

WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

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Summer 2016

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Urban Youth Wood River Paddles Are Back

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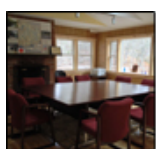


If You Build it...They Will Come

Thanks to a great staff, the WPWA Welcome Center has been up and running from 9 am - 2 pm on the weekends... [Read more...](#)

If you haven't already renewed your WPWA membership, please support our efforts on behalf of our watershed and you, our member, by doing so today!

Renewing your membership will ensure that our programs and advocacy continue throughout 2016 and beyond.
Thank you!



WPWA Board Makes Firm Strokes Forward

With the large fish passage project grants completed, the WPWA Board of Trustees is refocusing efforts on our grassroots base... [Read more...](#)

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Blue-Green Algae Blooms--What You Should Know

Toxic algal blooms on the east coast of Florida have been in the news a lot this month--but nuisance algal blooms can happen here, too... [Read more...](#)



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We want our members to be aware that there could be health concerns for both them and the rivers when using these products... [Read more...](#)



Aquatic Invasive Plants: Let's Not Spread Them

Aquatic invasive plants do not naturally occur in our area and can cause negative effects to the environment and be a nuisance...[Read more...](#)



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The groups scheduled to come this summer include kids from the Chariho RYSE program; three groups from the Providence After School Alliance summer program; the John Rollins Recreation Center in Providence; Jencks Cozy Middle School in Pawtucket; Project GOAL in Central Falls; Gateways Healthcare Children's Services; and Operation Military Kids. Many of these kids never have a chance to get out of the city. Many are from low income families, and some have developmental or behavioral issues.

Kayaking serves as an opportunity to be outside, gain a new physical skill, and learn about a natural river all at the same time. Under the calm guidance of WPWA staff and volunteers, initial fears (of snakes, bugs, alligators, falling in, and trying something new) give way to shrieks of joy and wonder. Kids soon discover that there is no better place to be on a hot summer day than in a boat watching damselflies dance over the water as a great blue heron fishes nearby.

We cover staff time and equipment use through the grant, while the youth centers provide transportation to the WPWA campus. Even so, without the membership dues and donations of WPWA members we would not be able to make these programs possible. A great amount of operational time is needed to write the grants, contact prospective summer groups, and organize volunteers. Our young paddlers thank you for your support! [Return to Top](#)

If You Build it...They Will Come

Thanks to a great staff of Nick and Robert Petrocelli (photo below), the WPWA Welcome Center has been up and running from 9 am - 2 pm on the weekends. These fine young men are standing by to serve all your membership needs, and most importantly, to help get you out on the river. We've had a solid response to our new membership structure that lets you and a guest access our boats and gear anytime at no cost. Thinking about paddling the upper Wood River? We're your outfitter. Maybe you'd like to stay cool with a paddle on the Lower Pawcatuck River? Then c'mon in and take a kayak with you for a day. We urge you to call 401-539-9017 in advance to make sure that the boats you need are available.



You've already got your own kayak? Is it a tandem kayak?? No?? Well, you and a friend can enjoy nature together in the same boat by joining as a Trout member and taking out one of our 2-person kayaks. Even your dog is going to love them!!! Whatever your destination might be, we want to help you get out and enjoy the beautiful Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed.



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Please help us spread the word about our new member benefits and urge a friend that loves the outdoors to join WPWA today. The money we receive from your membership contribution is critical to supporting our efforts to monitor water quality in the watershed. Your contribution is also essential to supporting all the costs related to running a powerhouse watershed protection organization. Without your membership dollars, we'd never be able to bring more than 200 children from urban areas out on the water in kayaks for the first time. This is a priceless experience for them. Without your support, they'd be sweating it out in Providence playing Pokemon Go in Roger Williams Park. Please help us continue to help them.

If you haven't renewed your membership already, please do so today. If you have, thank you and please tell a friend why they should be a WPWA member, too. It means the world to this watershed and all those who enjoy its cool, clean, and abundant water.

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WPWA Board Makes Firm Strokes Forward

Over the previous decade Chris Fox has spent innumerable hours orchestrating the opening of the watershed to migratory fishes. The large grants associated with those efforts are completed, and we need to refocus efforts on the grassroots base that has been the historical support-base for WPWA. So the Board of Trustees will put some focus on fund development—to build a sustainable, diversified stream of funding to support the organization—and on member development—to increase the member base, improve retention, and more fully engage the membership in WPWA activities. The Board will also be working hard on building and expanding its membership so that it has the horsepower needed to develop those efforts and see them to implementation. We plan to have a consultant guide us through a process of developing the strategies and action plans to accomplish these important objectives. While these sound rather mundane, they are critical elements of a healthy non-profit organization, and we want a very healthy WPWA on-hand to continue its critical mission of preserving and protecting watershed resources.



And one of those critical resources is water. Over the past year WPWA conducted a major assessment of its water quality monitoring program, and the findings of that assessment were presented at the annual meeting in May of this year. Now we need to take those findings and work them into a 5- and preferably 10-year strategic plan for water quality monitoring in the watershed. Water quality monitoring is a major expense for the Association, but it's a critical component in our ability to achieve our mission goal of preserving and protecting watershed resources. Therefore, we need a good, solid plan for keeping the program going well into the next decade.

WPWA members are, of course, the greatest assets the organization has. If you are interested in engaging with the organization at the level of board or committee service, I urge you to reach out and contact me, through the WPWA office, so we can discuss your interests.

Alan Desbonnet
WPWA President
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What's Happening

Re-occurring

- [Westerly Land Trust Free Summer Paddles!](#)
- [Wakefield River Fires](#)
- [Free Ice Skating at URI Every Wednesday](#)
- [Free Oyster Farm Tours](#)
- [Summer Star Gazing Nights at Frosty Drew](#)

Events By Date

Today (July 19th)! [Free Admission at Mystic Aquarium for the Military](#)

July 22nd [Pettaquamscutt Paddle](#)

July 22nd [Narrow River Paddle](#)

This Weekend (July 23/24) [Kayaking & Tours of Kenyon's Grist Mill](#)

This Weekend (July 22/23/24) [South County Hot Air Balloon Festival](#)

July 23rd [Butterfly Event at Trustom Pond & Fisherville Brook](#)

Aug 5th [Bats at Eppley](#)

Aug 6th [Paddle Board & Kayak Race in Wickford](#)

Aug 6th [Pawcatuck River Glow Event](#)

Aug 12th & 13th [Perseid Meteor Show @ Frosty Drew](#)

Aug 27th [The Mystery of Mushrooming](#)

Related News

[Rhode Island Suffers From Lack of Maturity](#)

By FRANK CARINI/ecoRI News staff
May 26, 2016

Blue-Green Algae Blooms--What You Should Know



Severe, wide-spread toxic algal blooms on the east coast of Florida have been in the news a lot this month--but nuisance algal blooms can happen here in the northeast, too. The following is an excerpt from the [University of Rhode Island's Watershed Watch](#) (URI WW) website, where links to more information as well as updates on any current blooms in Rhode Island, can be found.

Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, can form harmful blooms in lakes, ponds, and rivers

that make the water cloudy, sometimes even making the water look like pea soup or as if bright green paint has been spilled into the water. Under some circumstances these blooms may produce toxins that could make pets and people sick.

In past years there have been blue-green algae blooms in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed (in Yawgoo, Barber, and Pasquisset Ponds) but none have been reported since 2012. Please be aware that if the water looks unusually murky or cloudy, either blue-green or brown-green, it is worth contacting URI Watershed Watch (eherron@uri.edu or lgreen@uri.edu) to help you figure out what is going on.

A new regional effort (which URIWW is part of) has been launched to learn more about cyanobacteria in New England. Check out cyanos.org to learn about the Northeast Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program, including the bloomWatch app (because of course there is an app). A few additional resources can be found here:

- [Warning poster for pet owners](#)
 - [Algae in Your Pond? Has your blue lake turned green?](#)
 - [RIDEM Factsheet – Blue-Green Algae \(Cyanobacteria\)](#)
- [Return to Top](#)

Coal-Tar-Based Pavement Sealcoat: Potential Concerns for Human Health and Aquatic Life

A recent short publication put out by the US Geologic Survey raises concerns about coal and tar based pavement sealcoat. Since summer time is usually when a lot of home maintenance projects take place, we wanted our members to be aware that there could be health concerns for both them and the rivers and streams we love so much when using these products on their driveways. Below are excerpts from the publication with a link to the full article at the bottom.



Sealcoat is the black, viscous liquid sprayed or painted on many asphalt parking lots, driveways, and playgrounds to protect and enhance the appearance of the underlying asphalt. Studies by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), academic institutions, and State and local agencies have identified coal-tar-based pavement sealcoat as a major source of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) contamination in urban and suburban areas and a potential concern for human health and aquatic life.

Coal-tar-sealcoat, which contains elevated levels of PAHs, is commonly applied to parking lots, driveways, and some recreational areas across the central and eastern parts of the United States. Friction from vehicle tires abrades sealcoat into small particles that can be tracked indoors or washed down storm drains and into streams, potentially harming human and aquatic life.

Key Findings: Human Health Concerns

As coal-tar-based sealcoat ages, it wears into small particles with high levels of PAHs that can be tracked into homes and incorporated into house dust. For people who live adjacent to

Caterpillars Hit Rhode Island Hard

By ecoRI News staff
June 02, 2016

Road Mortality Increasing Problem for Local Turtles

By TODD McLEISH/ecoRI News contributor
June 02, 2016

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By TIM FAULKNER/ecoRI News staff
June 06, 2016

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By ecoRI News staff
June 08, 2016

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By TODD McLEISH/ecoRI News contributor
June 15, 2016

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By TIM FAULKNER/ecoRI News staff
June 20, 2016

Gypsy Moth Caterpillars Take R.I. By Surprise

By TIM FAULKNER/ecoRI News staff
June 23, 2015

Pass or Fail? 2016 Rhode Island Legislative Session Environmental Scorecard

By TIM FAULKNER/ecoRI News staff
June 27, 2016

What Impact is All This Caterpillar Poop Having on Forest Floors?

By TODD McLEISH/ecoRI News contributor
June 29, 2016

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coal-tar-sealcoated pavement, ingestion of PAH-contaminated house dust and soil results in an elevated potential cancer risk, particularly for young children. Exposure to PAHs, especially early in childhood, has been linked by health professionals to an increased risk of lung, skin, bladder, and respiratory cancers.

Aquatic Life Concerns

Runoff from coal-tar-sealcoated pavement, even runoff collected more than 3 months after sealcoat application, is acutely toxic to fathead minnows and water fleas, two species commonly used to assess toxicity to aquatic life. Exposure to even highly diluted runoff from coal-tar-sealcoated pavement can cause DNA damage and impair DNA repair. These findings demonstrate that coal-tar-sealcoat runoff can remain a risk to aquatic life for months after application.

As Sealcoat Wears Off, Where Does It Go?

Worn particles of coal-tar-based sealcoat containing high concentrations of PAHs and related chemicals are transported by rain, wind, tires, and even our feet from pavement to other environmental settings. Sealcoat product (A), after it dries, gradually abrades to a powder and becomes part of the dust on the pavement (B). Pavement dust is transported by rainfall runoff (C) to stormwater-management devices (D) or to receiving streams and lakes (E). Pavement dust also adheres to tires (F) that track it onto unsealed pavement, and wind and runoff transport the dust to nearby soils (G). Sealcoat particles tracked into residences can become incorporated into the house dust (H). Associated PAH concentrations for these settings, from studies by the USGS, other government agencies, and academic institutions, are given below.

For the full publication go to: pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2016/3017/fs20163017.pdf. [Return to Top](#)

Staff

Chris Fox, Executive Director
Denise Poyer, Project Coordinator
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THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

1/2 inch
Zebra Mussel
Variable Milfoil
Water Chestnut
Asian Clam
Eurasian Milfoil
Farnwort
Carp
Goldfish
Koi

BOATERS: INSPECT VESSEL CAREFULLY BEFORE & AFTER USE!

- Remove ALL weeds and plant fragments from watercraft & trailer before & after use
- Drain boat & motor far from water; allow to dry before next use
- Clean off all waders, boots and gear after use in any waterbody
- Do not release bait or aquarium fish, shellfish or plants

For more information contact:
RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
Division of Fish and Wildlife
(401) 789-0281 or (401) 789-7481
www.dem.ri.gov

Aquatic Invasive Plants: Let's Not Spread Them

Aquatic invasive plant species (AIS) are plant species that do not naturally occur in our area and that can cause negative effects to the environment and be a nuisance to people. We can all do our part to not spread these non-native invaders for our benefit and for the ecosystem's. The information below is from the [RI Department of Environmental Management's \(RI DEM's\) Aquatic Invasive Plant website](#), and we strongly encourage you to visit that page for more information.

Native aquatic plants are an essential part of a freshwater ecosystem, providing many benefits to wildlife as well as humans. Aquatic invasive plants are non-native species that can disrupt the ecosystem and create nuisance conditions in freshwaters. Under the right conditions, aquatic invasive plants are able to thrive in our waters and can out-compete beneficial native plants that are naturally part of our aquatic ecosystems. Once invasive plants become well established, the density of

plant growth not only degrades the native habitat, but often interferes with human enjoyment of water bodies by limiting recreational uses such as swimming, fishing and various boating activities. Left uncontrolled, certain species can "choke" a waterway, completely covering what was once open water with plant material. Aquatic invasive plants are already widely distributed in Rhode Island freshwaters. Please review the [AIS distribution map and full list of infested lakes by town](#).

Most of Rhode Island's submergent invasive plants (found primarily under the surface) can reproduce, grow and spread through fragmentation. Fragmentation is a simple form of reproduction in which a plant is split into small fragments, and each fragment can then develop into a whole new plant. This means that even one small plant fragment caught on a boat motor, trailer or equipment can be transported to a different water body and start an entirely new infestation.

Invasive species are transported between water bodies in several ways:

- Boat traffic and boat trailers: plant fragments stuck to boats and watercraft, wrapped around motors, trailers and fishing gear and microscopic animal larvae in bilge water can move AIS between water bodies
- Bait or bait buckets: If released into the water, animals used as live bait or accidentally caught in bait buckets can become invasive species
- Aquarium and water garden disposal: pets and plants that are dumped from aquariums or water gardens into natural water bodies may end up taking over their new environments
- Planting: Individuals planting aquatic plants along their property may introduce an invasive species to that water body
- Wildlife: plant fragments or seeds snagged on waterfowl or mammals can spread invasives throughout the ecosystem
- Rivers: streams flowing out of infested lakes can spread AIS downstream throughout the watershed

Preventing the Spread of AIS

Humans are the primary reason for the rapid spread of AIS; it is important that everyone does their part to prevent the further introduction and spread of invasive species. It is essential for boaters and recreational users of lakes and ponds to be vigilant! [Here are steps YOU can take to prevent the spread of AIS:](#)

- Know your surroundings. Be aware of which lakes, ponds and rivers are known to be infested with invasive species; [Click here for the RI AIS distribution map](#)
- Recognize the usual suspects. Learn to identify common aquatic invasive species in RI; [Click here for a guide to identifying common aquatic invasive species](#)
- Inspect and clean. Examine your boat and trailer before and after any use. Carefully remove any mud, plant or animal material before transporting your boat, gear and equipment.
- Allow time to dry. Clean and dry anything that came in contact with the water (boat, trailers, recreational equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
- Isolate and drain. Empty water from boat wells and motors far away from lakes and rivers.
- Discard into trash. Dispose any unused bait into proper garbage receptacles; do not empty bait buckets into the water.
- Prevent releases. Avoid disposing plants, fish or animals from aquariums or water gardens into local water bodies.

Managing Aquatic Invasive Plants

AIS infestations are best managed by one or a combination of strategies. Management strategies must be tailored to the particular species of concern, the stage of invasion (see "How Aquatic Species Invade" for more information) and the physical characteristics of the water body. [Visit DEM's webpage for more information.](#) CAUTION: Because some invasive plants reproduce by fragmentation, certain strategies, such mechanical harvesting, may not be appropriate and may contribute to the spread of the plants.

This information is from RI DEM's website. [Return to Top](#)