

WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Volume 24 No. 3

SUMMER 2007

Riverside gathering celebrates the life and career of John M. "Jay" Cronan

The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association formally dedicated the John M. "Jay" Cronan River Access on July 16, at the site of its newly-acquired public river access on the Pawcatuck River at Route 91 in Richmond.

The property was a gift to the association from Roy and Kim Dubs of Hopkinton. The site, formerly known as the Richmond Fishing Access, was renamed the John M. "Jay" Cronan River Access by the association, in honor of the late WPWA trustee and retired state fish and wildlife official.

Cronan, a renowned wildlife and fisheries biologist, worked for 34 years with the RI Department of Environmental Management, and for a short while with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Following his retirement in 1988,

Cronan remained active as a volunteer for WPWA and other environmental and community causes. He resided with his wife Barbara for many years on Locustville Pond in Hope Valley, where he also served as volunteer monitor and steward.

During his tenure with RIDEM, Cronan was credited as an integral force in the acquisition of many public access areas and protected open spaces, such as the Great Swamp, Carolina, and Arcadia Management Areas, and many other key sites that are open to the public for recreational enjoyment. He was responsible for the construction of Carolina Trout Pond fishing facility, an opening day favorite. Jay also authored publications for the state on mammals and water-

fowl in Rhode Island.

The morning ceremony brought together members of the community, including family, friends and former coworkers of Cronan.

In his remarks at the morning ceremony, RIDEM director W. Michael Sullivan recalled his first meeting with Jay, at the very site of the dedication. "In that brief conversation, I got an unmistakable sense of the dedication with which he approached his work, and his genuine care and concern."

Jay's wife lovingly remembered her late husband's dedication to RI's environment. "Jay truly cared about his work," she shared. "He had such a passion for wildlife and the outdoors. He was very personally connected to what he did professionally, and he knew very early on that this was what he wanted to do." She added, "Jay would be very very pleased to know that this was dedicated to him. The outdoors was his life."



Family, friends and coworkers join at the site to remember and honor Jay.

(Continued on Page 6)

From the Executive Director

About the distance of a ten-minute paddle upstream of our offices, which sit on the upper Wood River, is Frying Pan Pond, a wonderful "expanse" (Rhode Island scale) where the channel opens up in an ecosystem unique from the river corridors just above and below it.

On Frying Pan Pond lives a resident of many years, or at least as long as I can recall, which is back to 1993. I call him Charlie. He's a Great Blue Heron. My sightings of Charlie used to be confined to my upstream paddling ventures, but over the past year, Charlie has come to me, flying down gracefully by my windows close to the Wood River. (They're so close I don't see the surface beneath my windows and I feel like I'm on a boat sometimes.)

He lands first in a small patch of vegetation, where pickerel weed is currently in bloom. He alternates between sitting and posing showily. He knows I'm watching, and usually I talk to him a little. He doesn't get spooked.

Sometimes he fishes from there. Other times, he ventures into the wood for a short walk (about 150 feet) closer to the dam, then gets back in. That gives him a longer head start to show off his glorious plumage as he sails back by my window.

I'm sure this is all for my benefit, and I certainly do appreciate it!



New trustees Ray Cherenzia and Pete August join board

Westerly engineer Raymond F. Cherenzia, and URI professor Peter August, were elected to the Board of Trustees at Annual Meeting on May 23, 2007.

Cherenzia is the president of Cherenzia and Associates, a fixture of the greater Westerly business community, and a knowledgeable force in land use, planning and development in the watershed region. Cherenzia has received numerous accolades for his contributions to the community in the form of advice, consultation, and construction services for numerous charitable organizations. He has been a member of WPWA since the 1980's and has given generously of his time and that of his staff to support our public access enhancement work.

August is known around Rhode Island as the "GIS" guy. The servers in his lab at URI host the statewide RIGIS program, which stands for RI Geographic Information Systems. This is the all-important software with which users can research digitized parcel data in different towns, as well as generate data layer maps to look at land uses in depth statewide.

WPWA looks forward to working with Ray and Pete in the coming months.

Senator Breene sponsors legislative grant for WPWA

The RI General Assembly recently announced grant awards to non-profit organizations in the

state.

WPWA has been awarded a grant of \$5000 to support its water quality monitoring efforts in ponds, rivers and streams in the watershed. Specifically, the funds will cover the costs associated with laboratory analysis of water samples.

Past grants from the legislature in Rhode Island have provided for the purchase of scientific equipment, office equipment, program implementation, and water quality analysis.

Program director Denise Poyer explains, "because the state dollars available for water quality analysis continue to shrink, the local non-profits are picking up the slack as much as they can, but laboratory costs can escalate quickly. These funds help insure that WPWA can continue these activities to keep us informed of the quality of our watershed's recreational waterbodies,"

Land & Water Partnership site promotes volunteer jobs

For those interested in volunteer opportunities in environmental conservation, a great place to start is the Land and Water Partnerships website, www.landandwaterpartnership.org. There you will find a comprehensive listing of volunteer projects offered by watershed councils and land trusts across RI. Ongoing activities, and one-time projects, fulfill all community service interests.



WPWA proudly announces the Saul B. Saila Fellowship

The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) today announced establishment of the Saul B. Saila Fellowship, an endowment to provide funding assistance for student research in fisheries and environmental science in support of the association's mission.

Lori Urso, WPWA executive director, created the fellowship with a personal bequest of \$1,000, as a way to honor Dr. Saila for his inspiration to the staff at WPWA, for his dedication to advancing the scientific capacity of the organization, and in particular, for his lifelong commitment to helping his students fully develop their potential for achievement.

Once the fund reaches \$10,000, it will be established as a permanent donor-advised fund with the Rhode Island Foundation.

An additional \$2,000 has already been donated to the fellowship's founding endowment; a donor who wishes anonymity has pledged to match up to \$20,000 in donations.

Dr. Saila, a University of Rhode Island Professor Emeritus of Biological Oceanography, is currently a member of the WPWA Board of Trustees, and was a founding member of the association in 1983. Over the past six years, he has directed several studies sponsored by WPWA related to brook trout

and brook trout habitat.

In 1956, Dr. Saila joined the URI faculty where he enriched the field of fishery science through innovative research and his dedication to education. He pioneered the application of new analytical techniques in fisheries research and created new research tools that have substantially advanced the disciplines of marine biology and marine fisheries. He is the author or co-author of more than 100 academic and technical papers.



Dr. Saila with WPWA interns Mel Cheeseman and Kat Fisher

Dr. Saila was an early proponent of the development and utilization of quantitative models in fisheries applications. He initiated and directed the first computer lab at URI in 1960 while continuing in his role as professor in the Departments of Oceanography and Zoology, and he established the Marine Experiment Station for the Sea Grant program at URI modeled on the agricultural experiment stations of Land Grant Colleges.

He has contributed to research areas as diverse as multi-species and ecosystem modeling, complex nonlinear dynamics and uncertainty theory. He has studied the application of artificial intelligence in fisheries involving neural networks in fish and how they imitate the human brain.

An internationally eminent fisheries expert, Dr. Saila has received numerous academic and scientific awards and honors for work in his field, including the Award of Excellence, the oldest and most prestigious award of the American Fisheries Society for his body of work. In 2001, when the award was presented, Michael Fogarty of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, said, it was "fitting that the AFS recognizes a half century of commitment to excellence, dedication, and intellectual development with its highest award for professional excellence. Saul's journey as a scientist has indelibly left its mark on the field and on all those whose lives he has touched."

In 2004, Dr. Saila received the Dwight A. Webster Memorial Award, the most prestigious award given by the Northeastern Division of the American Fisheries Society, for significant lifelong academic and technical accomplishments in the science of marine fisheries and for his outstanding contributions to the profession of marine fisheries in the Northeast.

Yet, with all his outstanding scientific accomplishments, Dr. Saila has always derived the most satisfaction by "helping my students become not only my equal but to be better and to achieve more than I did. They have succeeded in positions world-wide." During his career at URI, he helped 65 students earn their Ph.D's, more than any

Continued on Page 6

A photo journal of spring and summer events

Annual Membership Meeting May 23, 2007



Family Fun Fishing July 6 & 13



Paddle Pick-Up On-river volunteer clean up



June 6 & 7

Source-to-Sea Paddle Saturdays in June



Coming up late summer into early fall . . .

August

Floating Lunch Club
Tuesdays, Noon to 1:30pm
\$10 for rental and guided trip
BYO Lunch and drinks
(see story below)

Bioluminescence Paddle
on the Narrow River
August 24; 8pm
Delight in the glow of bioluminescent jelly fish as you float downstream
\$10 non-member / \$5 member
Kayak rental extra, and self-transport required from our office at 6pm.

September

September Splendor
on the Wood River
Sept. 5 & 12; 5 to 7:30pm
Leisurely upstream paddle to identify late summer blooms.
\$10 non-members / \$5 members
Kayak rental extra; available onsite.

October

Yard Sale Fundraiser
October 6; 9am to 4pm
Donations requested, buyers wanted! To donate items, email nshess@riconnect.com or call 401-539-9017.

Floating upstream for lunch on Tuesdays in August

Lunchtime takes on a whole new meaning when enjoyed from a kayak afloat on the Wood River and Frying Pan Pond.

Launch is at noon for this guided, leisurely upstream paddle. Once the group reaches the pond (about 10 minutes upstream) its lunchtime before a

summer backdrop of nature theater.

There is a long-time resident great blue heron on Frying Pan Pond—maybe he'll give an air show. If not, there are plenty of other colorful species in the air and on the water to delight.

For \$10.00 you'll get the kayak, paddle and PFD for the trip, and the guide. Bring your own bagged lunch, drink, sunscreen, & bug

spray.

There is a very good chance paddlers will get a little wet. Facilities are available to change out of your business suit into before the launch.

Pre-registration is optional. We'll take drop-ins. But if you want to be sure to get a boat, or if you have questions, call us in advance, 401-539-9017, or email info@wpwa.org.

Proper catch and release technique enhances fishing while protecting fish

By Saul Saila

Editor's note: This material is adapted from Catch and Release Fishing, by Erik Williams and Malia Schartz, P1364, RI Sea Grant Fact Sheet.

It is evident that recreational activity in our watershed will continue to increase along with the local and regional populations. Much of this activity will be recreational fishing. And why not? Our watershed offers many of the most pristine rivers in Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut.

One of the most effective things that all anglers can do to help ensure good fishing is the careful release of their catch.

It is not enough to just throw the fish back after they have been unhooked. Several studies have demonstrated that released fish may die soon after release if proper release behavior is not employed. Some of the reasons follow, as well as information to help prevent unintentional mortality after a fish has been caught and released.

Catch and release fishing is becoming increasingly popular as new anglers become more environmentally oriented and aware of our fish populations. WPWA encourages anglers fishing for native fish (such as the brook trout) to utilize effective catch and release procedures whenever possible. We emphasize that simply throwing the fish back after capture is not all there is to catch and release fishing. Obviously, if a fish is released in such poor condition

that it is likely to die defeats the entire concept.

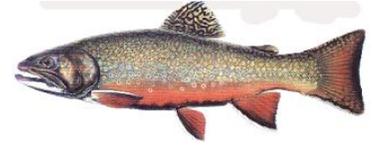
Here is a brief guide to procedures that are helpful for successful catch and release fishing.

Fishing gear: The bottom line is to use appropriate gear for the target fish. When a fish is hooked it should be brought in as soon as possible. A long battle with very light tackle may be harmful due to the increased production of lactic acid in the body of the fish.

Hooks: Experienced anglers suggest that there is no appreciable number of fish lost using barbless hooks. The barbs of small hooks can be easily flattened with a pair of pliers. Such hooks are recommended. Do not use stainless steel hooks. These do not dissolve in the stomachs of gut hooked fish. Finally, be alert when bait fishing, and strike as soon as a bite occurs. This will help to increase the amount of desirable lip hooking.

Landing fish: Remove the fish from the water as gently as possible. Large fish should probably not be removed from the water when removing the hook. Small to medium sized fish can be removed from the water by placing your hand flat and lifting the fish out of the water. Wet your hands before handling any fish in order to protect the fish's slime coating. Removing barbless hooks is easy in most cases. However, if the fish is hooked in the gills, it is a difficult situation. If the fish is bleeding from the gills, it is probably better to keep it. If there is no bleeding it may be possible to remove the hook.

Release: Release the fish by holding it upright in the water and move it gently until it swims away.



Trout Unlimited seeks expansion of catch and release fishing areas

by Lawson Cary

It is argued by some that Rhode Island has not been as aggressive as other east coast states when it comes to regulatory efforts to protect native brook trout populations.

At the state's yearly open meeting on fish and wildlife regulations, the Narragansett Chapter of TU petitioned for an extension of the catch and release area on the Falls River to include the river stretch beginning at the bridge on Falls River Road, extending to the bridge over Rt. 165. TU further advocated against stocking hatchery trout in this area, and for the use of only artificial lures with single barbless hook, or single barbed hooks with barb flattened. Immediate release of trout and char of eleven inches or less should be mandated, TU urges.

TU also recommended the fishing season in catch and release area should run from the second Saturday in April, to the first of October, so as not to interfere with the spawning cycle of wild brook trout, and to avoid damage to their redds due to wading in the river.

A limit of two fish on the

Continued on page 6

Saul B. Saila Fellowship

(Continued from Page 3)

other professor at the university.

In recognition of his dedication to his students, the Southern New England Chapter of the AFS annually awards the Saul B. Saila Best Student Paper Award. It is his commitment to his students that is being further honored by the establishment of the Saul B. Saila Fellowship by WPWA.

A lifelong resident of Richmond, Dr. Saila resides with his wife Jennifer in the home his parents built upon immigrating to the United States from Finland in the early 1900's. He served with the 100th Division during WWII and was wounded in France.

Ms. Urso said the endowment is intended to provide financial support for college-level intern and fellowship positions at WPWA. Students conduct field investigations and gather data for a variety of scientific studies related to riverine and watershed environments, usually during the summer months. Students are typically recruited through their colleges and universities.

Robert Schiedler, WPWA president, said, "The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and the residents of the watershed owe Lori Urso an enormous debt of gratitude for initiating this endowment as a mechanism to help us recognize and support the research of young environmental scientists."

Cronan River Access

(Continued from Page 1)

Lori Urso reflected on Cronan's dedication to the organization. "Jay was always ready to be of service, whether it was water quality monitoring, teaching kids to fish, or helping to mail the newsletter. He obviously connected deeply with WPWA's mission."

Cronan also played an important role in helping WPWA acquire its headquarters on the Wood River in 1993. "Jay was chairman of our properties committee then. He had a relationship with the Wrights, which helped."

Urso also spoke about the hardships that Cronan endured as a small child. "He was diagnosed with osteomyelitis, and spent six years in a sanitarium, two and a half of which he was confined to bed with a frame molded to his back." But the experience, she continued, "gave him his first exposure to fishing, when the staff would carry his bed out to the beach." Over the years, he developed an appreciation for the outdoors that resulted in an incredible life-long career."

Catch and Release

(Continued from page 5)

upper Wood River from Route 165 down to the Barberville Dam



A new sign marks the entrance to the access

is recommended from the second Saturday in May through February 28. All other rivers in RI management areas should have a three-fish limit, according to TU, to try to control the poaching that is alleged to be occurring in some areas, with anglers taking more than one daily limit.

The only area that TU recommends stocking trout is in Deep Pond. TU also urges an increase in environmental law enforcement in all management areas.

The wild brook trout is the only native trout species in RI. With the numbers of its natural predators such as Osprey, Kingfisher, and other birds on the rise, survival of this species becomes more of a challenge. So its important that we humans limit the adverse impact that our own practices can have on this already vulnerable species.

RIDEM announces 2007-08 hunting regulations

New "All Outdoors" permit package being offered

The Department of Environmental Management announces that there are several changes to the hunting regulations for the 2007-08 season, primarily regarding deer hunting. The DEM remains committed to managing the growing deer population by focusing on the harvest of female deer. Most of the other changes are strictly date changes reflecting the calendar shift.

RIDEM is encouraging more private landowners to allow

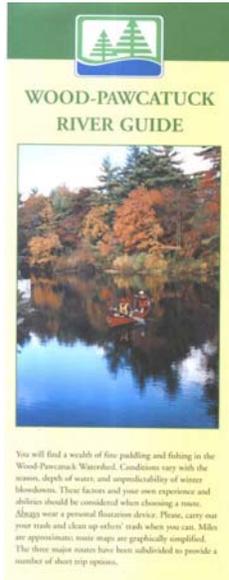
Continued Page 7

WPWA CANOE AND HIKING GUIDES

Order Form

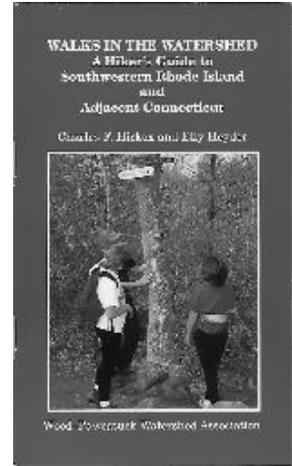
Wood-Pawcatuck River Guide (2nd edition)

By Charlie Hickox and Elly Heyder
 \$ 4.00 members (\$5.00 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
 \$4.00 members (\$5.00 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*
 Add \$1.50 postage and handling per item.

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____

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

RICKA to host Canoe and kayak races in September

The Rhode Island Canoe/Kayak Association is holding the 30th Annual Rhode Island Flat-water Championships (formerly the Wood River Race) on Saturday, September 8th. This race will take place on one of Rhode Island's cleanest and most scenic rivers— the Pawcatuck River.



There are classes for all types of canoes and kayaks. So come join the fun! Sign up on race day at the Bradford Fishing Access on Route 91 in Bradford, RI.

For more information contact Alan & Barbara August at (401)

725-3344, or at www.ricka.org

Event details:

Location: Bradford Access
 Rt. 91&216, Bradford RI
 Date: Saturday, Sept. 8, 2007
 Registration times:
 Morning races 9:30- 10:00am
 Afternoon races 12:30-1:00pm
 Start times: 10:00am & 1:00pm

Hunting Regs (Cont'd from Page 6)

hunters to hunt on their property during deer-hunting seasons. As a reminder to deer hunters, annual written permission is required for all deer hunting on private lands. RIDEM has developed a courtesy card, available on their website, for hunters and landowners to sign, which gives the dates for permissions, and contains *A Hunter's Pledge* regarding princi-

ples of conduct.

This year RIDEM is offering a new "All Outdoors" permit package. The package, which must be purchased before September 15 from DEM's Division of Licensing, entitles hunters to buy all nine mainland deer permits at one time for \$112.50, and receive two additional mainland permits free of charge. The two permits are valid for either sex or antlerless deer during their respective seasons. Hunters wishing to purchase the package must show previous RI firearm and archery permits or proof of both hunter and archery safety course cards. A limit of 500 permit packages will be printed this first year, on a first come first served basis. Order forms will be available at www.dem.ri.gov by mid-August.

Application for Membership

Name(s) _____

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 extra contribution of \$ _____

*Your contribution is tax deductible .
Thank you for your support!*

Board of Trustees

- Robert J. Schiedler, President (Charlestown)
- Dante G. Ionata, V. President (N. Providence)
- Nancy Hess, Secretary (Richmond)
- Harold R. Ward (Woodville)
- Saul B. Saila (Richmond)
- Malcolm J. Grant (Hope Valley)
- Thomas B. Boving (Richmond)
- Laura J. Bottaro (Saunderstown)
- Peter August (Arcadia)
- Raymond Cherenzia (Westerly)

WPWA Staff

- Lori Urso, Executive Director
- Denise J. Poyer, Program Director
- Danielle Aube, Program Asst.
- Michelle Hetu, URI Coastal Fellow

WPWA Campus

203 Arcadia Road, Hope Valley
 at Barberville Dam
 401-539-9017
 Email: info@wpwa.org
 Website: www.wpwa.org



Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association



Ray Turgeon runs the rapids at White Rock on this season's Source to Sea Paddle in June

Opinions expressed in *Watershed* are not necessarily those of WPWA, its Board of Trustees, or staff.

US Postage
 PAID
 Non Profit
 Permit No. 9
 Hope Valley RI

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
 203-B Arcadia Road
 Hope Valley, RI 02832