



Watershed News

December 2015

President's Message

Greetings,

Let's review briefly some of the accomplishments of the past year.

We started the year with our planning meeting to determine not only what to do for the coming year, but to bring ideas for different activities that would interest the community and protect our watershed. Events that took place include our annual symposium, "Trout in the class room," river clean ups, the fish ladder open house, canoe and kayak cruise, storm drain labeling, speakers at the Westfield library, and the fly fishing clinic.

We also sponsored an internship for a student at Westfield State University. All activities have been addressed or will be in our newsletters.

For the coming year the board will be reviewing some of the activities listed above and schedule them in the future. We will be looking at topics that members and other people have suggested. We will be considering

sponsoring water safety instruction classes, a second boat cruise, more speakers thru out the year, water quality monitoring (the WSU internship highlighted in another story) and easier access to the river.

We welcome any suggestions that you may have, now and throughout the year. Any donation of time to help and/or participate is always appreciated.

The symposium theme this year has yet to be determined, but will be held April 4th. "Trout in the class room" is continuing this year (see the list of participants in the accompanying article). Go to our improved web sight for information on programs, links, and topics of interest in our watershed.

I would like to take this time to wish everybody a "HAPPY and SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON." SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!!!!!!"

Bill Rose
WRWA President

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Storm Drain Labeling in 2015

By Mike Young

WRWA's storm drain labeling program moved to Southwick this past summer and fall, eventually labeling nearly 1000 drains all over town in cooperation with the Southwick DPW.

The colorful blue, white and green 4-inch plastic labels are intended to make sure that residents realize that the storm drain system drains directly into local waterways, including the Congamond Lakes and Great Brook, a tributary of the Westfield River. Ideally, only rain water would go down the drains, but

we often hear stories of people using them as more general dumping stations – using them to dispose of pet waste, automotive oil, cigarette butts, or trash.

Virtually all of the residential streets to the east of the 10-202 corridor were labeled as well as many streets to the west of 10-202 and north of Rt. 57. There's a little work, perhaps another 100-200 drains, remaining to be done in areas south of Rt. 57 on the west side of town – a project for 2016!

Trout in the Classroom

By Mike Young

For the third year, WRWA will be sponsoring the participation of several local schools in the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program organized by Mass-Wildlife. Most of the schools have been participating for years, originally in the Atlantic Salmon Egg Rearing Program (ASERP) and now in TIC – those schools are the North Middle School (Westfield), South Middle School (Westfield, 2 tanks), Powder Mill Middle School (Southwick, 2 tanks), and Gateway Middle School (Huntington). We've also added one new school this year, the R.H. Conwell Elementary School in Worthington, which takes the place of the now-closed Berkshire Trails Elementary School in Cummington.

WRWA provides chillers and 29-30 gallon aquarium tanks, along with multi-mode filters and other supplemental equipment for providing the brook trout with a "pseudo-stream" habitat during the winter and spring months. The eggs, provided by the Roger Reed Fish



Hatchery in Palmer, will be delivered to the schools by WRWA volunteers in early January along with filter materials and other expendable supplies. Students will watch the eggs hatch, by late January or early February, then provide feed to the fry for several months before releasing them into local streams. By that time the young fish are typically 3-4 inches in length and much more active than salmon fry at the same age, making them more interesting for the students.



Photo #1 Chelsea Gilbert collecting samples from West Springfield Site (WSR-1).

Internship Project on Water Quality

By Chelsea Gilbert and Dr. Aaron O. Reyes

WRWA is currently sponsoring Chelsea Gilbert as their second intern student in the WRWA internship program. Chelsea, a chemistry major in her senior year at Westfield State University, is working with Professor and WRWA board member Aaron Reyes on a new water quality monitoring project. This project focuses on comparing water quality data during periods of high versus low volumetric flow-rates.

Ms. Gilbert engaged in two sampling expeditions this past summer. The first expedition in August followed a recent rainfall event that ensured the river would be at high flow-rate conditions (circa 1,600 cfs). Although, the average high temperature for that expedition was about 80°F, the morning was quite chilly for a mid summer day and the water considerably cooler. A cloudy and breezy day with a raging and murky Westfield River made for an exciting and challenging sampling expedition. The second expedition, in September, saw a day with a high temperature

in the upper 60's, yet the lack of breeze and clear skies made for a very pleasant day to be out in the river for sampling (Photo #1). While the river was a bit colder, the levels were low, crystal clear, and the low flow-rate (48 cfs) made it easy for Gilbert and Reyes to access it and collect samples.

Gilbert collected 6 samples per expedition, mostly along the West Branch of the Westfield River, with one sample near the river mouth close to the Big E in West Springfield as well as one groundwater sample from the Bear Hole Spring in West Springfield. The samples were tested for basic water quality parameters including temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, bacterial content, total dissolved solids, as well as a few naturally occurring metals such as calcium, sodium, and potassium (Photo #1). Preliminary results show that water quality parameters are within values expected for natural river waters and variations in concentrations can be explained as a result of

variations in flow rates. Gilbert is currently working on analyzing her data and writing a final report. Her results will be summarized and presented to the public at our upcoming annual symposium, which will be held on Saturday April 2, 2016.

We are very pleased with Ms. Gilbert’s work and hope that this compilation of a data-base of basic water quality parameters can help us monitor the health of the Westfield River. The data she compiles will be incorporated (Spring 2016) into our interactive map, which will show collection sites and data results and can be found at our web page www.westfieldriver.org.



Photo #2 Chelsea prepares standards for metal concentration analysis.

Officers and directors for 2016.

Officers:		
President: Bill Rose	39 Sunset Terrace Feeding Hills 01030	786-0195
First Vice President: Brian Conz	53 Balfour Drive Springfield 01118	572-8084
Second Vice President: Allan Ouimet	16 Russell Rd. Westfield 01085	539-0964
Secretary: Mark Damon	54 Pleasant Street Westfield 01085	572-9991
Treasurer: Fran Siska	47 Salvatore Drive Westfield 01085	562-4998
Directors:		
Sheryl Becker	101 Regency Park Dr. Agawam 01001	821-0818
Allan Guagliardo	72 Colony Circle Westfield 01085	568-4770
Timblin Judy	37 Mountain Rd. Holyoke 01040	569-9018
John A. Pelli	32 Laro Road, Westfield	562-0182
George Reichert	75 Blair Road Blandford 01008	848-2074
Aaron Reyes	100 Park Drive Westfield 01085	572-8380
Phillip Sousa	29 Yankee Circle Westfield 01085	568-3982
Samantha Via	16 Crowhill Road, Monson, MA 01057	668-7746
Henry Warchol	2 Sackville Road Westfield 01085	562-3467
Mike Young	721 West Rd. Westfield 01085	562-8498
Honorary Directors:		
Dan Call	777 College Highway Southwick 01077	569-9677

For more information on WRWA’s activities, check our website at www.westfieldriver.org



Westfield River Watershed Association

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2016 Membership Application

New or **Renewal?** (Note: Memberships run Jan.-Dec. Memberships submitted on Oct. 1 or later will be credited to the next calendar year.)

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____

(We send email updates re: events to our members, so it's very helpful to have your email.)

Our newsletter is delivered via email, although those members who had previously requested actual mail will continue to receive it that way unless or until they tell us different.

Please make check payable to “**Westfield River Watershed Association, Inc.**” and

Send to: **WRWA Memberships, P.O. Box 1764, Westfield, MA 01086**

Membership Categories *(check one):*

Individual (\$20) Family (\$30) Student (\$10) Life Member (\$300 and up)

Business (\$50-100) Corporation (\$150-500) Government (\$100-300)

Additional Support: If you would like to make an additional contribution to support WRWA activities, please note the additional amount here: \$_____.

(Note: WRWA is a 501-c-3 charitable organization. You receive no goods or services in exchange for your membership, just the satisfaction of caring for your watershed. Membership dues and additional donations are tax-deductible.)

Get Involved: *Please fill out this next section, even if you've filled it out in previous years, so we might contact you about becoming actively involved in the following areas:*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Cleanup | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishway Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event staffing | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Space Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter, Public relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Serve as Board Member | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other suggestions? _____ | | |

Thank you for your support of the Westfield River Watershed Association.

www.westfieldriver.org