

# WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

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## **Patient Listed in Stable Condition** by Chris Fox

The pulse of the Pawcatuck River at Kenyon Industries in Richmond RI is being closely monitored while it undergoes bypass surgery. Surgeon's from SumCo Eco-Contracting are working carefully to repair the river's artery that was clogged hundreds of years ago. At that time, the need to siphon the blood of the river to build the state's economy far outweighed the overall health of the patient.

Today the need to fuel the state's economic engine has not gone away, but a treaty has been reached between Mother Nature and industry. Kenyon Industries now owns the Kenyon Mill Dam and relies on it to supply water to its fire suppression system. But Kenyon understands, and more importantly, is committed to reducing its impact on the environment. At their expense, they have made significant improvements to their waste treatment facilities, are taking the monumental step of eliminating their treatment

Recently fish passage has been achieved by WPWA at both the Lower Shannock and Horseshoe Falls Dams just downstream of Kenyon. The only clog left in the artery is the Kenyon Mill Dam.

After careful consideration of feasibility, cost, and impacts to nature and man, it was determined that fish passage at Kenyon would be achieved by creating a series of downstream rock walls across the river that will act as steps for fish and wildlife to step over the 4 foot high dam at Kenyon. Managing the water while building the new dam and walls was the biggest challenge. A half a million dollar challenge to be exact.

That would have been the cost to move water around the site with pipes and pumps. Instead, we chose to dig a temporary river around the site at half that cost. A carefully engineered channel lined with a rubber liner and reinforced with concrete blocks is now pass-



lagoons, and are fully supporting WPWA's efforts to reconnect the river to Worden's Pond.

The Kenyon Mill Dam Fish Passage Project, underway now, represents the culmination of nearly a decade of work by WPWA and its partners to complete fish restoration on the upper Pawcatuck River. The RIDEM began this effort decades ago by creating fish passage on the lower Pawcatuck River.

ing the blood of the river around the dam and project site, while still providing water to the fire pump house located next to the dam.

The careful project planning and design will benefit everyone who has a stake in the river. Fish will have access from Little Narragansett Bay to Worden Pond for the first time in hundreds of years. The waters behind Kenyon dam are teaming with tiny herring

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### From the Executive Director

We recently celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of protecting this beautiful watershed! WPWA has done so much over the years, on scales both large and small, to protect this invaluable resource and better our community. As a member, YOU are a critical piece of WPWA. You are equally responsible for all the accomplishments we have achieved over these thirty years and you should be proud of your efforts. Renewing your 2013-14 membership now is the quickest and easiest way to continue to show your support. Please take a moment to do so if you have not already.

The best way to show your support is to teach your children and grandchildren to respect this pristine resource. Doing so will help ensure another thirty years of ample and clean water for everyone to enjoy. It's never too late to learn, so consider telling a friend about the great work that YOU do to support the health of the local environment. Encourage your friends and family to join and support us as we work through another generation of watershed protection.

A special *Thank You* to all those members who have been with us for all thirty years! Without your legacy of giving and support, none of our accomplishments would have been possible.

Have a fun and safe summer!

Chris



### WATERSHED GREEN CORNER

**These articles are brought to you by RI NEMO - Produced by URI Cooperative Extension for RI Stormwater Solutions, a project funded by the RI Department of Transportation, in partnership with the RI Department of Environmental Management and RI municipalities. Articles have been formatted by WPWA to fit this space.**

#### Are Your Gardening Practices Watershed-Friendly?

by Lisa DeProspo Philo & Lorraine Joubert, RI NEMO

For many people, May is the true beginning of summer gardening. And while achieving a lush green lawn, beautiful flowers, and hearty summer vegetables are understandable gardening goals, some gardening and lawn care practices can have detrimental effects on our local water resources. In keeping with the State of RI's efforts to reduce the effects of stormwater pollution, there are a few gardening tips you can practice that will minimize the impact on your local waters:

*Fertilize sparingly. If you must use fertilizer, September is the best month. Please be sure to use slow-release fertilizer.*

*If you feel that you must fertilize more than once, don't fertilize in the spring until you have mowed the lawn three times.*

*Check the weather forecast before fertilizer or pesticide applications, and don't apply lawn chemicals when there is rain predicted. It increases the chances of those chemicals washing right into local waters.*

*If any lawn chemicals or yard debris get on the sidewalk or driveway, sweep them back onto the lawn to prevent them from washing into storm drains. Even grass clippings and excess leaves don't belong in our streams and rivers.*

And as always, if you're interested in learning about additional tips to help safeguard our waters, visit: [www.ristormwatersolutions.org](http://www.ristormwatersolutions.org)



Thank You Don Bousquet for your cartoon donation!

#### A New Look, With Even More Stormwater-Friendly Tips!

You might have noticed that most of our articles end with a link to our website. And if you've visited our site in the past, you might wonder what happened the next time you enter that URL address. You won't recognize the homepage, because our website has a brand new look! You'll still find simple steps that you can take at home, around the yard, at your business, and in your community to protect Rhode Island's waters, but you'll find plenty new, too.



**Teacher Training Workshops *by Denise Poyer***

Three students peered carefully into the water, with their nets at the ready. One of them dipped into the murky water and pulled up a pile of sticks, leaves, and mud. As their fingers searched through the net, they squealed with delight as a tadpole wriggled into view. More exclamations could be heard as they found water boatmen, sowbugs, and finally, a salamander larvae. Was this a day at camp? A middle school field trip? No, the occasion was another teacher training workshop.

This past winter and spring, WPWA partnered with the Narrow River Preservation Association to provide four unique and interesting Teacher Training Workshops for free, thanks to a grant from the RI Rivers Council. Instead of offering a semester-long course, we decided to break out several subject matters and present them in a series of 6-hour Saturday programs. WPWA also partnered with the RI Dept. of Environmental Management, Div. of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Education Resources, to provide Growing Up WILD (GUW) and Project WET curriculum guides to participants, also at no cost.

The 1st workshop in January, held at the Kettle Pond Visitors Center in Charlestown, focused on the GUW curriculum, which is part of the Project WILD program aimed at pre-school through first grade students. The workshop, attended by nursery school, elementary school, and informal educators, consisted of a series of fun activities from the colorful curriculum. Teachers tried eating like a bird to discover which beak design works with different foods, collecting food like a bear, and looking for their offspring as they tried to figure out what animal they were. All the activities in GUW include easy to use materials, craft ideas, songs, and snack suggestions. Teachers could design several days' worth of play and activities around topics in the book. GUW curriculum guides can only be obtained by attending approved workshops, such as this one.

The next two workshops, held in March at the URI Bay Campus in Narragansett, were built around the Active Water Education (AWESome!) Curriculum. Teachers learned about wetlands, water quality and pollution, and human impacts to a watershed by using the Enviroscape, an interactive model that clearly demonstrates how runoff from homes, farms, roads, and industry can get into lakes and rivers. They also learned about low impact development and best management practices, which are methods that use processes, materials, and devices to lessen human impact on the landscape. Annette DeSilva from NRPA shared information about their water quality monitoring program and what some of the data revealed.

During the third workshop participants explored watersheds and their features. Topics included geology, watershed delineation, groundwater, drinking water, and soil science. Jim Turenne (NRCS) donated his time to demonstrate the many fascinating facets of soils. After an instructive slide show, teachers got to look at soil profiles and then get their hands dirty figuring out the difference between sand, loam, and clay.

The final workshop in April was on the Project WET curriculum. This internationally recognized curriculum provides over 60 activities and lessons which help students gain an understanding of, and appreciation for, our precious water resources. Again using simple materials, teachers traveled around the room exploring the water cycle and used sponges to represent best management practices to absorb storm water runoff. For their last activity teachers sampled a vernal pool on Kettle Pond Preserve to learn about the tadpoles, salamanders, and macroinvertebrates that inhabit these very special places. One critical identification tool they learned was how to tell the difference between tadpoles and salamander larvae. If this is a skill you are interested in learning, you may consider attending a workshop next year!



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born in Worden Pond this summer. This spring their parents got an unusual ride in a RIDEM stocking truck from a nearby river to the pond by Ray Jobin of RIDEM Fish & Wildlife. In 4 years those herring should return to Worden Pond by following the “smell” of the pond while cruising by the mouth of the Pawcatuck River.

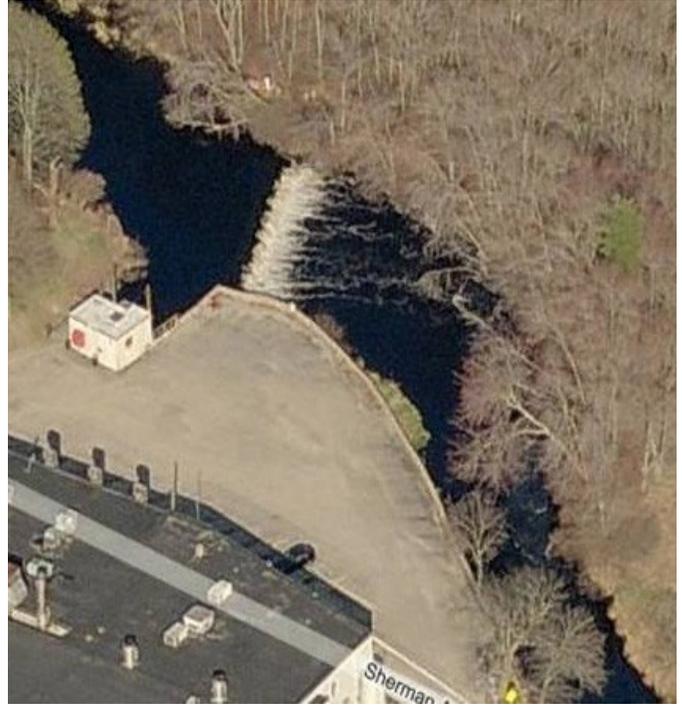
Kenyon Industries gets a brand new dam which resolves their long standing concern over the integrity of the existing dam. We were disheartened that we could not remove the dam entirely and thus their reliance on the river for fire safety. The cost to provide an adequate alternate supply of water was far too cost prohibitive.

At minimum paddlers will now have a stable, level, informal portage path around the dam. The hope is that more advanced paddlers will be able to ride right through. Generally what is good for fish passage is good for paddlers.

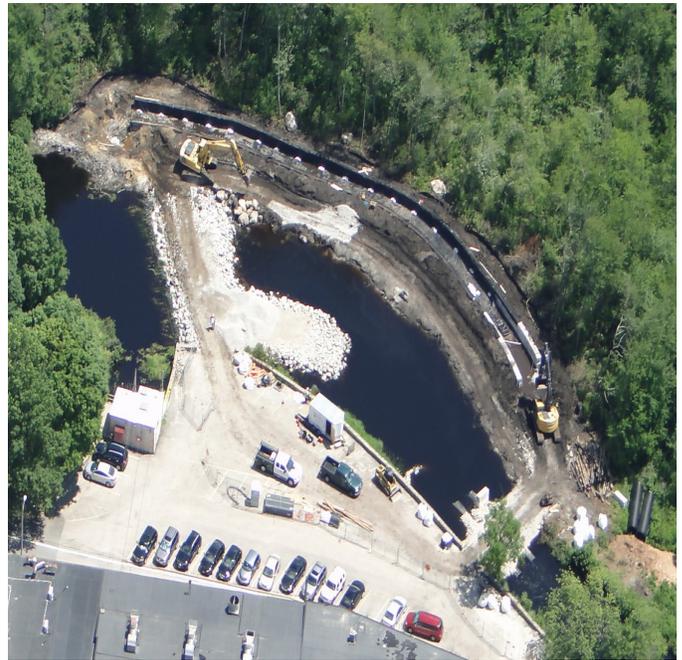
Fresh and saltwater fishermen should see an increase in the size and numbers of their catch as migratory species re-establish themselves in the system and serve as forage for the larger species. Word has it that the bass in Worden Pond are already thankful for the buffet of herring. Let’s just hope they don’t gobble up too many young herring before they make their dash out to the Atlantic.

We make no promises that these projects will instantly and totally reverse the centuries of negative impact that dams have had on the Pawcatuck River. But we are confident that the improvements we have made to the river in the last 10 years, (for way less than Taylor Swift paid for her cozy home in Watch Hill) will pay incalculable dividends in habitat, recreational, and industrial improvements.

Remember, it is you and your support of Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association that has made these historic improvements a reality. Please remember this each and every time you contribute financially and morally to support our cause to protect and preserve the lands and waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed.



**Above:** A bird’s eye view of the Kenyon Mill Dam just before the project. **Below:** The recent construction of the temporary river channel in progress and the two access bridges. When complete, the channel will be filled and replanted and the flow returned to the main channel. Aerial Photos courtesy of Charlestown’s Kristy Armstrong, the Fabulous Flying CPA.



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