

# WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Volume 22 No. 2

SPRING 2005

## Need for increased vigilance evident in case of illegal Hopkinton dump

Nearly fifteen years has passed since the illegal dump operated by Roland Bowley on private and public property in Hopkinton was first spotted on the radar. In 1990 a fire at the site prompted the fire chief to push the town to intervene. Not until some seven years later, in 1998, did resident complaints first lead the RI Department of Environmental Management to cite the owner and operator of the scrap yard. Formal violations and orders for consent followed, but not until this year, another seven years later, on the prompting by a resident complaint, have those orders seen any follow up from state officials. This time around the operator is looking at thousands of dollars of levied fines, and six felony counts of solid and hazardous waste viola-



Assorted wastes, some hazardous, comprise 9000 cubic yards of the Bowley site

tions. The obvious question now is why so much time was allowed to pass by while an illegal waste facility, upgradient of the Wood River and in a groundwater protection zone, continued to accept and store wastes while out of compliance with state consent orders, and without the proper town licensing for a solid waste business. In the seven years between the first notice of violation from the state, and the second, it is likely more waste was trucked in than out.

As watershed council, WPWA has asked these questions of state and local authorities. WPWA has also asked for the town to take a role in ensuring the site is cleaned expeditiously, since some of the waste, and one instance of groundwater contamination, has been found on town property on Townsend Road.

The lesson learned is that we cannot be complacent and expect that every state-issued notice of violation has been resolved. With the state budget cuts that have impacted the RIDEM we can expect that in fact there is less staff to deal with environmental violations statewide, relative to the number of complaints and cases that are filed each year.

WPWA believes it could play a role in ensuring compliance with expired notices of violation. Though not a regulatory body, WPWA has the right, as any private citizen, to look through state files on environmental violations and determine whether or not cases in the watershed have been resolved. The problem is there is not yet a mechanism in place to request files in bulk. Normally a file request is based on knowledge of a violation or site, and a search based on a known plat and lot number. So WPWA officials met with Russell Gagnon, Chief of the Office of Technical and Customer Assistance, (Cont'd pg. 7)

### From the Executive Director

I'm writing this paragraph at 10am on Opening Day. I arrived at 5:30 with coffee donated by Tim Horton's, and spent the day greeting and mingling with WPWA members and their kids here to enjoy this fishing ritual. It was still dark when Dave Baldwin shouted "good morning" to me from his boat across the river. Charlie Squillante was here, as were Gus Pagel, Bob Perry, and other members. Look for pictures and news in the summer issue.

This issue of *Watershed* recognizes our 2004-05 members and donors. We tried very hard to eliminate any error or omissions on these pages. If you find a mistake with your name, or believe it's missing, I sincerely apologize, and want to hear from you.

I'm happy to report that Charlie Hickox, co-author of our river and hiking guides, who moved to Colorado last year, has moved back! He and Elly Heyder, have agreed to lead some spring hikes for us, in addition to those already scheduled. So watch your local newspapers, or our website, for more information.

Finally I want to express our condolences on the passing of LeRoy W. "Roy" Bitgood. His family was kind enough to ask that donations in his memory benefit WPWA. We are certainly very appreciative of their consideration, and thankful to those who donated.

*Lou Ursos*

### Yawgoo Pond neighbors can help preserve land

Since 2000, land preservation in the Yawgoo and Barber Ponds area has been a priority for the South Kingstown Land Trust. This beautiful unfragmented forested area, adjacent to rare coastal ponds, features a range of natural resource values, including wildlife habitat, ground-water protection and scenic views.

In its first project in February 2001, SKLT purchased a 12 acre parcel on the southwest side of Yawgoo Pond from the Cox family, funded by neighbors who made donations to preserve the area.

Now SKLT asks the help of its neighbors once again to complete a purchase of 68 acres from the Buffum and Cox families by the end of April. Recent awards from RIDEM's Local Open Space Grant program, the federal Forest Legacy program, and The Nature Conservancy have brought SKLT closer to its goal of \$1.3 million for the project. SKLT is just \$84,500 away from covering this cost in full.

SKLT asks neighbors of Yawgoo and Barber Ponds, and throughout the neighboring areas, to help preserve the undisturbed natural beauty of the area, and seize a unique opportunity to protect waterfront land in a remarkably undeveloped part of this fast-growing town.

To learn more about the project, contact Joanne Riccitelli at 401-789-0962 or sklt@ids.net.

### Carcieri appoints Saila to Scientific Advisory Board

WPWA trustee, and URI professor emeritus Saul Saila, has been appointed by Governor Carcieri to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Rhode Island Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team, for a term expiring November 1, 2007. The charge of the committee is to advise on research priorities, technical matters, and best management practices. Specifically, the legislation calls for the scientific advisory committee to assist the coordination team in 1) ensuring that peer review is employed in the development of an environmental monitoring strategy; 2) providing the team with unbiased review of current validated scientific knowledge relevant to their work; and 3) assisting with the review of existing or future plans. The initial meeting of the committee is slated for early April 2005.

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## W P W A

Invites you to our

### *22nd Annual Meeting*

**Thursday, May 12, 2005**

6:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

**Boucher's Wood River Inn  
Main Street, Wyoming**

**Presentation of Annual Report  
Election of Officers  
Presentation of Salomon Award**

Meals and beverages a la carte

To reserve a seat, please call 401-539-9017 or email info@wpwa.org.

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The Forrest C. Lattner  
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John Wald Science Grants  
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RI Rivers Council \$ 11,000  
RI General Assembly \$ 5,000  
Town of So. Kingstown \$ 500  
Town of Richmond \$ 800  
Town of Charlestown \$ 600  
Town of Stonington \$ 1000  
Town of Hopkinton—  
Property Tax Exemption



**RHODE ISLAND RIVERS COUNCIL  
WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM  
BECOME A RHODE ISLAND WATERSHED STEWARD!  
MONDAYS IN MAY**

The Rhode Island Rivers Council announces the first offering of its RI Watershed Stewardship Program. Learn about the best ways to protect and restore our rivers and their watersheds in partnership with your fellow citizens. Learn about how to make all of our rivers fishable and swimmable in your neighborhood and throughout our state. Our first spring session is proudly being hosted by the Buckeye Brook Watershed Council in Warwick.

**Class 1: Introductions and Basic Watershed Facts**

Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:30 to 9:00pm

**Class 2: Water Quality and Quantity**

Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> 6:30 to 9:00pm

**Workshop: Water Quality and Quantity**

Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> 9:30am to 3:00pm

**Class 3: Land Conservation, Riparian Buffer Protection & Watershed Planning**

Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup> 6:30 to 9:00pm

**Class 4: Tools for Watershed Protection and Restoration**

Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 6:30 to 9:00pm

**Class location: Knights of Columbus, 475 Sandy Lane, Warwick**

(Intersection of Sandy Lane and Warwick Avenue)

**Workshop location: Warwick Wastewater Treatment Facility, 125 Arthur Devine Blvd**

(Off Jefferson Blvd)

Becoming a RI Watershed Steward recognized by the Rivers Council will enable you to become a more effective advocate for our rivers and their watersheds by learning hands-on techniques and insights about the river network. To become recognized, course attendance and performing a community service project with the Rivers Council or one of its designated watershed councils is required. Course enrollment is limited to 30. A course manual will be provided to participants. The course fee is \$45 which is a subsidized rate. Course scholarships and financial support for community service projects are available at the discretion of the Rivers Council. The Rivers Council plans to offer the course each spring and autumn in communities throughout the state.

The RI Rivers Council was established under RIGL 46-28 to provide policy guidance and stewardship for the state's rivers and their watersheds. The Rivers Council works statewide in conjunction with nine designated local watershed councils. For additional information visit <http://www.planning.state.ri.us/rivers/default.htm> or contact Rivers Council Chair Meg Kerr at 401-714-2313 or [megkerr@cox.net](mailto:megkerr@cox.net).



**RI Rivers Council Watershed Stewardship Program Registration**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this registration form with check payable to: RI Rivers Council, PO Box 1565, North Kingstown, RI 02852

**WPWA CANOE AND HIKING GUIDES**

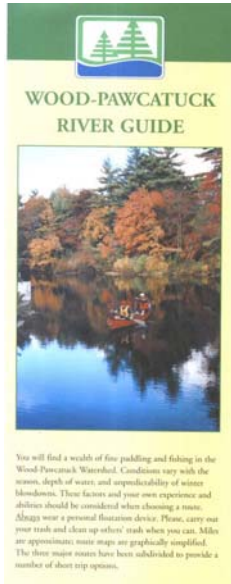
Order Form

**Wood-Pawcatuck River Guide (2nd edition)**

By Charlie Hickox and Elly Heyder

\$3.50 members (\$4.50 non-members)

Navigate the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers from source to sea with this colorful folded map.

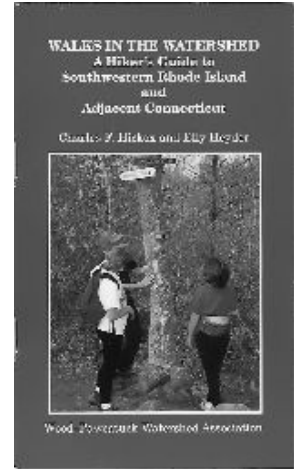


**Walks in the Watershed**

By Charlie Hickox and Elly Heyder

\$3.50 members (\$4.50 non-members)

Sixteen of the watershed's best loop hikes contained in a handy pocket-sized guide



Quantity:

\_\_\_\_\_ *Wood-Pawcatuck River Routes Map*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Walks in the Watershed*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Pawcatuck Watershed Report (free)*

Add \$1.50 postage and handling per item.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Mail form and payment to:

WPWA  
203 Arcadia Road  
Hope Valley, RI 02832

**Dump (Cont'd From Page 1)**

to discuss exactly how to frame an official request for files from a period of months or a year, that could be manually scanned for this purpose.

As we see it, this might be the only way we can be certain that hazardous wastes or other threats to our sole source aquifer and natural resources are not allowed to linger unabated in our watershed area. And to ensure that, whatever the type of violation, it has not been lost in the system. Further, conducting this type of research could allow us to map past instances of groundwater contamination or other environmental violations that could have an impact on drinking water wells that may be proposed in a threatened area

unknowingly.

WPWA continues to explore ways it can be most effective as steward of this watershed. We hope as we look historically at environmental violations that have occurred here we will not find other outstanding violations. However, In the event we do, WPWA will push for their timely remediation to eliminate threats to our water supplies.

**WPWA to pilot kayak rental program for members**

The staff here is developing a reduced-rate kayak rental program exclusively for WPWA members. The program will likely be piloted this spring and summer, with half- and full-day rentals during the week. Kayaks will also be available to rent for

WPWA paddle programs. Renter provides transportation for boats.

Our fleet includes 24 kayaks suitable for beginners and up. We also have a few canoes that we may rent. Rental will include paddle and PFD.

Proposed rates are \$10 for 2 hrs or less on-site launch (in and out at Barberville); \$15 for a half-day rental (up to 4 hrs); \$25 for a full day (10am-4pm).

For more information contact WPWA at 401-539-9017 or email [info@wpwa.org](mailto:info@wpwa.org).



[www.wpwa.org](http://www.wpwa.org)

**Application for Membership**

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In addition to my dues, I am enclosing an additional contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_

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**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association**



Longtime WPWA members Charlie Hickox and Elly Heyder, co-authors of our outdoor guides, are back to lead us along the rivers and terrain this spring.

Opinions expressed in *Watershed* are not necessarily those of WPWA, its Board of Trustees, or staff.

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