRWC was one of five guest speakers who facilitated hands-on activities for Woodbury Middle School's seventh grade students as part of the school's annual Make a Splash Day. Carol Haskins, Outreach Director, lead the Long Island Sound in a Jar activity which teaches students about different sources of pollution that can affect Connecticut's water resources. Students also learned about water monitoring, human health and water borne pathogens, rain gardens, and pollution prevention as they cycled through the different activities. The concepts students learn during Make a Splash Day are revisited frequently as they continue with their watershed studies in science class. Concepts are further reinforced later in the year with a unit on erosion.

Updating the Pomperaug Watershed Management Plan

Earlier this year, PRWC signed a grant contract with the State of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection that awarded PRWC with a grant to be used to update its Watershed Management Plan (WMP). We also received a matching grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation.

In September, we hired the consulting firm of Fuss & O'Neill to help us create a Plan that will develop site specific plans for remediating stream pollutants like bacteria and restoring instream habitat.

This update of the Pomperaug Watershed Management Plan is being driven by a couple of factors: (1) timing - it has been 10 years since the plan was last updated; (2) format - the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted a prescribed format for these plans and organizations must have an approved plan to be eligible for *(continued on Page 4)*

Connecticut Waterbodies Assessed for Recreational Use

Stream segments shown in red do not meet water quality standards to support recreational activities like swimming.

Image Source: CT DEEP's 2014 Integrated Water Quality Report to Congress.

Visit our News & Blog at WWW.POMPERAUG.ORG for expanded articles, additional photos, and to learn more about our past, current, and upcoming activities!



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The Pomperaug Watershed



Stream Monitoring Efforts Continue

While facing extremely dry conditions this fall, volunteers were able to get out to survey the macroinvertebrate populations in our small rivers and streams that still had some water. We found that the sites with low flow conditions (versus no flow) were still supporting creatures like mayflies, stoneflies, crayfish, and aquatic worms. However, these “bugs” were especially tiny this year and we had to dig a little deeper under the rocks in the wettest portion of the channel to find them taking refuge. The types of creatures we found indicated high quality water, essential to supporting aquatic life. Streams surveyed this season were Sprain Brook, East Spring Brook and Weekepeemee River. At the first two sites (and eight others), we also collected hourly stream temperature data for the entire summer season (June through October). We’ve submitted these data to CT DEEP in support of their statewide monitoring efforts. Later this winter, PRWC will summarize the data and compare it to data recorded since 2012. Among our goals for these efforts is to establish a baseline of data we can use to begin looking for trends while also trying to identify critical cold water habitat that can support native brook trout. Of the ten sites we currently monitor, one is considered “cold” while the others are “cool” or “transitioning.” To learn more, visit the “Science” section of our website.



Volunteers Tracy Frate and Jonathan Goldberg survey for macroinvertebrates in Sprain Brook off Papermill Road in Woodbury.

Board Changes: New Faces and Fond Farewells

At our Annual Meeting in September, PRWC elected Frank Scherer, Jr. of Woodbury and Dan Slywka of Southbury to the Board of Directors.

Vince McDermott, PRWC Board Chairman, emphasized that “in electing Frank and Dan to the Board of Directors we are welcoming individuals with the highest credentials and a demonstrated commitment to sharing their respective skill sets to strengthen their communities through volunteer support.” He went on to say that “PRWC will benefit immensely from their proven professional and leadership capabilities. Both Frank and Dan are strong additions to the PRWC team and will complement our work of using science, research and educational outreach to promote the protection of our water resources.” Learn more about Frank and Dan by reading their biographies found in the “News/Blog” section of our website.



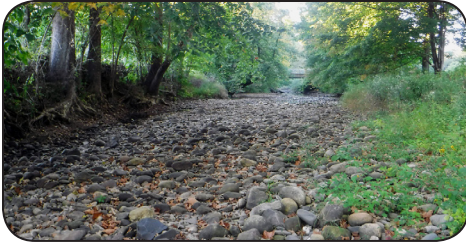
Welcome new Board Members Dan Slywka and Frank Scherer, Jr.



Our gratitude to exiting Board Members Fred Sell and Virginia Mason.

During the Annual Meeting the Board of Directors also re-elected Dr. Marianne Bette (Southbury) and Chris Wood (Woodbury) to serve new terms on the Board. The Board elected its slate of officers including Vince McDermott (Bethlehem) as chairman, Joe Eisenberg (Woodbury) and Gail McTaggart (Southbury) as co-vice chairs and John Lacadie (Woodbury) as secretary/ treasurer.

The Board of Directors also recognized outgoing members Virginia Mason and Fred Sell for their significant contributions to the Board and for their many years of volunteer service and environmental stewardship dedicated to the protection of the Pomperaug River water resources.



Recent local drought conditions, like those seen on the Weekepeemee in 2015, have been highlighted in developing the State Water Plan. This Plan aims to balance the needs of public water supply, economic development, recreation and ecological health, and to provide a framework for improved or more efficient water management in the future.

Our State Water Plan

In earlier communications we noted that PRWC has been a local “voice at the table” in matters pertaining to the development of Connecticut’s first State Water Plan. The Plan is being prepared in two phases. Phase I will soon be completed and includes an assessment of current conditions and practices along with prioritizing future planning issues. Phase II of the Plan will develop consensus-based policy recommendations where possible, identify pathways to address unresolved planning needs, and formulate a decision framework for solving existing and future water issues.

As a member of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group and the Science & Technical Committee, PRWC has highlighted and provided data on water issues of importance to us such as streamflow, groundwater withdrawals, and drought. Public Act 14-163 charged the CT Water Planning Council with delivering a completed State Water Plan to the General Assembly by January 1, 2018. Since this is our State Water Plan, your assistance with the development of the Plan is also encouraged through public meeting participation or by submitting written comments. To learn more please visit www.ct.gov/water or contact us.

Sharing Our Expertise Across the Region

As you know, our mission is to ensure the availability of high quality water in the Pomperaug Watershed communities through the use of science and education. But, did you know we are also committed to sharing our knowledge and expertise with others outside the watershed who are also committed to protecting water resources for future generations?



Len DeJong discusses drought planning and the State Water Plan process with an audience in Southbury.

This fall, PRWC made great efforts to share our scientific research and outreach programs across the region. Len DeJong shared the results of a Pomperaug Watershed focused USGS study that investigated impacts of climate change on watersheds across the country. This presentation was made at a Climate Change Conference presented by Rivers Alliance of Connecticut in October. Attending the conference were municipal and state officials who make important decisions regarding our natural resources. DeJong gave a similar presentation with additional emphasis on the State Water Plan and drought planning to the Southbury Business Association as well as to employees at Timex Group in Middlebury.

Carol Haskins shared PRWC’s expertise in community outreach by showcasing the River Smart program materials available to municipalities to use in meeting State Stormwater Permit requirements at a topical conference hosted by the Connecticut Council of Small Towns in October. She also presented on what it means to be River Smart at the Western Connecticut Leadership Program’s Environment Day in September.

In a typical year PRWC conducts an average of 55 outreach programs and presentations reaching upwards of 150,000 people with water conservation and environmental stewardship messages.

Steering Committee Volunteers Sought for Woodbury Earth Day 2017

Mark your calendars - Woodbury Earth Day has been scheduled for Saturday April 22, 2017 at Hollow Park!

While planning is already underway, we need YOUR help to make this the best event yet!

Steering Committee volunteers are needed to help plan and organize the following aspects

of Connecticut’s largest Earth Day celebration: Vendor Registration; Event Promotion; Music/Sound Coordination; Arts & Crafts; Site Logistics; Special Activities & Presentations.

Please email us at earthday@pomperaug.org or call 203-263-0076 if you are interested in volunteering. For additional information, including, forthcoming vendor applications and sponsorship forms, please visit www.woodburyearthday.org.



Photo credit: GGDavis.com

Help Us Safeguard Water Resources for Generations

Communities need clean water to be vibrant, healthy and sustainable. Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition is working on your behalf and those you care about, to ensure continued access to clean water. *We cannot do this critically important work without you.*



We rely on support from people just like you to do the work we do. By making a tax-deductible donation today, you help safeguard our vital water resources for generations.

Donate online at www.pomperaug.org.



Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition

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Donor Recognition List Inside!



(TOP) Kyle and Sarah Turoczi of Earth Tones replant the riparian buffer along the Pomperaug River with native species after removing invasive plants. (BOTTOM) One of the new access points to the river at Cedarland Park on River Trail in Southbury.

Riparian Buffer and River Access Project Completed

Since 2012, volunteers have been hard at work restoring the riparian buffer at Cedarland Park in Southbury. What began as an effort to remove invasive species and replant native species along the small stream that flows through the neighborhood park on River Trail expanded to a larger effort to do the same along the banks of the Pomperaug River. The buffer along the Pomperaug also included plans to install natural stone stairs down to the river at two points heavily eroded by past foot traffic to the water. In August, this vision became a reality! And, not without the support of many community partners. We wish to extend our thanks to ALL the volunteers who helped pull weeds and plant native species over the past four seasons; Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery and Landscaping for site designs, plant material, and labor; Civil 1 for engineering review and support through the permitting process; O&G Industries for donating round rubble for the access areas; Haynes Materials for donating large stone slabs for the steps; FirstLight Power for donating plants; CT DEEP and Patagonia Westport for grant funding support; the Town of Southbury for allowing us to create a model site for best river practices at one of their parks and having their Public Works crew provide weed disposal support throughout the project.

With all said and done (minus the continued weeding and occasional watering), we restored 270 feet of riparian buffer habitat along the Pomperaug River and another 100 feet along Spring Brook. The native buffer brings a great number of benefits including food and shelter for birds, pollinators, and other small creatures; shade over the river to help keep the water cool for fish; a soft, green barrier to absorb stormwater runoff flowing towards the river; and a maze of roots that helps keep the riverbank intact during floods.

If you haven't already checked out our work at Cedarland Park, we encourage you to do so. And, you might want to bring a fishing pole if you visit in the spring. This is afterall, a trophy trout section of the river stocked by the State!

Watershed Management Plan *(continued from Page 1)*

future restoration project funding; and, (3) new areas of concern - a greater number of monitoring locations since the time of the last WMP has revealed new sites where data do not meet federal water quality standards.

We are compiling the existing information and conducting field assessment surveys to better gauge the scope of factors that may be contributing to reduced water quality conditions. Stakeholder input will also be sought throughout the planning process. Please stay tuned for announcements about presentations of this information in your town and the opportunity to share your input on issues we may have missed.

Thank you to our generous newsletter sponsor!

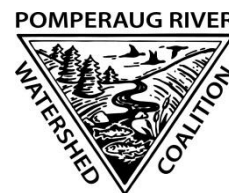


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*On behalf of the PRWC Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, we extend a heart-felt thank you!
As we continue our work, please know we fully recognize and truly appreciate your generous support.
Your support is recognized for gifts between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.*



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