



Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
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LOCAL WATERSHED GROUP PREPARES FOR SPRING DESPITE THE COLD TEMPERATURES

(Hope Valley & Bradford, RI) The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) recently completed the construction phases of two local projects. “The Switch Road Public Access Area” was a partnership between the WPWA, the Rhode Island DEM, and the Rhode Island DOT to provide safe public access to the Wood River and to create a natural buffer zone between the river and nearby Switch Rd. The design, developed by Cherenzia and Associates and constructed by Central Nurseries, will allow the native plantings to overtake and permanently stabilize the site. WPWA’s “Green Plan” for the project utilized no petroleum products, pesticides or fertilizers, and maximizes the soil’s absorption of rainwater and road runoff. For decades the baron landscape provided no protection to the Wood River from runoff created by the nearby Rte 95 overpass and heavily traveled Switch Rd. This valuable habitat restoration effort was made possible in part with funding from The WPWA, The USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service, and The RIDOT and RIDEM. WPWA will construct an informational kiosk and present the completed project to the public in the spring.

The recently completed “Bradford Fish Ladder and Portage Repair Project” will allow more fish on the Pawcatuck River to move upstream past the Bradford Dying Association Dam and provides the public with a safer path around the dam and fish ladder. This restoration project was a team effort between federal, state, local, non-profit, and private industry. WPWA executive director Chris Fox remarked “working to coordinate all the different interests in the project was a challenge but proved beneficial to both the river ecosystem and the public”. The engineering firm of Fuss & O’Neill, tasked with addressing a range of repairs at the site, proposed plans to the WPWA that unified the interests of all the stakeholders. Wilco Development diligently implemented a new portage path to allow boaters to move around the dam and fishway safely and modified the fish ladder to accommodate more fish. The WPWA plans to add native plantings, an informational kiosk and interpretive signage explaining how the fish ladder works prior to the spring 2009 fish and boat runs. Among those planning to attend the spring unveiling ceremonies are the project owners, Michael Grills of the Bradford Dying Association and the RI DEM, as well as project sponsors The USDA’s NRCS, The US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the RI Trail Advisory Committee. The WPWA would like to thank Bradford Dying Association for their enthusiastic project support and Richard Quinn of the USF&WS for his efforts in designing the improved fishway.

For additional information, contact WPWA at 401-539-9017 or info@wpwa.org.