

# WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Volume 35-1 *Please forward this edition of WATERSHED to a friend!* Spring 2018

## What's Better than Christmas???



If you live to fish... it's Opening Day of fishing season! Typically it's cold and rainy on this very special second Saturday in April, but that never dashes the spirits of folks who love to fish in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. But this past Saturday anglers across Connecticut and Rhode Island awoke to a beautiful spring day ripe for fishing the recently stocked rivers and ponds... [Read more...](#)

## Please check out these great videos highlighting your watershed!





### Let's Go Wild!

Your local rivers are poised to make their big break thanks to the hard work of the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild & Scenic Rivers Study Committee... [Read more...](#)

**Last year's membership expires May 31, so please renew today!**



Renewing your membership will ensure that our programs and advocacy continue for this year, and beyond.  
**Thank you!**



### Pretzels on the Pawcatuck

Enjoy tasty pretzels and craft beer while celebrating WPWA's 2017 accomplishments at our Annual Meeting on May 17th at 6pm... [Read more...](#)

### Thank you to our "WATERSHED" Sponsors



### EZ Pass Comes to the Pawcatuck River

Many partners have spent the last decade making it easier for fish to navigate up and down the river to spawn... [Read more...](#)



Jennifer @greysailbrewing.com  
greysailbrewing.com  
401 - 212 - 7592



### RI Rivers Council Unveils New Maps

At the RIRC Annual Meeting, the group presented banners, maps, displays and brochures detailing 10 watersheds throughout the state... [Read more...](#)



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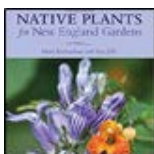


### Come Celebrate Pawcatuck Fish Migration April 21!

Herring are on their way up the Pawcatuck R. so the Richmond Conservation Comm. is hosting a World Fish Migration Day event... [Read more...](#)



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### Going Native Saves Money on Lawn Care

A new book helps anyone create a garden that will tolerate drought, resist disease, and encourage biodiversity... [Read more...](#)

## What's Better than Christmas???



If you live to fish... it's Opening Day of fishing season! Typically it's cold and rainy on this very special second Saturday in April, but that never dashes the spirits of folks who love to fish in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. But this past Saturday anglers across Connecticut and Rhode Island awoke to a beautiful spring day ripe for fishing the recently stocked rivers and ponds.

Over the week leading up to Opening Day trout could be seen breaking the surface through the windows of WPWA. A few insect hatches helped whip the fish into a frenzy with the waters of the upper Wood River nearly boiling with hungry fish. Some were stocked fish, but most were wild Brookies skilled at the art of catching flies floating on the surface of the calm river.

It wasn't just the fish that were feasting though. WPWA Project Coordinator Denise Poyer was

distracted from her daily routine by an osprey crashing into the water just outside her office window. The osprey surfaced clutching a large trout struggling to get free of the bird's sharp talons. She watched intently as the predator spread its powerful wings and struggled to gain altitude. Ultimately disappearing upstream to find a private place to enjoy the nutritious meal. Soon these impressive raptors will be working overtime to feed their voracious young.

Whether you enjoyed a lively day of fishing with your family this past weekend or a day of solitude bonding with your rod and waders, you know what a gift it is to live just minutes away from the bountiful waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. As a WPWA supporter, it is you who have helped to preserve the resource that makes this annual tradition possible. Thank you for all you do to protect and preserve one of the most diverse watersheds in the northeast.

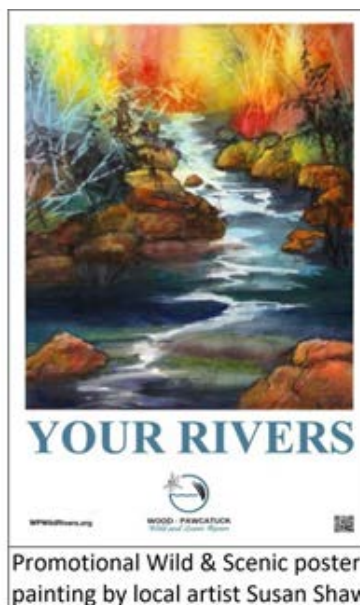
Please check out this [heartwarming video](#) that embodies the deep emotional connection people form with the local rivers you help to protect. [Return to Top](#)

## Let's Go Wild!

Your local rivers are poised to make their big break thanks to the hard work of the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild & Scenic Rivers Study Committee. The appointees from twelve towns in Connecticut and Rhode Island who comprise the committee are nearly ready to release their draft Stewardship Plan recommending seven rivers in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed to be included in the National Park Service's Wild & Scenic River System.

In June the committee members will be bringing the plan to the town councils in each town for their review and hopefully their approval. With those approvals, the US Congress will likely vote later this year to include these local river sections into the national inventory of very special rivers. That will represent a big win for the two states. Most importantly, because the recommendations for improvements and protections to the watershed outlined within the stewardship will be assisted by federal funding through the National Parks Service.

So if you care about water quality, recreational access, flood resiliency, and habitat protection in your backyard then now is the time to let your voice be heard. Please consider sending your support to your town council by writing a letter or speaking at the next town meeting. At the very least, tell a friend about the hard work WPWA, the towns, and other partners have invested in protecting



kristy @flyingricpa.com  
flyingricpa.com  
401 - 364 - 3500



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your rivers for generations to come.

To learn more about the Wild & Scenic process, please visit [www.wpwildrivers.org](http://www.wpwildrivers.org). There you will find a wealth of information on the Wild & Scenic process, a few truly inspiring videos filmed right in your own backyard, and soon you will be able to review the extensive Stewardship Plan. Very special thanks to all who have, for years now, marshaled this valuable effort along. From congressmen to coffee buddies and everyone in between it has taken a united community to reach this milestone. None of which would have been possible without the tireless efforts of the project's coordinator, Denise Poyer. [Return to Top](#)

## Pretzels on the Pawcatuck



Neither rain, sleet nor snow... can slow lan down!

The Malted Barley has proven to be a true champion of the watershed. Not only do they help to sponsor WPWA's water quality monitoring program and newsletter, they also have lent the passion of their general manger, Ian Willets, to the board of WPWA. Please join us in welcoming Ian to the WPWA board of trustees at our annual celebration on May 17th at 6pm at the Malted Barley. You won't want to miss this free event and RSVP will not be required. But stay tuned for more details coming in early May with your WPWA Membership Renewal letter. [Return to Top](#)

Come enjoy tasty pretzels and craft beer while celebrating all of WPWA's 2017 accomplishments at our Annual Meeting on May 17th 2018 at 6pm. This year the Malted Barley of Westerly, RI will host our 35th gathering featuring yummy nibbles, great local craft beers, and a presentation on the Wild & Scenic designation by Denise Poyer. We couldn't think of a better place to hold this event and we are very grateful to the owners of the Barley for providing us with such an inviting space right on the banks of the Pawcatuck River.

The Malted Barley has proven to be a true champion of the



Yum!  
Is it May 17<sup>th</sup> yet!?!?!?

## EZ Pass Comes to the Pawcatuck River



Researchers display adult herring looking to spawn in the watershed

Many partners including WPWA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have spent the last decade removing the Lower Shannock and White Rock dams; replacing the Kenyon Mill and Bradford dams with a series of steps and resting pools that make it easier for fish to navigate up and down the river to spawn.

During the same period, the partners also added fish and eel ladders to the Horseshoe Falls dam and improved the aging fish ladder at Potter Hill dam. This collaboration has resulted in restoring thousands of acres of spawning habitat associated

with the Pawcatuck River. Most notably, restoring migratory fish access to Worden Pond for the first time in hundreds of year.

Now, researchers want to assess the effectiveness of all these improvements, and they're going high tech.

Suzanne Paton, project leader and senior biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's coastal program, said; "We've never tested it (fish passage efficiency), so we want to test that and see how well the fishways do and if we've done a good job at designing them to meet the fishes' needs."

## Watershed Happenings

### Hikes Every Thursday

All Thursdays

10:00 AM

[westerlylandtrust.org/event/thursday-hike-at-grills-preserve-hopkinton](http://westerlylandtrust.org/event/thursday-hike-at-grills-preserve-hopkinton)

### Searching for Salamanders

April 21, 2018

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

[dpnc.org/calendar/searching-for-salamanders/](http://dpnc.org/calendar/searching-for-salamanders/)

### Eppley Hike

April 26, 2018

[www.southcountyri.com/events-calendar/04-26-2018-eppley-flora-and-fauna](http://www.southcountyri.com/events-calendar/04-26-2018-eppley-flora-and-fauna)

### Burlingame North Hike

April 26, 2018

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

[westerlylandtrust.org/event/thursday-hike-at-burlingame-north-charlestown-2](http://westerlylandtrust.org/event/thursday-hike-at-burlingame-north-charlestown-2)

### Glacial Hike

April 28, 2018

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

[dpnc.org/calendar/john-chaplin-glacier-park/](http://dpnc.org/calendar/john-chaplin-glacier-park/)

### Pawcatuck River Duck Race

April 28, 2018

11:30 AM - 3:00 PM

[www.oceanchamber.org/events/details/20th-annual-pawcatuck-river-duck-race-22469](http://www.oceanchamber.org/events/details/20th-annual-pawcatuck-river-duck-race-22469)

### Bird Walk

May 5, 2018

7:30 AM - 11:00 AM

[westerlylandtrust.org/event/bird-walks-and-social](http://westerlylandtrust.org/event/bird-walks-and-social)

## Related News

### Water Protection Funds Raided

April 02, 2018

By FRANK CARINI/ ecoRI News staff

### The Plovers are Back

April 04, 2018

By ecoRI News staff

### Bradford Fish Passage

March 12, 2018

By Cynthia Drummond,  
Westerly Sun staff writer

### More Staff Cuts at RIDEM

March 19, 2018

Videos and text by TIM FAULKNER/ ecoRI News Staff

Scientists have recently launched a two-year study that involves tagging river herring and shad with transponder tags to monitor how well they navigate the Pawcatuck River and its new fish friendly facilities. Much like the way EZ Pass works on our highways, the transponder signals from the fishtags will be picked up by antennas located along the Pawcatuck River. The data gathered by the receivers will determine how long it takes the fish to get through the new passage locations. The study will also help to determine roughly how many fish actually reach their spawning destinations.

Paton also noted the increase in migratory fish making their way up the river should benefit commercial and recreational fishing. "If we can get a run of 100,000 or several hundred thousand adult fish going up in this river and successfully spawning, that's a lot of young fish that are food for bigger marine fish and other species."

Fish biologists from the RI Dept. Of Environmental Management have worked diligently to over the last decade to restore the natural run of herring by transplanting spawning adults from other rivers in RI to the Pawcatuck system. This new study will help to confirm and expand the data that RIDEM biologists have already gathered through trapping and counting fish at the Pawcatuck River's fish ladders.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is collaborating with the U.S. Geological Survey, University of Rhode Island, WPWA, the Nature Conservancy and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management on the research study. [Return to Top](#)



### What is Wampum?

February 6, 2018  
by Hugh Markey

### Planning Green Development

April 06, 2018  
By FRANK CARINI/ ecoRI News staff

### RI Fish & Wildlife Newsletter

Spring, 2018  
RI DEM Division of Fish & Wildlife

### CT DEEP's Wildlife Highlights

April 2018  
CT DEEP

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## WPWA Board and Staff

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Ian Willets

### Staff

Chris Fox,  
Executive Director  
Denise Poyer,  
Project Coordinator

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## RI Rivers Council Unveils New Maps



By PHILIP COZZOLINO  
Narragansett Times

At the Rhode Island Rivers Council (RIRC) Annual Meeting in the statehouse library, the group presented numerous banners, maps, displays and brochures detailing 10 watersheds throughout the state. The materials were made possible by a legislative grant of \$2,000 to the organization, which was secured by Representative Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown and Narragansett) and Representative Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown).

RIRC is made up of 10 representatives of corresponding watersheds throughout the state. The group currently represents the Narrow River Preservation Association, Blackstone River Watershed Council, Buckeye Brook Coalition, Friends of the Moshassuck, Kickemuit River Council, Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council, Salt Ponds Coalition, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and Ten Mile River Watershed Council. Due to the funds provided by the grant, each body designed and received a detailed map and brochure of the corresponding watershed, which was then blown up for a six-foot banner. The materials will be carried by watershed members at meetings and other events in an effort to promote the rivers and the organizations who help maintain them.

Veronica Berounsky, chair of RIRC, a Narrow River Preservation Association board member and volunteer and researcher at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography, said the grant came about due RIRC seeing decreased funding from the state.

"For years, we had state funds that came to us and they started out pretty high, but then decreased," she said. "Then they were about \$20,000 a year - \$2,000 a year for each

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watershed organization. We used almost all of it to fund our competitive grants program. That allowed us to also fund some monitoring stations and conduct additional water tests.”

Those funds were in the form of community service grants - sums of money the legislature could provide to local non-profit organizations. This type of grant was done away with in 2016. McEntee and Craven’s legislative grant to RIRC hoped to fill in the hole that had been left by the doing away of the community service grants. On Wednesday night, McEntee was able to see what they money had produced for the organization.



“Knowing that the Rivers Council is unfunded by the state of Rhode Island, I along with Rep. Robert Craven, District 32, North Kingstown were able to secure a legislative grant in 2017 for \$2,000,” she said at the annual meeting. “It is great to see the large maps of all the areas that are covered by the Rivers Council and the brochures that were developed with that grant.”

Berounsky said McEntee, in addition to helping secure the grant for RIRC, had been “great” in working with the council and getting the group an appointment with the governor’s office to discuss future funding options.

“We wanted to make ourselves more visible and let more people know about us,” said Berounsky. “People on RIRC designed and produced the display and the brochures, and we had members working with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to construct and personalize the maps to the individual watersheds.”

The RIRC then hired a graphic designer to convert the completed maps into large banners.

The annual meeting also saw the election of Alicia Eichinger as vice chair of RIRC. Eichinger is the executive director of the Salt Pond Coalition, which oversees many salt water bodies in Narragansett and South Kingstown.

To view the maps in full, please visit [rivers.org/watershed%20councils.htm](http://rivers.org/watershed%20councils.htm) and then click on the corresponding watershed. [Return to Top](#)

## Come Celebrate Pawcatuck Fish Migration on April 21!

Herring are on their way up the Pawcatuck River so the Richmond RI Conservation Commission is hosting a World Fish Migration Day event at the Town-owned Knowles Mill Park on the Pawcatuck River in Shannock Village. Come with your family and friends to see and learn about river herring, shad, eel and other amazing migratory fishes that return to Rhode Island’s rivers and streams as part of their life cycles. This event is one of nearly 400 planned, worldwide in 2018!

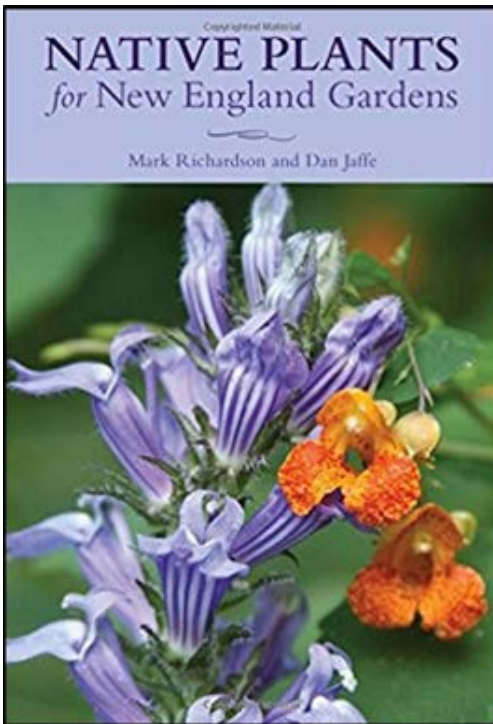


The event will include brief talks about the native fish species that migrate to and from Rhode Island waters, an overview of how the Pawcatuck River is being restored for fish passage, a fish passage study using “easy pass” tags for fish now ongoing on the Pawcatuck River, and the historical and cultural values of these fishes to the Narragansett Tribe. You should expect to see river herring and American eel migrating up the river, plus a tank display will be available to view these amazing fish up close!

While kids will love to see the live fish, there will also be other fun children’s events including using their great imaginations to make their own fish to take home as a keepsake for this important day in celebration of the fishes!

The event will take place on April 21 from 1-3 pm at the park grounds located off Railroad Street in Shannock Village in Richmond, RI. Snacks and drinks will be available, and the park is a nice setting for lunch. This scheduled event will occur with sun, clouds or sprinkles, but rain delays the event until Sunday, April 22, 1-3 pm. Please check the Richmond Conservation Commission’s for updates on the event. We look forward to seeing you, your family and friends there! [Return to Top](#)

## Going Native Saves Money on Lawn Care



By FRANK CARINI/ecoRI News staff

Neat is not always better, especially when it comes to your lawn.

Lawn-care professionals and amateur green thumbs dump pesticides and fertilizers on lawns and soak them with water in hopes of creating lush, green carpets of neighborhood envy. But lawns coated in chemicals are bad for human and pet health, pollute local waters, deter wildlife, and degrade the environment.

However, plants native to New England have evolved to thrive in local conditions and survive the region's harsh seasons. A new book, *Native Plants for New England Gardens*, culls the expertise of the New England Wild Flower Society to help anyone create a garden that will tolerate drought, resist disease, and encourage biodiversity.

The 233-page book, co-authored by Dan Jaffe and Mark Richardson, features 100 native flowers, ground covers, shrubs, ferns, and grasses that thrive in New

England. Jaffe is the propagator and stock-bed grower at the Framingham, Mass.-based New England Wild Flower Society; Richardson is the director of the organization's Botanic Garden.

According to the New England Wild Flower Society, "native" refers to plants growing in New England before European settlement, and includes woody plants such as trees, shrubs and vines, and non-woody plants such as flowering perennials, ferns and grasses.

A yard with a diverse mixture of native trees, shrubs, and plants is cheaper to maintain, easier to take care of, environmentally beneficial, and is more interesting. Native plants support native wildlife and insects, are accustomed to the weather and soil, and are pest resistant. They support the pollinators of our food crops, clean the air and water, and help regulate the climate. They also make good natural buffers, which capture rainfall and filter stormwater runoff.

"Native plants are better for the environment than lawns," Jaffe said. "They bring in pollinators. If you replace your lawn with, say, wild strawberries you don't need to mow, fertilize or water again. Native plants really bring maintenance costs down. They also can be good-tasting edible plants."

Jaffe noted that there is a growing trend around going native. He said clients are asking their landscapers for local plants. And he's seeing more landscape professionals in the classes and workshops he runs.

To create this type of easy-to-maintain, environmentally friendly habitat, buy native trees, shrubs, and plants from local nurseries that grow their own stock. It's important to layer the different species, cluster the same ones together — it creates shelter for wildlife — choose plants that produce pollen and nectar, and have an equal percentage of evergreen and deciduous species.

Ground cover also is important. A layer of decaying leaves and other organic matter, for example, is one of the most productive elements in a natural system, as bacteria and insects continually break down the material. Native plants attract the insects needed to do that work. Nonnative species introduced from, say Europe, may host hundreds of insects in the backyard of a Spaniard, but may only be suitable for a handful of insects in a Cumberland, R.I., garden. (The Rhode Island Native Plant Guide features a detailed list of some 230 native plants that thrive in Rhode Island, and Rhody Native notes places to buy local species.)

Besides slashing expenses for lawn care, going native also helps local species take root, as 22 percent of New England's 2,400 native plant species are in danger, according to the New England Wild Flower Society. Also, according to the Massachusetts organization, 62 of these species are globally rare, 325 are regionally rare, 96 no longer exist in New England, and 10 grow nowhere else on the planet. [Return to Top](#)