



River News

Our Mission: To restore, protect, celebrate and sustain the natural resources of the Westport River and its watershed communities of Westport, Dartmouth, Fall River, Freetown, Little Compton, Tiverton & Adamsville.

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New Leadership—New Direction

The Westport River Watershed Alliance is focusing more of its time and resources on protecting and restoring the Westport River watershed. With a unanimous budget vote from the board of directors, the organization is concentrating on being the watchdog of the Westport River watershed.



Executive Director, Matt Patrick, said, “Not many people are aware of our everyday activities on behalf of the river and its watershed, but it is quite substantial.” Patrick went on to say that while reading through the history of the organization he was impressed with all the work they have done and all the work currently in progress. “We don’t even get paid for most of this work and it would never happen without us. There’s the River Road project on the upper West Branch of the River where shellfish beds have been closed for years because of high coliform bacteria counts. We spent about \$10,000 in staff time to produce the testing and write a grant for the Town of Westport. The town won the grant for \$20,000 to design a system to treat the road runoff before it goes into the river. The Westport River Watershed Alliance did not get anything from the grant.”

Patrick went on to say that while education programs will continue, they will be scaled back in proportion to the financial support that is available. “Extensive polling of our members showed that they want us to do more to protect the watershed. We are going to focus our resources more intently on what people want us to do.”

Patrick gave more examples, “The town needed help with an application for a mandatory state Municipal Separate Storm System permit that had lapsed while the town was between town managers, so they called us and we were happy to do it. Another Town project, where Sam Tripp Brook runs under Drift Road, was initially rejected by the Conservation Commission and rightfully so. The new interim Town Administrator, Jack Healey, called our staff scientists to get their advice. These are just some of the daily occurrences that keep our office busy.”

In Celebration of WRWA’s 35 Years



We’re Going Paperless - It’s A Green Thing

It does seem a bit strange that in the “digital age” we still consume enormous amounts of mashed up, bleached tree pulp, most of which gets used once or twice and then tossed or recycled. The greenest paper is no paper at all, as an environmental organization WRWA is taking action to make more of our information digital and dematerialized whenever possible. The more we do online, the less we consume natural resources.

Next year we will make *River News* an online/digital newsletter. We are more than happy to provide a mailed paper copy to those that request it. If you would like to still receive a hardcopy of *River News*, please fill out the form below and return it to WRWA or send a e-mail with PAPER RIVER NEWS to info@wrwa.com, you should include your name and current mailing address.



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River News is published by the **Westport River Watershed Alliance**, a nonprofit citizens' organization working to protect the environment and improve the economic, aesthetic, and recreational value of the Westport River watershed and its coastal environs.

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 for *River News*.

Thank you Lees Market!

WRWA's New Executive Director

As the new Executive Director, people often ask me how it all came to be. Twenty seven years ago there was a need to save a river and a void of leadership. At a young age, I naively volunteered to fill it and it turned out to be the best decision of my life. That campaign led to the Commonwealth's acquisition of 380 acres of the Quashnet River's watershed. It prevented an 800 unit condo development from being built. And it changed my life.



That experience has taught me there is something magical in rivers and the land that carries them. In support of the bill we used to gain funding for the Quashnet River, the Mashpee Wampanoag Chief Vernon Pocknett testified that the rivers of our land carry the blood of mother earth but we have not treated them with the respect they deserve. Now, whenever I go back to the river valley I feel its presence strongly. I feel the powerful emotion in the chief's words and it brings me peace of mind. If I had done nothing else in my life it would not have mattered because, with the help of many other people, I saved this unique place on earth.

As someone who was only remotely aware of the Westport River before coming here, let me tell you the Westport is an incredible resource and the beauty of the setting is unsurpassed in the Commonwealth. The Westport River is in the royal family when it comes to coastal river estuaries. One can only imagine how productive this river was before European settlers arrived.

I'm very impressed with what the WRWA has been able to do over the years to protect this watershed. Gay, her small staff, the board and many volunteers have done a great job. The WRWA is saving your river for you doing many things all at the same time. We are teaching your children how they are connected to the river. We are constantly monitoring the river for sources of pollution and doggedly advocating at the town and state levels to correct them. And, we are helping farmers limit their impacts on the river. We can only continue to do all these things with your help.

During this time when local government is understandably underfunded, it is time to build up our Watershed Protection Fund. I believe it is important to restore the traditional sea-run Brook Trout and herring fisheries in the Westport's contributory streams because they are the sentinels in a healthy water system. We should also establish an eco-toilet revolving loan fund to help homeowners who have failing septic systems purchase composting and other the new toilets in preparation for the time when we may be called upon to clean up our wastewater. If you are curious about any of these items please call me.

Without WRWA's constant attention over the years the river would be in horrendous condition and it will take continued vigilance and new efforts to show our respect for our share of mother earth's blood that flows in the Westport River. Is it possible? Yes! Is it worth it? Absolutely! We need your continued support to save this river from death by a thousand cuts. What's the river worth to you? We need your membership support to ensure that we can continue the work you want done to save the Westport River.

—Matt Patrick

WRWA Works for Clean Water – Puddle by Puddle

Stormwater runs down our roads and other hard surfaces and picks up everything along the way; oil, bacteria, nitrogen, heavy metals, and other pollutants. What's in the runoff can affect our drinking water, shellfish beds, fisheries, stream and river health, soil health, and other resources. When rain that falls on hot pavement is heated and then runs quickly into a cold stream, it has a specific negative impact. Several fish species, such as the locally rare sea-run brook trout, need cold and clean streams and are affected greatly by any large changes in temperature.

There are many ways of removing pollutants from stormwater so that we can have clean water entering back into our water supplies, streams, and rivers. Many times the solution involves slowing the stormwater down so that it can absorb into the soil, which will help filter out pollutants. In other situations plants and mushrooms can help remove oils, heavy metals, and some excess nutrients. Other areas require chemicals or mechanical filters. In some cases bioretention ponds help remove pollutants. These are just a few examples of solutions to stormwater pollution, and each site needs the proper solution to be tailored to the location. So you can see why this is so tricky.

WRWA has located many of the stormwater issues in the watershed and is working to provide resources to help create a watershed that will thrive and that everyone can use safely for many generations. There are a number of local stormwater issues that WRWA is focused on: along Route 177, at the Head of Westport, at several points along River Road, and on Drift Road. These projects are all in different stages of investigation, planning, and engineering. You will be hearing much more about these projects as they continue forth. They are being worked on by the State, the Town, individuals, organizations, and local contractors. They are all being supported by federal and state grants, such as the 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant which is being used to support the work at the Head of Westport.

These are just a few of the stormwater issues around the Westport River watershed, and WRWA is working alongside many other groups and individuals to complete them in the most beneficial manner for the watershed. There are plenty of things that you can do on your own property to help lessen the amount of pollutants that enter into the watershed. Contact WRWA at (508) 636-3016 or b.white@wrwa.com if you'd like to find out how you can help improve the water quality in your community, or if you see something that might be a stormwater problem.

—Betsy White

Forever—Our ChickaDee

It is with great joy that we remember our dear friend, Dee Morris. Dee passed away in September, 2011 after a long illness. Dee was a great supporter of WRWA and over many years served as a volunteer, on the Board of Directors, as Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator. She coordinated our Westport Baywatchers program, River Run, and River Day. She loved her family and friends, Westport, her River, and WRWA. She was a dear friend to each and every member of the WRWA staff and will be sorely missed by all. Dee will be remembered by all who knew her, for her positive, nurturing disposition, hard-working ethic, and keen interest in water testing and improving the health of the Westport River. We will always keep the spirit of Dee in our hearts.

—Roberta Carvalho



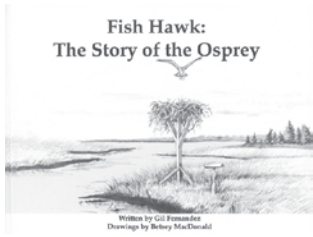
Thankful for Volunteers

In the spirit of giving, we would like to give a big thank you to our members and volunteers. WRWA could not complete many of the projects we do without the help of our many talented volunteers.



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visit <http://westportwatershed.org> to place your order online



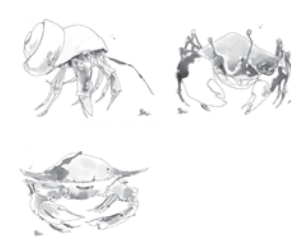
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Fish Hawk: The Story of the Osprey written by well-known Osprey expert and advocate Gil Fernandez and illustrated by local artist Betsey MacDonald.



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Adult WRWA T-Shirts



\$15
WRWA Note Cards. Each pack contains four cards each of three different illustrations by Jim Bush.

WRWA's 2012 Calendar A Great Gift Supporting A Great Cause

The 2012 WRWA calendar features beautiful photographs taken by volunteers of Westport River and the watershed. It also lists local daily tides and heights. The calendar is on sale now for only \$10 at the WRWA office at 1151 Main Road, on the WRWA



website, and at several local stores. Pick up a calendar so you can check the local tides when you head out fishing, boating, or to the beach. This year's calendar has the tides graphed out each day, a neat feature for those that do not like to do math.

The 2012 Calendar includes photographs taken by WRWA volunteer photographers, Steve Connors, F. Richard Cottrell, Carol Coutinho, Brian Graves, Matthew Mercer, Jane Roies, Karen Raus, Jessica Krause Smith, Carol Stegeman, and Mary Ann Thadeau.

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