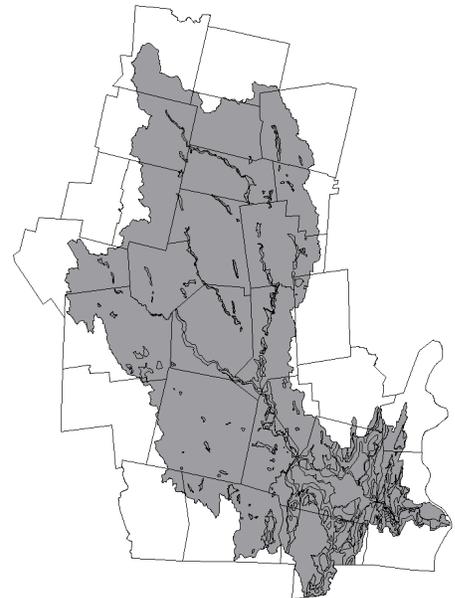


The *SUMMER 2007* WatershedNew

The President's Message

There are still bound to be some hot summer days left, but August is the augur of autumn, and things will be busy again soon for the Westfield River Watershed Association. This past spring we had our annual fly-fishing clinic, fishway open house, salmon-stocking program, and symposium, all well-attended and enjoyed by those who were there. We also continued the storm drain stenciling program and began sponsoring the Watershed Waltz puppet show for schools, both of which we plan to carry forward and expand this fall. On September 29, we'll be conducting our annual fall "harvest" of trash, when we hold our river cleanup. As in the past few years, it will coincide with the Connecticut River Watershed Council's source-to-sea cleanup, and we can probably expect copious amounts of trash, some appalling, some amusing, and some amazing.

In recent years, WRWA has also found itself more involved in local issues dealing with development and resource use in the watershed. We were contacted and consulted regarding the timber harvest at Robinson State Park in Agawam. In addition, we are a commenter on the proposed Russell Biomass plant and on the Indian River Hydroelectric facility, also in Russell. Some other areas in which our members have an interest include the proposed Westfield Pavilion project in north Westfield (which has implications for water quality in the Barnes Aquifer) and the proposed redesign of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail to accommodate the Falcone development project in Westfield center. We'll continue to monitor, and in some cases get involved in, these issues and perhaps others. WRWA, of course, isn't acting alone in all this. The work of the Wild and Scenic advisory committee, the Nature Conservancy, the Massachusetts Riverways program, state and federal fish and wildlife officials, and many others enables and complements everything we do, and many thanks to all of them.



Our Board of Directors does a great deal of work and we should especially note the achievements of outgoing president Mike Young, who acknowledged everyone's efforts but his own in his last President's Message. Mike remains on the board, and is responsible for the website and the salmon-stocking program among many other contributions. We also have some new board members, as listed in this issue. Welcome to Sheryl Becker, Heather Comee, George Reichert, Phillip Sousa, and Stanley Warren.

The most important factor in everything we do, however, is our membership at large. Your interest, your input, your feedback, and your participation are what allows WRWA to accomplish what it does in promoting conservation, education, and recreation in the Westfield Watershed. At a time when climate change and other issues have reawakened environmental concern, belonging to and taking part in WRWA affords the opportunity to act locally to make a difference. Help out - get involved. Contact information is in this issue.

Mark Damon

Westfield River Fish Ladder Open House

By: Henry Warchol

Rain showers greeted the visitors to the fish ladder this year and even with the rain, registered attendance was 234 with most of them children. One family arrived in a heavy downpour, went home and came back with rain gear. WRWA volunteer board members and personnel that helped were Bill Rose, Kathy Meyer, Mark Damon, Michael Young, Phillip Sousa and Leon Pothier. Fish and Wildlife personnel in attendance were Caleb Slater, who heads up the MA salmon restoration effort, and Jacob. A salmon was trapped the day before and was held over in the chilling tank for open house before transporting to the fish hatchery. One of the owners of fish ladder and hydro plant Tom Tarpy was a visitor with his grandson. Thanks go to A & D Hydro, Mr. Southworth of Southworth Paper and MA Fish and Wildlife representative Caleb Slater for giving us permission to hold the event. The spring flood damaged the eel ladder and only one ramp was able to be repaired by the Fish and Wildlife seasonals, more volunteer repairs will have to be performed. Volunteers Leon Pothier, Bill Rose and Ted Ziskowski will be checking the eel count from July 9th to the beginning of September. The fish counts from April 23 to June 9 for the Westfield River this year were:

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| Shad | 4,497 |
| Lamprey | 1,797 |
| Salmon | 21 |
| Sucker | 2,280 |
| Small M. Bass | 133 |
| Brown trout | 44 |
| Rainbow trout | 11 |
| Brook trout | 15 |
| Tiger trout | 21 |
| Eels | 129 |

Volunteers are needed for the Westfield River Booth at the 139th Cummington Fair, August 23rd-26th. Each volunteer who signs up for a 2-4 hour block of time will receive a day pass to the fair. If you are interested in volunteering to help staff the booth, please contact Carrie Banks at (413) 268-3129 or river_banks@hotmail.com.

Annual River Cleanup

By: Mark Damon

WRWA's annual River Cleanup will be held on Saturday, September 29 this year, in conjunction with the Connecticut River Watershed Association's source-to-sea cleanup. We'll have trash bags and some work gloves (if you have your own gloves, that would help), and it's a good idea to wear some clothes that you can get grubby. We'll be working from 9:00 AM until about noon or 1:00 PM. If anyone wants to get an earlier start, there will probably be a WRWA representative there by 8:30. We usually meet at the Westfield Gas and Electric substation near the Great Bridge, and we're still planning on that meeting site this year, but it's a good idea to call or contact us by email to double-check, as the construction in the area may force a change.

Protecting and Enhancing Forested Watersheds

By: Mike Young

In early June I attended a workshop on this topic, hosted by the US Forest Service and several partners, in Portland, Maine. A major theme of the workshop was a discussion of optimal management strategies in regions that are serving as sources of drinking water (e.g. the Quabbin), where a primary goal of management would be to have a positive impact (or to reduce negative impacts) on the quantity and quality of groundwater. The consensus among the foresters, who comprised most of the attendees, seems to be that management should focus on producing a multi-layered diverse forest that is actively reproducing. Such a forest absorbs nutrients more effectively than a mature even-aged forest would. The presence of a vigorous understory and mid-story, in addition to fully mature trees, also allows the forest to recover more rapidly from disturbances, for example wind events that might topple larger trees. The plan, then, would be to initiate smaller-scale disturbances (timber harvests) relatively frequently, with the goal of reducing the amplitude of natural disturbances that could have large negative impacts on water quality. One of the speakers was Dr. Paul Barten, of UMass-Amherst, who is the co-author of a just-

published reference work ("Land Use Effects on Streamflow and Water Quality in the Northeastern United States") that synthesizes research on a wide variety of related topics and also provides several introductory chapters that cover the underlying scientific principles.

A related theme was the impact that urban forests (well, urban trees?) can have on the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff in cities. Infiltration rates for forested landscapes are ~3-5X greater than for typical suburban landscapes, and trees also do an excellent job of reducing peak stormwater flows simply by intercepting the water on its way to the ground. Of course, anything that can be done to minimize the amount of impervious surface present will help to limit stormwater runoff in urban areas. We had the chance to visit a Portland elementary school that has installed a

"green roof" on a portion of its building. Not only does the "green roof", which consists of flats planted with mosses and other low plants, absorb significant amounts of rainfall (reducing stormwater runoff), it also reduces air conditioning costs by lowering the roof's temperature substantially!

The WRWA Youth Committee is looking into a Fishing Derby on the Westfield River in September. We are going to involve Agawam in the river clean-up in late September. Some scout troops have expressed an interest in helping. stenciling storm drains in Agawam is also being planned for the fall. The fishing derby will require a lot of help to organize and run. Any body interested in helping out in any of these activities please contact Bill Rose.

Here are the names and addresses of our officers and directors for 2007-2008.

| Officers: | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------|----------------------|
| President | Mark Damon | 54 Pleasant Street | Westfield | 01085 | 572-9991 |
| Vice President | Bill Rose | 39 Sunset Terrace | Feeding Hills | 02030 | 786-0195 |
| Second Vice Presidents | Sheryl Becker Heather Comee | | Agawam Southwick | 01101 | 821-0818 427-5089 |
| Treasurer | Kenneth Taylor | 8 Greylock Street | Westfield | 01085 | 562-4947 |
| Secretary | Dave Lovejoy | P.O. Box 219 | Blandford | 01008 | 572-5307 |
| Directors: | | | | | |
| | Mike Young | 721 West Road | Westfield | 01085 | 562-8498 |
| | Henry Warchol | 2 Sackville Road | Westfield | 01085 | 562-3467 |
| | Kathy Meyer | 87 Old Farm Road | Westfield | 01085 | 568-4252 |
| | Philip Sousa | | Westfield | 01085 | 568-3982 |
| | Stanley Warren | | Westfield | 01085 | 562-3338 |
| | Tom Condon | 80 General Knox Road | Russell | 01071 | 564-0895 |
| | Bob Thompson | 10 Lyon Hill Road | Chester | 01011 | 354-9636 |
| | George Reichert | | Blandford | 01008 | 848-2074 |
| Honorary Directors: | | | | | |
| | Dave Pardoe | 25 Sampson Road | Huntington | 01050 | |
| | Dan Call | 777 College Highway | Southwick | 01077 | 569-9677 |