

2019-2020 Annual Report

preserving and protecting the lands and waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed

From the Board of Directors

Wild and Scenic Rivers status for portions of the watershed is the biggest thing to have happened since the Herculean feat of opening access to migratory fishes from estuary to Worden Pond. The WPWA Board of Directors recognizes this and understands that the mission of “preserve and protect the lands and waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed” is now enhanced beyond what could not even have been imagined a few short years ago.

The work of the WPWA board going forward will be to do everything that it can in support of empowering and abetting success of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council. This is an opportunity for the watershed that must not be ignored. The Wood-Pawcatuck watershed is a very special place. Full of quietude and cool, clean waters that supports unique populations of plants and animals and provides for endless opportunity for recreation of many, many types. The Wood-Pawcatuck watershed is a Wild and Scenic Rivers watershed.

Board Retirements—A Special Thank You to:

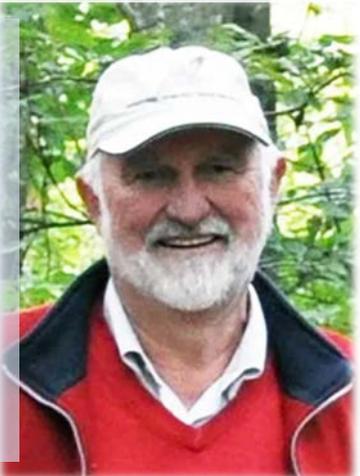
- **Peter August** for long service as Treasurer.
- **Jack Cross** for service and assistance in hiring Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinator Kassi Donnelly.
- **Matt Dowling** for service in multiple topical areas.
- **Brenda Rashleigh** for service and development of the Water Quality Monitoring Strategic Plan.
- **Ian Willets** for service as Vice President and Chair of the Water Quality Monitoring Committee.

Board Additions—A Very Warm Welcome to:

- **Kelli Butler**—Marketing and Communications Manager for Westerly Library and Wilcox Park
- **Amanda Columbo**—Aquatic Invasive Species and Monitoring Intern at RIDEM Office of Water Resources
- **Mike Mowry**—Coffee Quality Coordinator, Equal Exchange
- **Annie Ragan**—District Agricultural Field Technician for the Northern RI Conservation District
- **Brett Still**—URI Dept. of Natural Resources Science

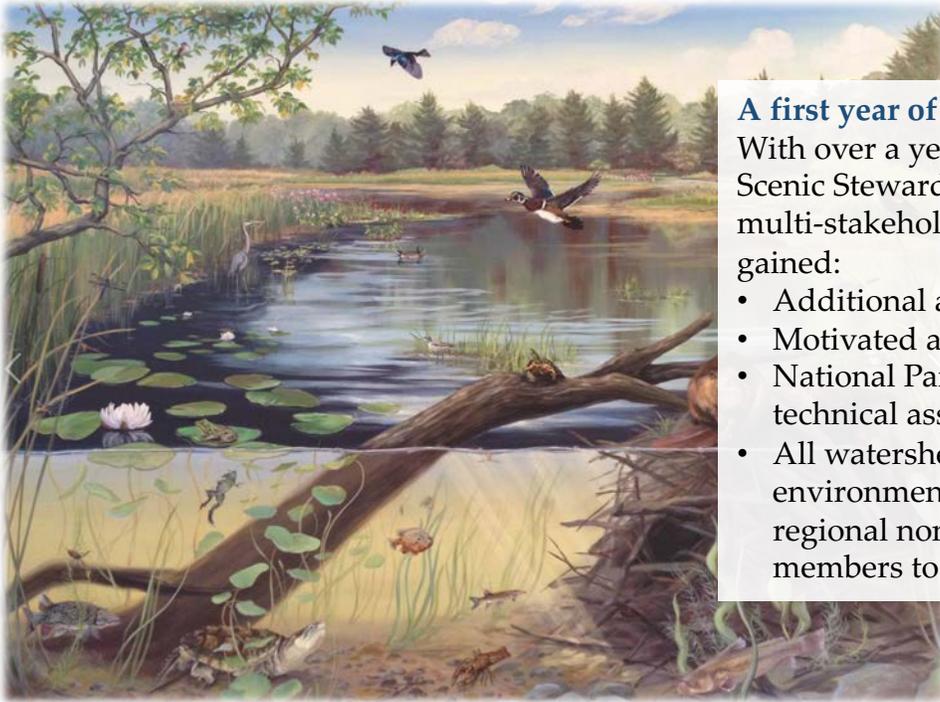
Loss of a Landmark

WPWA founder W. Edward Wood passed away during the fall of 2020. Ed Wood was an inspiration for all that WPWA embodied and was a landmark for WPWA and its work. But most of all Ed was an enabler. When confronted with dilemmas he rapidly identified solutions, but rather than simply blurt out a solution, Ed would lead a discussion that brought others to solutions. Having done so, they received a subtle yet profound education in problem solving. Seeking Wild and Scenic designation was something WPWA attempted in the late 1980s that didn't pan out. Ed knew even then that Wild and Scenic designation was an important key to long-term watershed preservation and conservation efforts. Ed left this mark, and many more, for others to learn from for all time. He is missed, but not forgotten.



A Wild and Scenic Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed

Focusing resources for mission attainment. The WPWA board and WSRSC are meeting regularly to develop mechanisms by which to best align and utilize resources for maximal benefit to the watershed.



A first year of wild and scenic effort.

With over a year under the Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council's belt, the multi-stakeholder group is proud to have gained:

- Additional appointees
- Motivated and active committees
- National Park Service funding and technical assistance
- All watershed towns, both state environmental agencies, and several regional non-profits have appointed members to this collaborative group.

A first year of wild and scenic achievements.

- Advisories have been submitted for state and local level consideration.
- River name signage along state and local roadways has been installed at a majority of river crossings.
- Connecticut and Rhode Island state environmental agencies have installed or allowed signage at public access points that says the river name and wild and scenic designation status.



When you see these logos you know the Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council is involved in helping to protect and preserve the watershed



WOOD - PAWCATUCK
Wild and Scenic Rivers

Building Community and the Next Generation of Stewards

In 2019 a total of 247 children and young adults took part in 11 WPWA education programs.



In 2020, despite pandemic restrictions, over five programs were held that engaged 111 students and teachers.

An additional 75 students engaged in WPWA programs during 2020 through kayak activities led by a teacher and WPWA volunteer.

Academic level of participants ranged from fourth graders to undergraduate college students.

Program activities—wet and dry—ranged from groundwater and stormwater models to aquatic insect sampling and assessing habitat value in the Wood River from a kayak.

Kassi attended a facilitator training event with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management in use of their Aquatic Education and Critter Kit program and activities.



Hat's off to volunteers! These dedicated folks showed Kassi the ropes in 2019, easing her into a first paddle season with WPWA. Volunteers also kicked it up a notch for a particular summer group, who required an adult paddling for them in a canoe or tandem kayak since twelve kids were under ten years old.

Millions of grant dollars flowed into the watershed for a variety of habitat studies and watershed improvements over the past two years. In some meaningful way, WPWA empowered many of the recipients to apply and receive this funding. We are always mentoring the watershed communities through our high-level planning projects all the way down to direct individual project involvement. WPWA is consistently building community and natural systems resilience by nurturing our vast network of partnerships at all levels within the watershed.

Financial Report

For this annual report we present two measures of our financial performance:

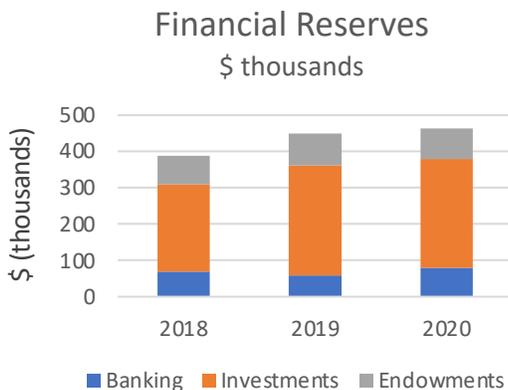
- Sources and uses of cash to run our organization (not including investment results) and
- Trends in the amount of financial reserves (cash, investments, and restricted endowments).

Sources of Cash		Uses of Cash	
Grants	71,000	Payroll and Benefits	135,131
Membership and Donations	58,974	Facilities and Administration	47,190
National Park Service	34,171	Watershed Projects	13,011
From Financial Reserves	30,346	Scientific Monitoring	5,644
Program Revenue	8,105	Program Expenses	2,153
Other	553		
Total	203,129	Total	203,129
Change in Financial Reserves		62,000	

2019

2020

Sources of Cash		Uses of Cash	
Membership and Donations	70,533	Payroll and Benefits	119,455
Grants	49,500	Facilities and Administration	37,067
National Park Service	32,422	Watershed Projects	16,876
Payroll Protection Program	27,500	Scientific Monitoring	5,877
Program Revenue	2,567	To Financial Reserves	2,518
Other	-434	Program Expenses	295
Total	182,088	Total	182,088
Change in Financial Reserves		13,000	



With the disruption due to SARS-COV-2 in 2020 we did not produce a 2019 annual report so we present financial highlights for 2019 and 2020 along with a graph of our financial reserves for the last three years.

For a more detailed financial presentation, our 2019 IRS Form 990 is available at WPWA.org. We expect to have our 2020 IRS Form 990 available on the website in July 2021.

Scenic and Recreational Resources



Kayaking lends itself nicely to social distancing—WPWA hosted over 50 participants in one or more recreational program in 2020.

Fly Fishing Classes went virtual.

The fishing pier at the WPWA Barberville Dam Campus was rebuilt.

Over 100 people took part in one or more paddling, fishing, or hiking program that WPWA led or partnered with others to enhance the experience during 2019.

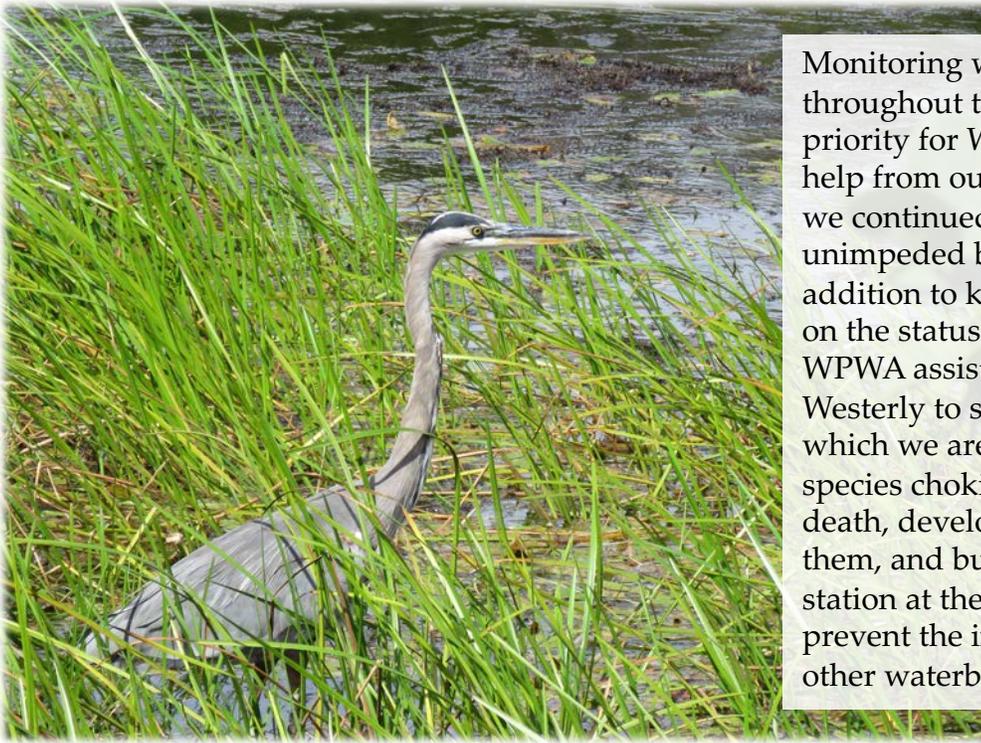
Program offerings spanned from how to lead a kayak trip to beginner fly fishing.

WPWA hosted trips ranging from stand-up-paddle boarding in South Kingstown, RI to on-water birding from a kayak in Stonington, CT.



The natural resources of the watershed provided the ideal escape from COVID and plenty of social distancing. Many of these priceless natural places would not exist if not for 37 years of collective efforts by WPWA and so many others to preserve them. Hundreds of WPWA members came, in droves, to take advantage of our fleet of kayaks, canoes and assorted recreational gear. And all those who paddled the local rivers benefitted from the 42 trees WPWA removed which presented significant navigation hazards.

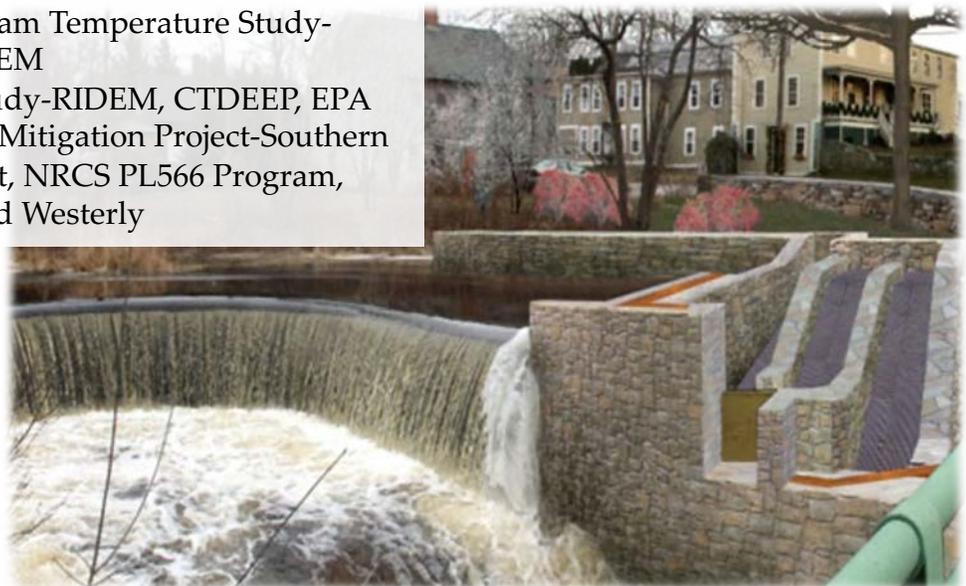
Exceptional Ecosystems



Monitoring water quality throughout the watershed is a top priority for WPWA. With funding help from our Wild & Scenic friends we continued monitoring, unimpeded by the pandemic. In addition to keeping a watchful eye on the status of water quality, WPWA assisted the Town of Westerly to secure a grant under which we are studying the invasive species choking Chapman Pond to death, developing a plan to remove them, and built a boat cleaning station at the pond's launch to help prevent the invasive's spread to other waterbodies.

Restoration Project Partnerships

- Beaver River Watershed Assessment -Town of Richmond
- Potter Hill Resilience & Fish Passage –Town of Westerly
- Comprehensive & Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates-Towns of Richmond, Hopkinton, Westerly, and Charlestown
- Upper Wood River Stream Temperature Study-Trout Unlimited & RIDEM
- Pawcatuck Nutrient Study-RIDEM, CTDEEP, EPA
- Watershed Wide Flood Mitigation Project-Southern RI Conservation District, NRCS PL566 Program, Towns of Richmond and Westerly

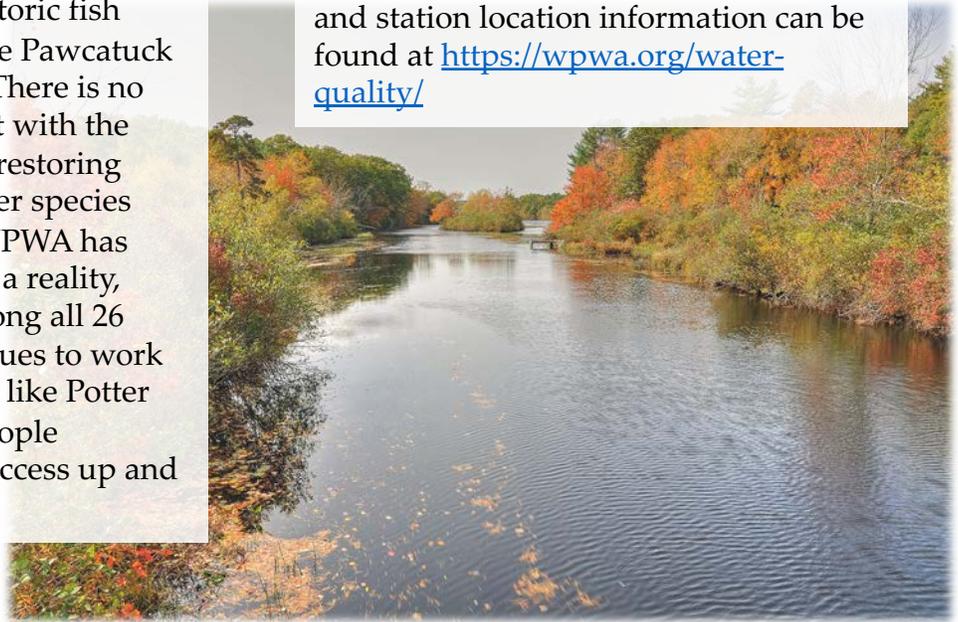


Hydrology and Geology

Way back in 1992 *The Pawcatuck River Estuary and Little Narragansett Bay: An Interstate Management Plan* was adopted by RI and CT. This report points to removing fish passage barriers as a priority toward restoring historic fish runs that were blocked by the Pawcatuck River's dams centuries ago. There is no better way to connect the salt with the fresh water than to focus on restoring access to habitat that saltwater species need to spawn. Since then WPWA has made the removal of 5 dams a reality, restored migratory access along all 26 miles of the river, and continues to work to improve passage at places like Potter Hill to ensure all wildlife, people included, have unimpeded access up and down the Pawcatuck River.

Water quality monitoring continues at 16 sentinel watershed stations.

Volunteers, trained by URI Watershed Watch, continue long term monitoring at 16 sampling stations—10 WPWA, 2 Trout Unlimited, 1 EPA, 1 Watershed Watch, 1 URI—that are strategically located to provide a “finger on the pulse” of water quality in the watershed. Development of a “Watershed Report Card” is being explored. Long term data and station location information can be found at <https://wpwa.org/water-quality/>



Staff

Christopher Fox; WPWA Executive Director

Kassi Donnelly; Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinator

WPWA Board of Directors

Kelli Butler; co-Chair Marketing Committee

Amanda Colombo; co-Chair Water Quality Monitoring Committee

Alan Desbonnet; Vice President

Tom Ferrio; Treasurer

Mike Mowry; President

Annie Ragan; co-Chair Water Quality Monitoring Committee

Brett Still; Liaison to the WSRSC

Jon Waldstein; Secretary & co-Chair Marketing Committee

Elise Torello; Consultant

Kristy Armstrong; Controller

Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council

Neil Wardley; **Robert Maietta;** Charlestown

Nan Quinlan; **Kevin McGovern;** Exeter

Elaine Caldarone; **Clifford Heil;** Hopkinton

Cassius Spears Jr.; Narragansett Indian Tribe

Ahren Cohen; **James LeBlanc;** North Kingstown

Madeline Jeffery; **Richard Seager;** North Stonington

Antonia Bryson; **Peter August;** Richmond

Dennis Migneault; **Bill McCusker;** South Kingstown

Roger Gibson; **Kim Gunn;** Sterling

Fred Wagner; **Sara Baker;** Stonington

Mark Oulton; Voluntown

Christopher Grube; **Patricia Lardner;** West Greenwich

Jon Ericson; **Lauren Barber;** Westerly

Jamie Fosburgh; National Park Service

Lauren Bonatakis; National Park Service