

The

SUMMER 2009

WatershedNews

The President's Statement

Greetings to all members! I trust everybody has had a safe and enjoyable summer. We are looking forward to an exciting and challenging year in the watershed and there is always some activity planned or issue to address. You joined because of your concern for the watershed and/or you participated in an activity, and enjoyed it. Members are the most valuable assets of this organization. Please contact me or any other board member with your concerns and suggestions. We extend an invitation to join us at the board meetings, held once a month, to learn more about what we do.

Earlier in the year, we had the symposium, which was an informative seminar on "what to do in the watershed". There were many booths of free activities and informative lectures; the attendance was one of the largest we have had and the feedback was positive from members and guests. Salmon fry

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stocking is done throughout the state in the spring. It consists of putting salmon fry (1" long) in small streams and we sponsor two separate stockings in the watershed. The event was attended by both school and scout groups – and all who participated, children and adults, were very enthusiastic.

Storm drain labeling was done in Westfield this year, which consists of gluing a label onto the pavement near a storm drain and informing people that the water runs to the river, so please don't pollute. School and scout groups also attended this activity. A fly-fishing clinic was held on the banks of the Westfield River where we teach children and

adults about the insects that live in the water and the foliage along the banks of the river, which is food for the fish. There are people there to teach how to tie an artificial fly to mimic the insects and instruction in fly-casting is also offered. The weather cooperated, and all participants had a good time. A canoe/kayak cruise down the Westfield River was another popular activity; it starts in Westfield and ends at Robinson State Park, in Agawam.

The fish-way open house was held in West Springfield at the fish ladder. This year there was a salmon in the holding tank that was 30" long, a clear result of the salmon stocking. The viewing window allows you to see the fish passing up the river and you also get to see the majestic wooden dam. The cleaning of some of the rest areas in the watershed is an on-going task that takes place from the spring into the fall. It is an excellent activity for our enthusiastic members.

The end of summer is approaching and the fall offers more activities within the watershed. There is the river clean up, the Mass Outdoor Exposition, and many organized hikes. In the winter, we place water systems in some schools to raise salmon fry from eggs and the students who raised them place the hatched fish in the river come springtime. This is a big help to the salmon-stocking program.

All of the above will be addressed in this newsletter and future newsletters. We are a very busy association working on your behalf within the Westfield river watershed. If you want more information, want to help, or have a suggestion, please contact any board member listed on the last page of the newsletter. When it comes to monitoring, protecting, and enjoying the watershed "if not us, then whom?"

Bill Rose

Kenneth Taylor 2009 Waite Award Recipient at the 57th Annual Meeting

By George Reichert

The 57th Annual Meeting of the WRWA was held May 21st at the Bistro in Westfield. Music during the social hour was provided by Joyce Platt. Following the activities report of 2008 – 2009 by outgoing President Mark Damon, the Nominating Committee presented Thomas Condon for the position of Secretary and Fran Siska for the position of Treasurer. Both were elected unanimously by the membership. The Board of Directors at its June meeting elected Bill Rose, President; Allan Guagliardo, 1st Vice President; Heather Comee & Sheryl Becker, 2nd Vice Presidents.

Karen E. Leigh the new Conservation Coordinator for the City of Westfield was the guest speaker. Her topic "Non-Point Source Pollution, What Can A Homeowner Do?" drew great audience participation.

The highlight of the evening was the Presentation of the Waite Award to Kenneth Taylor for his years of outstanding service in the protection of the Westfield Watershed and for his years of service as the WRWA Treasurer. Due to illness, Ken was unable to attend and the Award was accepted by his son.

Trash Talk

By Kathy Meyer

Let's talk dirty....

Each summer for the last six years I've begged, pleaded and cajoled WRWA members into helping clean trash left by lazy picnickers at turnouts along Highway

20 on the Westfield River in Huntington and Russell. Initially, we cleaned these troubled spots every 2 weeks during June – August. Now we do them once/month and as part of our Fall Annual Westfield River Clean Up.

The most problematic location is the turnout in Russell across from the Countryside Furniture Store. With its wonderful sand beach, this site attracts numerous people who come to swim in the Westfield River. Because of the extremely steep slope with no visibility from the highway, privacy abounds. The steepness of the slope makes it hard to carry trash up the hill after a day of picnicking; so many people just leave it behind, reasoning that it can't be seen from the highway above.

In our July clean up of this beautiful sand river beach we gathered 14 large bags of trash including numerous broken beer bottles, soiled rain-swollen baby diapers, used feminine hygiene products, grills, carpets, shoes, a fishing rod, wet paper plates, and all manner of rotten decomposed food. Then we hauled them up the steep embankment to the turnout at the top where Mass Highway Department picks them up for disposal. Compared with past years this was a light load due to all the rain and cool weather this summer. With the weather warming in August, I expect we will find much more trash when we clean on Saturday, August 22.

I'd like to thank volunteers who helped this year – Ron Lucassen, John Shuttleworth, Marge Lehan, Gene Theroux, and Al Guagliardo – and encourage any who wish to help to call me at 413-568-4252.

Big MOE 2009

By Bill Rose

The Massachusetts Outdoor Exposition (MOE) will be held Sunday September 27th

at the Hamilton Rod and Gun Club in Sturbridge, MA. Last year they had over 5,000 people in attendance and they estimate that 1,000 of those were from Western Mass. There are more than 50 stations of activities, most of which are hands-on experiences. We set up our display, which Mark Damon manned and was busy all day. The Western Mass Fly Fishermen sponsored the fly tying booth; eight members instructed over 100 people. The expo is a great way to expose our club to the public and all participants get a free lunch. This year we are looking forward to having more members come to the expo and walk around the grounds. It is completely free to the public. For more information call Bill Rose.

Fishway Update

By Henry Warchol

The public's interest in the Westfield River fish ladder in West Springfield attracts many people every year. More than two hundred fifty people attended open house this year, most of those interested in the facility being parents with their children, and scout groups. Thanks go to A&D Hydro, Southworth Paper Co. and Mass Fish and Wildlife for permitting the event.

An unusual amount of rain and cooler river water produced a lower fish count migrating upstream this year. The counts were 2 salmon, 1,361 shad, 541 lamprey and 54 eels. One salmon a (Grilse) three year old male salmon (one year at sea) was on view, which came up the fish ladder the day before the open house. The salmon count for last year was 34.

Very low counts of fish (herring almost non existent) coming up the Connecticut River and its tributaries, was very disappointing, while salmon counts in Maine and Canada recorded an improvement on some of their rivers.

Caleb Slater of Mass. Fish and Wildlife shut down the fish ladder July 14. Phil Sousa, Ted Ziskowski, Bill Rose and Leon Pothier volunteered to monitor juvenile American eels (elvers) till mid September. WRWA guides and registrars for the event were Bill Rose, Kathy Meyer, Mike Young, Phil Sousa, Mark Damon and Henry Warchol.

There are still problems with the ocean's fish numbers from over fishing that is adding to the problem of river returns. Interesting information on the fishery can be viewed at these web sites:

- Pew Environmental Group.
- <http://www.endoverfishing.org>
- www.nmfs.noaa.gov
- <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ma/nwis/rt>

One Step At A Time - Exploring and Restoring Glendale Falls

By Meredyth Babcock

The Trustees of Reservations and the Westfield River Wild and Scenic Committee are joining forces with YOU to build a walkway that will preserve and make safe & accessible this beautiful treasure. Adopt a stair and one step at a time and we'll descend over 150 ft. to view the cascading falls that are part of the Trustees of Reservations property, located in Middlefield MA.

Contribute \$10 for each step you can make towards the Glendale Falls - One Step at a time campaign.

Send your check or money order to:
**WRWA - Westfield River Wild & Scenic
PO Box 397, Huntington, MA 01050**

Do you have a story or memory about Glendale Falls? Please send it in along with your step contribution. We are finding out that many of us have wonderful memories from our time at Glendale Falls or plan to make some!!

Westfield River Cleanup

By Mark Damon

This year's annual Westfield River Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, October 3. As in previous years, it will coincide with the Connecticut River Source-to-Sea cleanup. The main group will meet at 9:00 AM at the Westfield Gas and Electric Substation off Meadow Street (near the new bridge). A second group will meet and work in Agawam. Wear work gloves and clothes you can get grubby. We'll send people out to various sites and work until between noon and 1:00 PM. Last year we had a great turnout and removed an amazing amount of trash – let's top that with even more this time!

Fly-Fishing Clinic

By Bill Rose

The fly-fishing clinic was held on May 16th; the weather was sunny and the temperature was just right. Phil Sousa, Mark Damon and his wife, and Manny from the Western Massachusetts Fly Fishermen were on hand to help out, and various members stopped by to help during the day. The fly tying bench was kept busy all day, even after the clinic ended, as was the insect identification table. Mark went into the river and captured some insects, while his wife collected insects from the bushes along the side of the river, which led to a discussion on the various insects collected.

Fly-casting instruction interested many people and some even brought their own fly rods. Members manned the WRWA display with Phil and they were kept busy with questions about the organization. We are looking forward to having this event next year with a larger attendance. Thanks to everyone who helped out. Fly-fishing is alive and well in the watershed!

Westfield River Canoe Cruise

By Tom Condon

I felt like Goldilocks on the day of the annual Westfield River canoe cruise. On Thursday Mike Young called me to tell me that he had checked the river gages on the Westfield River and they were really low, perhaps too low to even run the section of river from the Great River Bridge in Westfield to Robinson State Park in Agawam. But then it started to rain, and rain, and rain some more. Perhaps this was the true start of our summer deluge. Now by Friday, the river was up and running. Running too fast in fact. The current was far too strong to lead a casual trip. One day it's too dry and the next it's flooding. Would it ever be just right?

Well, when Saturday came, the river had dropped to a near perfect level for canoeing. And so, a group of 18 WRWA members and potential members joined on the banks of the river and pushed off under blue skies. At a tight turn above the new bridge in Westfield, George and his wife took a spill and added a bit of excitement to the journey. Otherwise we all reveled in the small waves the river threw at us. We enjoyed sighting a number of birds, including a great blue heron and a bald eagle soaring over the river.

Join us next year for this annual event or come along on some of our adventures this fall.

Stevens Hiking Trail

Date and Time: Sunday, September 2,
10:00 – 12:00, *Huntington*

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call 413-564-0895 to register.

Meeting Place: Pullout along Route 20 across from the Huntington Health Center. There is a kiosk/gazebo at this pullout.

The Hilltown Land Trust has established a new 1.2-mile hiking trail in Huntington. It is on a 379-acre parcel of land donated by Frank Stevens to the Hilltown Land Trust. This trail winds through a wooded landscape dotted with boulders covered in mosses, ferns and lichen. Signs of past inhabitants include a cellar hole and a maple sugarhouse ruin. The trail was cleared in 2007, so is not well established. Let's explore this beautiful area only recently made available to nature lovers like us, by a generous donor and the gracious efforts of the Hilltown Land Trust.

Tekoa Peak Hike

Date and Time: Saturday, October 18;
10:00 – 1:00pm, *Russell*
Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)
Registration: Please call to register.
Meeting Place: Pull-out along Route 20 on Westfield-Russell town line (east of the Mass Pike Bridge)

As you travel west on the Mass Pike from Westfield toward New York, you pass over the Westfield River. Just west of the river, the Mass Pike enters a narrow steep pass between two peaks. The peak to the south is called Tekoa Peak. It hosts a Westfield city park with nice trails to follow. Our hike will start on Route 20, pass under the Mass Pike Bridge and then climb to the peak. At times the climb will be steep, but we'll take our time and stop along the way to watch for birds in the treetops (we'll be looking down into them), mushrooms at our feet (its been a good wet year – do we dare hope it continues?) and catch our breath to enjoy the fall colors. Dress for the weather, wear sturdy hiking boots, a hiking stick might be helpful, and bring plenty of water with your lunch. Heavy rain cancels.

Turtle Bend Mountain

Date and Time: Sunday, October 18; 9:00 – 1:30, *Russell*
Leaders: Sheila Croteau (413-732-7254) and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)
Registration: Please call to register.
Meeting Place: By the Westfield River bridge on Main Street in Russell.

Avid hikers are welcome to join us for this over-the-mountain hike on Unkamt's Path, (or the U.P.). This trail was named for an Indian guide who led travelers and settlers through the Westfield River valley during colonial times. This 2 ½ mile section goes over Turtle Bend Mountain in Russell and leads us up to the top of this singular round hill for a view of the Westfield river valley below, Shatterack Mountain across the river, Tekoa Mountain, and beyond. Fall colors will only help to enhance the picturesque scenery from the top. Be aware that there are some steep sections.

This is a rugged, challenging trail for adventurous hikers only. Many blow downs make bush-whacking necessary and the trail is overgrown with brambles in some sections, so long pants are recommended. We will leave some cars at the meeting place, then shuttle to the start of the hike on Route 20 in Russell. Be sure to wear sturdy, supportive hiking boots. Bring a lunch and water. A hiking stick is recommended as well as an adventurous spirit.

The Keystone Arches of the Westfield River

Date and Time: Sunday, November 2; 10:00 – 3:00pm, *Chester*
Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)
Registration: Please call to register.
Meeting Place: Chester Elementary School, Middlefield Road

Back at the turn of the century, the 20th, not the 21st, a railroad track was laid through

the rugged country of Western Massachusetts. Engineers struggled with tackling such a steep and treacherous terrain. George Washington Whistler solved the problem: a series of spectacular keystone arched bridges. Join us as we follow the path to these hidden marvels on the Westfield River. We'll walk past, over, and around these bridges and along the way enjoy the sights and sounds of the woods that now envelop the structures of man.

The trail is never very steep, but is often wet, so come prepared, wear sturdy hiking boots, a hiking stick might be helpful, and bring plenty of water with your lunch. Dress for the weather and remember heavy rain cancels. The bridges might be able to handle it, but we can come back another day.

Shatterack Mountain Hike

Date and Time: Sunday, November 14; 9am – 1pm, *Russell*

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

Registration: Please call to register.

Meeting Place: Westfield State Commuter Parking Lot

Rising up over the village of Russell is Shatterack Mountain. The views from the peak offer spectacular vistas of the Westfield River and the surrounding mountains. A short, but steep, descent will bring us to Shatterack Brook, which we will trace back to near its source on the mountain. Stopping along the trail, we will discuss the signs of reforestation from recent fire, fall tree identification, and the strategies of wildlife as they prepare for the coming winter.

This 1.8 mile hike is for experienced hikers. In places the going can be rough. Although we will travel at a casual pace, there will be times when significant elevation is gained and lost in a short

distance. Please wear sturdy, supportive footwear, dress for the weather, pack a lunch, and carry plenty of water.

Nighttime at Noble View

Date and Time: Saturday, December 13; 7:00 – 9:00pm *Russell*

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

Registration: Please call to register.

Meeting Place: Noble View Parking Area, South Quarter Road, Russell.

Heavy rain or heavy snow cancels; light snow would be a delight.

Sunset is about 4:30pm. Winter is nearly upon us. Join us for a pleasant leisurely nighttime walk along the road to the Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View cabin. Along the way, we will call for owls; Great Horned Owls nest in late January, and begin calling to one another as early as October so hopefully, we'll receive answers. Be alert too, for other nighttime creatures like porcupine or flying squirrels. Our destination will be the stunning view down into Westfield, where we'll enjoy a little stargazing (if the weather permits) and some hot chocolate and goodies at the picnic table. Bring along a mug and warm clothes.

Membership Update

Thanks to these Businesses and Organizations for their Support of WRWA

United Bank

Southwick Conservation Commission

Westfield River Wild & Scenic Committee

Welcome to these New Family and Individual Members

Lou & Deborah Desi

Stanley & Kim Kozik

Peter Morizio

Richard Scott

Here are the names and addresses of our officers and directors for 2009-2010.

Officers:					
President:	Bill Rose	39 Sunset Terrace	Feeding Hills	01030	786-0195
First Vice President:	Allan Guagliardo	72 Colony Circle	Westfield	01085	568-4770
Second Vice Presidents:	Sheryl Becker	101 Regency Park Dr.	Agawam	01101	821-0818
	Heather Comee	10 Maple Street	Southwick	01077	427-5089
Secretary:	Tom Condon	80 General Knox Road	Russell	01071	564-0895
Treasurer:	Fran Siska	47 Salvatore Drive	Westfield	01085	562-4998
Directors:					
	Tracy Adamski	26 Aldrich St.	Northampton	01060	572-3256
	Mark Damon	54 Pleasant Street	Westfield	01085	572-9991
	Kathy Meyer	39 Rachel Terrace	Westfield	01085	568-4252
	George Reichert	75 Blair Road	Blandford	01008	848-2074
	John Shuttleworth	63 Warwick St.	Longmeadow	01106	567-3648
	Phillip Sousa	29 Yankee Circle	Westfield	01085	568-3982
	Kenneth Taylor	8 Greylock Street	Westfield	01085	562-4947
	Bob Thompson	10 Lyon Hill Road	Chester	01011	354-9636
	Henry Warchol	2 Sackville Road	Westfield	01085	562-3467
	Mike Young	721 West Road	Westfield	01085	562-8498
Honorary Directors:					
	Dan Call	777 College Highway	Southwick	01077	569-9677
	Dave Pardoe	25 Sampson Road	Huntington	01050	

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

