



*Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association*



*2005 Annual Report*

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association**  
**2005 Annual Report**  
(Published May 2006)

**Congratulations to**

**Harvey C. Perry II**  
President, Westerly Land Trust

Recipient of

**The Salomon Award**

Presented in recognition of his exemplary  
efforts to preserve, protect and conserve the  
natural resources of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed,  
in furtherance of the goals of  
The Mitch and Betty Salomon Endowment

Presented at WPWA Annual Meeting  
May 25, 2006

**Front cover:**

Top: Coventry High School kayak expedition May 2005  
Center: Mass DEP staff assist with brook trout research June 28, 2005  
Bottom: Volunteer Bob Perry distributes free coffee to  
anglers on Opening Day, April 2005  
*Photos by Lori Urso*

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association**  
203 Arcadia Road  
Hope Valley, RI 02832  
[www.wpwa.org](http://www.wpwa.org)

# Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

## 2005 Annual Report

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E Z Waste Systems, Inc. - Earth Day Trash Container  
RI DEM - Portable restrooms in summer  
URE Outfitters - equipment  
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Brightman Hill Charitable Foundation	\$ 15,000	Mitch & Betty Salomon Endowment
The Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation	50,000	2005-06 Scientific Programs
Miriam C. Horton Trust	2,000	Recreational Programs
The Nature Conservancy	3,000	Brook Trout Study
WPWA Mitch & Betty Salomon Endowment	701	Regional program support
Trout Unlimited Embrace-A-Stream	9,650	Brook Trout Study
John Wald Science Foundation	3,000	Small Dam Study

## *↻ GOVERNMENT GRANTS ↻*

RI Rivers Council	5,000	Town of Stonington	1000
RI General Assembly	5,000	Town of Hopkinton	600
Town of Richmond	800	and Property Tax Exemptions	
Town of Charlestown	600		

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The Trustees of Lyman Preserve	

## *↻ ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS ↻*

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit conservation organization founded in 1983 and incorporated in the State of RI. WPWA is governed by a Board of Trustees, and employs a full-time executive director, full-time program director, a part-time program assistant, and in the summer a college intern. More than 100 individuals make up WPWA's volunteer force.

WPWA enjoys the support of more than 800 members and donors from within the watershed, throughout the states of RI & CT, and nationwide.



In 1999, WPWA was designated Watershed Council for the Pawcatuck by the RI Rivers Council, pursuant to RIGL 46-28-8, giving it legal standing to advocate on behalf of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed resource. This status was renewed in 2004 for an additional five years.

The campus is situated on the banks of the upper Wood River at the Barberville Dam and Fishing Access in Hope Valley. In 1993 WPWA established its permanent headquarters, and in 2001 dedicated an easement to the State of RI for the location of a handicapped-accessible fishing pier and canoe launch on our property.

## **↻ PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS ↻**

### **RESEARCH AND WATER QUALITY**

#### ***Integrated Small Streams Studies***

This past year WPWA continued our studies on small streams in the watershed for stream temperature and macroinvertebrates. The sites were selected to coincide with priority sites in the Pawcatuck Optimization Project. This project, which is being conducted by the US Geological Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, will be able to run models of water withdrawals and their impacts to streams and groundwater. Temperature data loggers were installed at twenty-five sites on the Queen, Chipuxet, Chickasheen and Shunock Rivers, as well as Roaring, Meadow and Taney Brooks. While only half the data loggers were recovered, the data did demonstrate the profound effect of hot dry weather on the small streams. This information can be used to argue that any further impact, such as water withdrawal or vegetation removal, can make the stream uninhabitable to native fish.

In addition, eight sites on the Wood, Queen and Beaver Rivers, and Meadow Brook, were sampled for freshwater benthic macroinvertebrates according to EPA protocols. Most of these sites show relative good quality, based on species composition.

Fish assemblage sampling was attempted on three very small streams in August. This study was meant to supplement RI Department of Environmental Management Data on streams with native brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*). However, due the lack of precipitation that month, the streams were too dry to sample at the time.

#### ***Biological Control of Invasive Species***

The Plant Science Department of URI teamed up with WPWA to provide biological control for a small section of the Pawcatuck River. Purple Loosestrife, (*Lythrum salicaria*), can wreak havoc on a fresh water river system. This ornamental plant from Europe has invaded and degraded wetland habitats across the continent, completely taking over an area and effectively crowding out native plants. In addition, purple loosestrife presents no nutritional or habitat value to native wildlife. Over the last 10 years URI has developed a program using *Galerucella* beetles from Europe to slow down and minimize the growth of the loosestrife.

In June, with the help of URI Coastal Fellow Michele Hetu, and Watershed Steward Brian Allen, WPWA set up a study area in the Pawcatuck River, east of Rt. 112. This section has shown a rapid increase of the invasive plant over the last decade. However, it still has a vital native wetland plant community. By controlling the spread of purple loosestrife before it damages this area, WPWA hopes we can maintain and even improve the high quality of this wetland. The purpose of the study area is to document the effectiveness of the beetles in controlling purple loosestrife at that site. In July, over 2500 adult *Galerucella* beetles were released at the study area, and event documented on Channel 10 News Watershed Report. The hope is that larvae that emerge from eggs laid by these adults in the spring of 2006 should do measurable damage to the plants.

The future of the study involves continued monitoring at the study area, additional beetle releases, and scouting the rivers for other significant loosestrife stands.

### ***Anadromous Brook Trout Study***

As a continuation of our Brook trout habitat studies, WPWA expanded its research area into a watershed with a known population of anadromous brook trout. Red Brook Stream on the Lyman Preserve in Wareham, MA served as our remote field location to look more closely at anadromous habitat, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the brook trout's behavior in salt water.

With funding from Trout Unlimited Embrace-A-Stream, The Lattner Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy, WPWA set out to tag native sea-run trout with DST Micro data loggers, developed by Star-Oddi in Iceland, these high-tech, and very tiny, data loggers are placed inside the fish, and record 12 months of depth, temperature, and salinity information. Recovery of one tagged trout that has ventured out to sea and back could provide never-before discovered information about the travels of the anadromous trout.

Program partners include MA Dept. of Environmental Protection, The Trustees of Lyman Preserve, Trout Unlimited Narragansett Chapter, and principal investigator Dr. Saul Saila, and field veterinary surgeon Dr. Richard Wolke.

### ***Surface Water Quality***

Of the 51 watershed pond, river and stream sites in RI and CT monitored through the URI Watershed Watch Program, WPWA was sponsor of 36. Ponds monitored included Alton, Barber, Browning Mill, Hundred Acre, Meadowbrook, Pasquisett, Watchaug, White Brook, Wincheck, Wordens, Wyoming, Yawgoo, Boone Lake and Wyassup Lake. The Usquepaug, Ashaway, Chipuxet, Pawcatuck, Queen and Shunock Rivers were monitored, as were Assekong, Brushy, Chickasheen, Fisherville, Glen Rock, Locke, Moscow, Sherman, Taney and Tomaquag Brooks. Fifty volunteers monitored dissolved oxygen, temperature, chlorophyll, bacteria and nutrients at each site.

Among the 19 ponds, four were oligotrophic, eight were mesotrophic, and seven were either eutrophic or hypereutrophic. Queen River at Usquepaugh, Breakheart and Wincheck ponds improved from mesotrophic to oligotrophic since the previous year, while Spaulding, White Brook, and Yawgoo ponds went from eutrophic to hypereutrophic, continuing a downward trend in all three ponds. To address the adverse effects of nutrients in Yawgoo and Barber Ponds, WPWA applied for 319 non-point source pollution funds from the State of RI to develop a watershed plan for the ponds. The award was made in October 2005; however the project is on hold until a grant agreement is provided by the RI Department of Environmental Management

Two thirds of the stream and river sites exceeded the EPA guidelines for total nitrogen at least once in 2005. Four sites on the main stem of the Pawcatuck River exceeded guidelines for most of the summer. This is of concern because RI DEM has listed the Pawcatuck Estuary on their list of impaired waters for low dissolved oxygen, which can be a consequence of excessive nitrogen. A TMDL for the tidal Pawcatuck River is scheduled to be done by 2008.

### ***Research Publications***

Saila, S., D. Poyer, and D. Aube. 2005. *Small Dams and Habitat Quality in Low Order Streams*. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, Hope Valley, RI.

Poyer, D., and M. Hetu. 2005. *Study of Maximum Daily Stream Temperatures of Select Streams in the Pawcatuck Watershed, Summer 2005*. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, Hope Valley, RI.

Poyer, D., S. Saila, A. Gulliot, and D. Aube. 2005. *Freshwater Macroinvertebrate Sampling Near Small Dams in the Pawcatuck Watershed*. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, Hope Valley, RI.

## **STEWARDSHIP, POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

Early in 2005, WPWA participated in the development of the Watershed Council Notice Rule, a regulation of the RI Rivers Council that requires municipalities and state agencies to provide notice to watershed councils of proposals and permits in their watersheds. Grant funds from RI Rivers Council supported WPWA's development of procedures for dealing with public notice, which can quickly become overwhelming when generated by several towns and the state.

RI Rivers Council funding also supported a ten-week effort to search archived state solid waste compliance files for outstanding violations and consent orders in the watershed region. WPWA worked with staff at RIDEM Office of Compliance and Inspection to retrieve 21 boxes of archived files, dating as far back as the mid-1980's, for follow-up review. This was both fact-finding, to get an idea of historical cases in the watershed, and investigatory, to see if violators were found in compliance before the cases were filed as closed.

An illegal dump in Hopkinton that escaped RIDEM compliance for several years was the focus of investigation and calls for action from WPWA to state and local officials.

WPWA participated in several planning sessions targeting the Pawcatuck Borderlands Region identified by The Nature Conservancy as an unsegmented forest area in need of proactive conservation efforts.

Public meetings were attended in several communities to comment on proposed amendments to Comprehensive Plans relative to affordable housing goals. WPWA advocated for protection of sensitive watershed areas from the impacts of high-density proposals.

Community Development Consortium, representing development funds for Hopkinton, Richmond, and Exeter, recruited WPWA to participate in efforts to regionalize wastewater management in these three communities on a phased basis.

WPWA advocated for wastewater management plan enforcement for the Exeter Job Corps Center, located in the otherwise protected Queen River watershed. WPWA is developing protocols for more directed studies of temperature along the Queen for next season, and will work with RI Watershed Steward Ray Hartenstein to study freshwater mussels in the basin.

High-impact development proposals in Hopkinton, Charlestown, and other watershed towns continued the call for local advocacy of watershed resources in the face of inevitable growth. WPWA helped thwart a proposed ATV park proposed for the site adjacent to Ninigret Wildlife Refuge. Proposals to develop along the Route 95 corridor, and proposals for zoning changes, from Stonington to West Greenwich, have become more frequent, calling for increased vigilance over the past few years.

## **RECREATION, PUBLIC ACCESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**The big news was the opening of our seasonal "camp store" in the program building at the campus. Here visitors can get maps and information, bottled water, and other items. The store opens around Opening Day and closes for the season around Thanksgiving.**

In the area of public access, WPWA worked with RI DOT and RI DEM to complete the land transfer necessary for the Switch Road access improvement project to progress. Pending improvements to the portage around Bradford Dam remain under development, and additional funding sources sought, for the combined fishway restoration and portage improvement program. Finally, WPWA completed preliminary site plans for the Bonner and Brown property sites in Ashaway. Progress is being made slowly toward the removal of materials from the Bonner site.

Four volunteers worked on maintaining the Browning Mill Pond trail. Several more volunteers worked on blow-down clearing on the Wood and Pawcatuck rivers to improve navigation around obstructions.

The recreational events offered by WPWA in 2005 attracted close to 400 participants with a variety of paddle, hiking, fishing, and instructional programs. New this year was a Kayak Safety Course, taught by Four Points Canoe Outfitters, attended by 22 children and adults. At least 25 percent of the participants attending programs were under the age of 18.

On Opening Day, our annual litter awareness initiative reached out to hundreds of fishermen on the need to carry out trash, encouraging them to use refillable coffee mugs instead of disposable styrofoam cups that are found all over our rivers and access areas, and to be vigilant on fishing line disposal. Tim Hortons Coffee Shops donated free coffee for the event.

Twenty-five volunteers participated in Earth Day cleanups throughout the watershed, led by our Chariho Community Service students.

Fishing education programs expanded in 2005 to include several sessions of fly fishing and tying instruction with Trout Unlimited and United Fly Tyers, in addition to learn-to-fish programs at Carolina Hatchery with RIDEM Aquatic Resource Education Program.

Students from Chariho's RYSE (Reaching Youth through Support and Education) program offered community service hours to WPWA in exchange for kayak instruction. WPWA provided kayaks for Tomaquag Museum Summer Camp in August. In total, 60 students benefited from these opportunities.

Weekly summer camp exploration programs drew 300 participants over eight weeks. Roger Williams Park Zoo, Dennison Pequot Nature Center, and Newman YMCA brought campers, as did two Boy Scout troops and one Girl Scout troop. Kayak instruction, aquatic exploration, and navigational guidance on the Wood River rounded out the program content.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

Program director Denise Poyer worked directly with elementary and middle school students in the classroom and in the field. In all, 120 students participated in educational programs conducted in Hope Valley Elementary School, Exeter/West Greenwich Regional Junior High School, and Prout School in South Kingstown. aquatic exploration programs for April Vacation Camp at Camp Cononicus in Exeter, were provided for forty students.

Middle and high-school students from Chariho and Coventry participated in field tips and explorations. Over 160 students participated in river kayaks and clean-ups, biological sampling, and water quality monitoring. WPWA sponsored two students through the Chariho High School Community Service program in spring of 2005.

In a program sponsored by the Narrow River Preservation Association, Denise taught an Active Watershed Education (AWESome!) course over eight weeks of the spring semester. Twenty-six teachers from South Kingstown, North Kingstown, and Narragansett who took this 3-credit, graduate level course learned about the physical, chemical, historical, and social aspects of a watershed. The AWESome! Curriculum guide will provide the teachers with activities and

information to bring into their classroom. An estimated 850 students are taught by these teachers every year.

Denise participated in GEMS-Net training sessions on the Land & Water Kit for 24 elementary school teachers in South County. In addition, she helped organize the annual conference for the RI Environmental Educators' Association for 65 formal and informal educators. Denise also took part in the RI State Envirothon Competition, providing instructions in the area of aquatic macroinvertebrates to 60 teachers and students. She was involved in the judging of the competition in May. The winning team went on to participate in the national competition in Virginia.

In the areas of other adult education, WPWA conducted several programs for 120 participants from URI, AmeriCorp volunteers, The Nature Conservancy, Groton Land Trust, Women in the Outdoors, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. WPWA also sponsored a URI Coastal Fellow and a RI Watershed Steward over the summer and fall.

### **NEWSLETTER, PUBLICATIONS, WEBSITE, RIVER AND HIKING GUIDES**

Four quarterly issues of *Watershed* were published, with a total distribution of over 4000. Through this quarterly publication, WPWA conveys news, events, issues, and proposals that impact our watershed and natural resources, and has done so for the past 23 years.

The WPWA Education Program brochure was published and distributed to over 500 local educators, featuring field trips, lectures, explorations, classroom programs, and curriculum development programs available to all grade levels.

The *Wood-Pawcatuck River Guide* and *Walks in the Watershed* continue to sell at over twenty retail outlets throughout the area, as well as directly through WPWA.

[www.wpwa.org](http://www.wpwa.org) continues to be a source of watershed information, news and events. Over the past year there has also been an increase in new members who print out the online application.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING AND WATERSHED COUNCIL MENTORING**

WPWA joined the Land and Water Partnership "Infrastructure Collaborative" in early 2005. This learning network of seven member organizations-- including two watershed councils, two land trusts, as well as the RI Rivers Council and RI Landtrust Council, and a volunteer non-profit consultant -- was formed to develop solutions to administrative needs of small non-profit conservation groups. Funding from Third Sector New England, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, and the RI Foundation have supported the project. Focus areas include database management and donor services, and combined volunteer management services.

Professional educational opportunities that WPWA participated in include Dealing with Density Workshop at URI, the RI Land and Water Conservation Summit, RI Natural History Survey Poster Conference, and the RI Watershed Steward training program.

With grant funds from RI Rivers Council, WPWA developed a membership recruitment strategy for the 2004-05 year that continues to be implemented on an ongoing basis. The strategy outlined benchmarks for potential member lists, as well as quantities for membership drives. Although membership increases have been moderate, retention of existing members has improved.

*~ FINANCIAL STATEMENT ~*

December 31, 2005 and 2004

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Checking.....	\$ 1,071	\$ 1,123
Savings .....	57,666	64,809
Investments.....	215,488	197,994
Inventory .....	<u>2,428</u>	<u>2,428</u>
Total current assets.....	<u>276,653</u>	<u>266,354</u>
PROPERTY		
Buildings .....	187,724	187,724
Improvements .....	158,245	158,245
Less accumulated depreciation.....	<u>(12,915)</u>	<u>(8,858)</u>
Total property .....	<u>333,054</u>	<u>337,111</u>
OTHER ASSETS		
Land .....	<u>146,000</u>	<u>146,000</u>
TOTAL ASSETS.....	<u>\$ 755,707</u>	<u>\$ 749,465</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Rental security deposit.....	<u>\$ 1,250</u>	<u>\$ 1,000</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted		
Designated by the trustees for long-term investment.	160,049	161,081
Undesignated .....	392,969	394,471
Temporarily restricted .....	-	10,000
Permanently restricted.....	<u>201,439</u>	<u>182,913</u>
Total net assets .....	<u>754,457</u>	<u>748,465</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS.....	<u>\$ 755,707</u>	<u>\$ 749,465</u>

*See accountants' compilation report.*