



Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

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WPWA Receives Rivers Council Grant

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) and science teachers at Chariho Middle School (CMS) will team up to make students' research data available on the web, thanks to a grant from the Rhode Island Rivers Council (RIRC). According to WPWA Program Director, Denise Poyer, "This grant allows us to tie in many of the programs in which WPWA is involved. 'Research Data Management with Chariho Middle School Science Classes' nicely combines water quality monitoring, research, education, and public outreach."

For the past year WPWA has been conducting an in-house data management project to organize their twenty-one years of water quality monitoring data. "We want data about the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed to be a useful tool for managing water quality. We don't want this information to be stuck in a spread sheet somewhere", said Ms. Poyer. This process has involved compiling and processing the data and developing a clean, consistent format to report data results over time. A prototype report can be found at: <http://www.edc.uri.edu/wpwa/>. When this project is completed in the summer of 2010 WPWA will have much of the water quality monitoring data published on their website and accessible to everyone.

The grant from RIRC will enable WPWA to develop the ability to also publish middle and high school students' water quality sampling efforts. WPWA has had a close relationship with several watershed schools and especially with science teachers at the CMS. Ms. Poyer said "We have worked on many projects with them, including water quality sampling of the Wood River. For the last several years CMS classes have used WPWA's kayaks to explore and learn about the Wood River and South County Salt Ponds through first hand observations." Every spring the

students collect water quality information on these sites. This project will give students an opportunity to learn to take monitoring and research a step further by publishing the data they collect. They will learn how to organize and analyze their data, especially as it compares to previous years. They will then create their own webpage, upload their data, and link it to the WPWA data maps. Although CMS students' data does not have the same quality control checks and laboratory accuracy as other data collected by WPWA, it is still a useful tool to look at trends in water quality. "The hope is that students become engaged in science, not just for a good grade, but because they see it is fun, interesting, and has direct applications to their own lives."

For more information call WPWA at 401-539-9017 or email denisep@wpwa.org.

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