

WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Volume 18 No. 2

SPRING 2001

Let's Take Control of Our Watershed

Harold Ward

The next six months offers WPWA and our members a unique opportunity to influence the protection of natural features in our watershed and the plans that will guide agency actions here. Here's what you can do:

1. Attend Greenspace meetings and sign up to set priorities for land preservation and recreation development in your town.
2. As you canoe our rivers this summer, identify and report to WPWA a) potential sources of contamination and b) access and portage areas that need to be improved.

Last November voters approved a \$34 million bond issue for open space preservation. Partly through WPWA's efforts, areas that are identified in watershed plans will be given priority over other comparable areas. Further, as a Watershed Council designated by the River's Council, WPWA can nominate lands for preservation. These watershed plans will be developed in the next several months, and WPWA and our members could and should take the lead in their design.

The WPWA board has set as a priority for this year the identification of areas or activities adjacent to our rivers (riparian lands) that:

- are likely to be developed, and therefore should be pro-

tected,

- are degraded and should be restored by reforestation or wetland restoration,
- are potential sources of contamination, or
- should be acquired to improve fishing/canoeing access to the river.

Each of these categories will be incorporated into the plans for the Pawcatuck Watershed. Areas of potential contamination can be targeted for strategic water quality monitoring. Areas in need of restoration can be candidates for federal funding for wetland or forest restoration funding. Areas in need of protection can be nominated for acquisition with open space bond funds. And new river access points or portage improvements can be proposed as projects for recreation bond funding.

The Greenspace program will hold several meetings in each town in our watershed in the next several months. The purpose of these meetings is to recruit volunteers who will then identify areas that should be protected and recreation options that should be developed. As a Watershed Council, WPWA is charged with ensuring public participation in this process. The next two Greenspace meetings will be held:

4/5, 7PM, Richmond Town Hall
4/11, 7PM, So. Kingstown Workgroup

4/16, 7 PM, Charlestown Town Hall
4/30, 7 PM, Westerly Town Hall

For later meetings, you may check the Wood-Pawcatuck website at: <http://watershed.envstudies.brown.edu/> or call the WPWA office at 539-9017

We need to be certain that WPWA is represented at **all** of the Greenspace meetings and that our priorities for protecting our rivers is incorporated in the reports that will be prepared for each town. If you are able to attend a meeting in your town, please call the WPWA office and let us know you will be there. After the town meetings are concluded this spring, we will convene all participating WPWA members and coordinate our views, so that the watershed level plans that will be devised by combining the town reports will reflect WPWA's priorities.

During the summer WPWA staff and board members, assisted by a Brown University intern, will be canoeing the entire river system with a Geographic Positioning System (GPS) and a Geographic Information System (GIS) computer to locate precisely where the priority areas are located. We encourage WPWA members to bring to the attention of WPWA staff areas that we should investigate with particular care.

Senator Donna Walsh Sponsors \$10,000 Senate Grant for WPWA

Senator Donna Walsh of Charlestown has once again stepped up to the plate on behalf of WPWA.

WPWA is the beneficiary of a \$10,000 Senate Grant sponsored by the Charlestown Senator this year. This is the third grant Senator Walsh has sponsored on our behalf, for a total of \$20,000 in funding over the past four years.

Senator Walsh is a long-time supporter of WPWA. As one of its original charter members, Senator Walsh has been associated with WPWA since 1983.

In addition to the financial support, Senator Walsh has served as

Senate organizer for our annual River Day Canoe

Trip for members of the General Assembly.

Senator Walsh has a full plate upstate, serving as Vice Chairwoman of the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare, Vice Chairwoman of the Joint Committee on Water Resources, and as a member of the Committee on Judiciary and the Joint Committee on Environment and Energy. She is also the Senate's Deputy Majority Leader.

Senator Walsh has proven to be a true friend and supporter of WPWA and our State's natural resources. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to her for her considerations throughout the years.



RI State Senator
Donna Walsh
District 25

Paul Geremia

Paul Geremia
in Concert
with special guest
Ursula George

An evening of acoustic blues to benefit
Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Saturday June 2, 2001 at 8 pm doors open at 7:30 pm

Chorus of Westerly Performance Hall

Tickets: \$20 in advance / \$25 at the door

For Tickets Call: 401-539-9017

SPONSORED BY
McQuade's
ICE

wpwa@mindspring.com

The poster features a large, close-up black and white photograph of Paul Geremia, an older man with a mustache, looking slightly to the right. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image. The name 'Paul Geremia' is written in a large, elegant, cursive font at the top. Below it, the text 'Paul Geremia in Concert with special guest Ursula George' is written in a clean, sans-serif font. Further down, the event details are listed in a smaller font. At the bottom left, there is a logo for 'McQuade's ICE' and a website address 'wpwa@mindspring.com' at the bottom right.

The Mitch and Betty Salomon Endowment

Linda Wood

Mitch and Betty Salomon believe that the river does not recognize town boundaries. "The river," Mitch said of the watershed, "runs through it." As it runs through the watershed it carries the communities it runs through -- the people, the flora, the fauna, the soil, the fish.

It has been one of the most fervent wishes of the Salomons that the watershed communities recognize this and work together as a region to preserve, protect and conserve the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed.

A recent challenge grant to the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association in honor of the Salomons will ensure that their wish will not be forgotten. The gift of \$25,000, which must be matched by donations from other WPWA members and supporters, will create a \$50,000 endowment. The proceeds from the "Mitch and Betty Salomon Endowment" will be used to support the education of the citizens and the municipal officials of the towns to work together cooperatively as a region.

WPWA will use the endowment for two purposes: to develop programs to encourage the towns of the watershed to cooperate regionally with other towns, agencies, and non-profit organizations to preserve, protect and conserve the natural resources of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed, and to establish an award – The Salomon Award – to be presented annually to a municipal official, volunteer member of a town board, or an organization active within the Watershed to recognize exemplary work in furtherance of the goals of the Mitch and Betty Salomon Endowment.

One of the most crucial things that WPWA can do in the watershed is educate municipal officials and the town citizens. "They change," said Director Lori Urso. "We don't. We are here as a constant resource to everyone and every town in the watershed. We take this responsibility very seriously.



The "Mitch and Betty Salomon Endowment" will give us the resources to educate and to explore ways the towns can work together to protect our natural resources."

"We live on the river," said Betty, "and we live with the river. We see this wonderful gift as a way to create a dialogue between and among the towns of the watershed."

"I don't recognize town lines when it comes to natural resources," said Mitch. "We all live downstream. We must make sure that municipal officials don't see boundaries either if we want to protect the health of the river."

Mitch and Betty Salomon found their home 30 years ago through an ad in the newspaper that read, "Conservation-minded couple want land with water view." The answer to the ad came in the shape of some rundown buildings along a beautiful stretch of the Pawcatuck River, just below the confluence with the Wood River. They never sat back and put up their feet and enjoyed a "retired" life, but instead they both stepped in with both feet to protect the river they were living on.

For many years Mitch chaired the

Hopkinton Conservation Committee. Betty became involved with local history and photography. In 1982 when Ed Wood left the directorship of the Department of Environmental Management he was given a check made out to a non-existent "Wood River Association."

Within days Mitch and Betty had volunteered to help Ed start

the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association. In the early days they often met in either the Salomon's or the Wood's houses, compiling a database of index cards for each new member. Money was not a problem then as there were no paid employees, no office, and no costly projects to staff or implement.

Before long, however, the WPWA had outgrown the living room meetings. The National Park Service initiated a survey of "Wild and Scenic Rivers" with the DEM and the WPWA found itself with an important role to play in both the survey and in the strategy that resulted from the report.

Today the WPWA has grown to an extensive computer data base of over 800 members, property in Arcadia, and the responsibility of protecting and preserving the communities' precious watershed.

You can help with this commitment by giving generously to the Mitch and Betty Salomon Endowment. Contact Lori Urso at WPWA with an offer to help.

Welcome Back Lori Urso

Linda Wood

Welcome back, Lori!

After a six-year interval, the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association has re-hired Lori Urso as interim Executive Director. We thought you might like to know where she's

been and what she's been doing, as well as what her plans are for WPWA.



First off, Lori married Mark Urso of Westerly and added Sara Elizabeth to the family of Mark, Lori and her son Todd, who is now 11 years old. Mark and Lori ran the radio station WERI AM/FM. They managed and produced several programs growing the station into an exciting and vibrant business.

Lori hosted a talk show, was an "FM Jock," and co-created "Backstage with the Blues" which was syndicated on four stations from Maine to Oklahoma. James Montgomery, a well known Detroit blues harmonica player, was the host of the show for four years, and prompted Lori into furthering her own career as a Blues artist.

She performs with harmonica player George Reithoffer in a duo known as "Ursula George" in many venues including local clubs and as far away as Memphis. In 1999 they produced their first CD, "Blue Basics" which has aired on blues shows in 12 countries. The band will perform at WPWA's benefit concert with blues legend Paul Geremia on June 2 at the Chorus of Westerly Performance Hall.

Through James Montgomery, Lori connected with the Invasion

Group in NYC and producer Bill Laswell and partnered with them to start a new record label last summer known as Innerhythmic which is releasing three titles this April. Lori describes the music as ambient-techno-dub.

The radio stations were sold in 1998 and 1999. WERI-AM has become part of the new NPR sound in Rhode Island, WXNI Westerly which is an affiliate of WBUR out of Boston.

The sale of the stations left Lori with "time on my hands." That's something that is completely foreign to Lori so she decided to run for Westerly Town Council last fall. It was her first run for office. "I really, really love it," she said with enthusiasm. "I am in charge of council appointments to committees and I am the liaison to the Chamber of Commerce and Westerly-Pawcatuck Joint Development Task Force. I also serve on the Washington County Regional Council."

"The timing was right" she said when Ed Wood asked if she might consider coming back to WPWA. It was mutually beneficial. "I already knew the job and my understanding had actually progressed during the interim. I hadn't lost anything," she said. "Of course, Denise Burgess is great to work with and extremely knowledgeable. It has been easy for us to make a connection again just like before."

One thing that is different this time is having the "information superhighway," she pointed out. "The Internet and email make it possible to do the work from anywhere really, giving me flexibility with my kids."

The Town of Westerly has been historically difficult to work with for the WPWA in terms of selling the concept of protecting natural resources. "I think I can play an im-

portant role now in dealing with Westerly and its commitment to the environment."

"I am committed to staying with WPWA for a year and it may be longer. There is lots to do and lots to accomplish," she said with her usual enthusiasm. "I have also committed to finding a new executive director for the association should I plan to depart."

Lori has three action issues for immediate attention: First, a capital project: to restore and fix up the property, which includes putting the "central" building back into its intended purpose of holding educational programs. Several promises of financial support are forthcoming for this project. Second, to demonstrate to the state the need to improve and increase access to the rivers in what she calls a "riparian greenways corridor." This means improving the existing canoe launching areas and having the state purchase additional access points for portages and launching areas. And third, to develop a transient monitoring system which would gather "short term" river data for analysis and action. Board member Saul Saila is developing a computer monitoring program. An example of the use for this type of system would be to determine the amount of pollution in the river caused by sanding roads during a snowstorm.

Lori also is finding time to travel, play the Blues and continue her work on a Masters in Public Administration at the University of Rhode Island.

So, welcome back, Lori!

Art In Nature

Annual Auction Taking Shape

Art in Nature is the theme for this year's Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association art auction, to be held Sunday, September 9, 2001 at the Carolina Mill of John and Lois Quinn. The gala annual event is our largest fund-raiser of the year. In addition to the usual art items, some individuals will auction services emphasizing the "art of living life creatively" in the watershed. The auction will include finished works by talented local artists, some of whom will be painting in the watershed the weekend previous to the auction in keeping with the "wet paint" nature of former WPWA auctions. Commissioned pieces, which will encourage relationships between artists and clients will be a new addition. These will include a rendering of your home, a sculpture built for a specific site in or outside your home, or a customized piece of furniture.

In a significant expansion, however, members of the community

who promote human relationships, the sharing of knowledge and the enhancement of the places they live will offer their services for auction.

The art auction committee is seeking people whose way of life contributes to the common good of the environment and the community. They may have developed skills and knowledge about an interest or passion that they would be willing to share, thereby benefiting others and enriching the life of the community as a whole. This might take the form of identifying birdcalls, a musical talent, creative cooking, building stone walls, gardening, collecting family memories, or sharing anything that is a unique experience. Perhaps the river inspires their lives. It might mean creating something for someone else or helping someone to learn or to create through a joint effort. It might be something that money could not normally buy. Please contact a committee member or the WPWA office with your contribution or suggestion.

To provide more leisure as well as daylight, this year's auction will be-

gin at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday. Artist Bob Spring will demonstrate his watercolor art. The Quinn family will give a tour of the mill. Music will be provided by harpist Rory Contin.

The preview of the auction items will begin at 4:30 p.m. The live auction is at 5:30 p.m. with auctioneer Bob Ward. A silent auction will be ongoing. Co-chairing the auction are Linda Wood and Sandy Arnold. Serving on the committee are Ana Flores, Marnie Lacouture, Betty Salomon, Susan Shaw and Susan Stone.

Don't miss this exciting celebration of art in all its many forms reflecting nature and the quality of life in the watershed. Be sure to mark your calendar and watch for updates. Contact the WPWA office at 539-9017 for more information.

URI Watershed Watch Spring 2001 Calendar

New Volunteer Classroom Training (choose one)

Saturday, April 4, 2001 9:00am Location TBA, URI Kingston

Saturday, April 10, 2001 7:00pm Location TBA, URI Kingston

Field Training for New Volunteers (choose one) - locations to be determined

Saturday, April 28, 2001 9:30am & 1:00pm

Thursday, May 3, 2001 5:00pm

Saturday, May 5, 2001 9:30am & 1:00pm

Returning Volunteer Equipment Handout (call for times)

Begins week of April 23, 2110, Room 002 Coastal Institute, Kingston

Returning Volunteer Refresher, 2000 Updates, and Evening Equipment Handout

Thursday, April 26, 2001 7:30pm, Room 002 Coastal Institute, Kingston

First Rivers Water Collection

May 12, 2001, Room 002, Coastal Institute, Kingston

First Lakes and Ponds Water Collection

May 17-19, 2001 Room 002 Coastal Institute, Kingston

Contact URI Watershed Watch at 401-874-2905 or email uriww@etal.uri.edu.



Paddle Providence / WPWA Offer Youth Workshops in Environmental Kayaking

Donna Baer

Paddle Providence will be offering basic kayaking instruction and environmental paddling tours to groups of up to 12 children, ages 10-18. WPWA program director Denise Burgess will join Paddle Providence in teaching the importance of our watersheds and their inhabitants. Children from all around Rhode Island are invited to make a reservation to participate in these programs. They will be offered Monday through Friday, during the months of July and August. Children will first be introduced to the Wood/Pawcatuck Watershed and the ecosystems in and around the river. The group will then break for a picnic lunch on the river's edge.

Next an instructor from Paddle Providence will explain how to properly wear a lifejacket, hold and use a kayak paddle, enter and exit the kayak and rules while on the water. The group will practice basic kayaking technique

including going straight and turning and, when everyone is comfortable, will begin their paddling adventure on the river. The children will experience up close, the nature and beauty of the watershed and we will review the lessons taught by the WPWA educator. These programs are offered to any youth group including summer camps, birthday parties, YMCA's and Community Centers. Paddle Providence, Inc., is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) organization es-

tablished in Rhode Island, November 13, 1998. As founders, Donna and Joe Baer have sought to create a community minded organization that draws on years of for-profit business in the outdoor canoe and kayak industry. This newly incorporated non-profit business partners with other organizations to teach paddle sports, outdoor and environmental education while providing canoes, kayaks and other small craft as a means to improve the quality of life and economic development of the greater Providence area. For more information please call (401) 453-1633 or email Paddleprov@aol.com.

Annual Giving Campaign

WPWA and its Board of Trustees would like to convey its sincere appreciation to the generous contributors to our Annual Giving Campaign. Additional donations from friends listed below have brought our total to \$8939 raised to support WPWA goals and programs. It's not too late to join the list of donors and **help us reach our goal of \$10,000**. To double your donation, ask your employer about a matching gift program. Also, you may include WPWA on your United Way giving form. Thank you for your continued support!

Stream of Friends (up to \$49)

Jim Heim
Katherine E. Cowles
James L. O'Brien
Helen M. Schell
Michelle Madden

Watershed Club (\$50 – \$99)

Alan J. Buck,
Technical Maintenance
Joel B. Dirlam
William D. Metz

Director's Circle (\$100 – \$249)

Robert B. Hertling, Jr.
Betty & Mitch Salomon
John Lathrop

Founder's Society (\$250 – \$499)

Anonymous

WPWA CANOE AND HIKING GUIDES

Order Form

Wood-Pawcatuck River Routes Map

By Charlie Hickox and Polly Matzinger
 \$3.50 members (\$4.50 non-members)
 Navigate the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers from source to sea with this colorful folded map.

Walks in the Watershed

By Charlie Hickox and Elly Heyder
 \$3.50 members (\$4.50 non-members)
 Sixteen of the watershed's best loop hikes contained in a handy pocket-sized guide



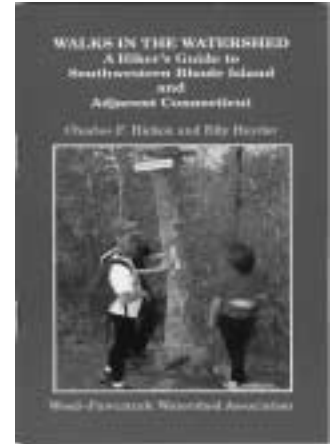
Quantity:
 _____ *Wood-Pawcatuck River Routes Map*
 _____ *Walks in the Watershed*
 _____ *Pawcatuck Watershed Report (free)*

Add \$1.50 postage and handling per item.

Name _____

Address _____

Mail form and payment to:
 WPWA
 203 Arcadia Road
 Hope Valley, RI 02832



WHIP Funds Available To Landowners

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will be accepting new applications for the **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** through May 31, 2001. The purpose of WHIP is to provide funding and technical assistance to landowners interested in creating, restoring, and enhancing wildlife habitat on their property. Program participants will be reimbursed for up to 75% of the costs.

During the past four years, Rhode Islanders have utilized this beneficial program to restore a variety of wildlife habitat types. Landowners of salt marshes, riparian areas, abandoned gravel pits, overgrown fields, and other lands have enrolled in WHIP. At the present

time, almost 25 landowners have entered into restoration agreements with NRCS.

Types of projects that WHIP helps to fund include: coastal features, freshwater wetlands, grasslands, and buffers (riparian, field borders, windbreaks). Call 401-822-881 for information.

Country Cape Antiques Show Raises \$1500

Chuck and Jan Thompson of Country Cape Antiques Shows presented WPWA a \$1500 donation from proceeds of their annual Mystic show. This year's donation represented a 50% increase thanks to their successful show. This is the 9th year the Thompsons have held a benefit show for WPWA. In fact, all of the shows Chuck and

Jan produce during the year benefit a variety of worthy local causes. WPWA would like to extend its gratitude to Country Cape and Chuck and Jan for their ongoing enthusiasm and support for our programs.

Volunteer Opportunities
Opening Day 4/14

Coffee servers are needed to remind anglers about the litter problem caused by thoughtlessness.

Earth Day Cleanup 4/21

Spend a couple of hours cleaning up your favorite river access point.

Source to Sea Canoe 6/2-6/30

Experience canoeists are needed as river leaders; also help shuttling drivers.

Call us at 401-539-9017 to help!

Application for Membership

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- _____ Individual \$25
- _____ Family \$40
- _____ Contributor \$50
- _____ Corporate \$100
- _____ Supporter \$100
- _____ Sponsor \$250
- _____ Patron \$500
- _____ Benefactor \$1000

In addition to my dues, I am enclosing an additional contribution of \$ _____

All but \$5.00 of your dues is tax deductible within the limits of the law.

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WPWA Staff

Lori Urso, Executive Director
 Denise Burgess, Program Director

WPWA Headquarters

203 Arcadia Road, Hope Valley
 at Barberville Dam
 401-539-9017
 wpwa@efortress.com



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
Agelaius phoeniceus

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