

Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee
2007 Annual Report



Volunteers survey the headwaters of Shaker Mill Brook in October Mountain State Forest.

The Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee (WRW&SAC) works to preserve, protect, and enhance the special qualities and outstanding natural resources of the Westfield River Watershed in concert with local communities.

Throughout the year, members of the WRWSAC worked in cooperation with 10 other National Wild & Scenic Rivers and Congressman Olver to secure a \$1.5 million budget for the Partnership Rivers Program. The federal appropriation includes project funding for the Westfield River. The Committee continues to work with the other Partnership Rivers to secure additional funding for FY09.

In 2007, WRWSAC teamed up with the Riverways Program to sponsor extensive shoreline surveys of the East, West, and Middle Branches and several of the headwater tributaries along the Wild & Scenic Westfield River. Over 65 Stream Team volunteers visually surveyed over 70 miles of the Westfield River – documenting and cataloging historic, cultural, scenic, geological, recreational and ecological features along the river corridor. Large format maps were created to highlight the problems, assets and priorities for action identified by the volunteers. In the upcoming year, Executive Summaries and Action Plans will be produced for each of the three branches. Short-term and long-term actions identified by the volunteers will be incorporated into the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Stewardship Plan and help guide the Committee's future projects and activities.



A salamander is released back into Center Pond Brook

Survey results have already been incorporated into a new Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program sponsored by the Westfield River Environmental Center at Westfield State College. WRWSAC served on a steering committee to help draft the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and wrote letters of support to help fund this new ambitious program. Water quality samples will be taken at 7 locations along the Wild & Scenic reaches of the Westfield River.

Our committee meets once a month and all meetings are open to the public. We encourage you to take part in any of our sponsored activities, including stream teams, river clean-ups, land protection, and workshops. To learn more about what is happening in the watershed, sign-up for WRW&SAC's bimonthly newsletter, *Westfield RiverNotes*, by sending an e-mail to Westfield_RiverNotes@hotmail.com or download copies at www.westfieldriver.org.

**Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee
Status Report**

January 2007– January 2008

Summary of Objectives & Accomplishments

OBJECTIVES	2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<i>WRWSAC will develop and implement a 5 Year Funding Plan that includes funding for a part-time coordinator and a minimum of \$25,000/year for projects.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress passed a \$1.5 million FY08 Partnership Rivers Budget which includes project funds for the Wild & Scenic Westfield River • Attended Partnership Rivers meeting and worked collaboratively to secure FY08 funding and to request FY09 funding • Held legislative breakfast at Chester Depot to highlight Wild & Scenic, staff and funding needs
<i>WRWSAC will inventory and assess Outstandingly Remarkable Resources (ORRs) and develop Wild & Scenic Stewardship Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held 4 Stream Team Trainings and recruited over 65 volunteers to survey and catalog resources along 70 miles of the Westfield River • Created large format maps of Stream Team findings which highlighted problems, assets and priorities for action • Drafted Shoreline Survey Reports (includes over 120 pages) and Executive Summaries for the three branches (West, Middle & East) • Received National Park Service RTCA assistance for the Cost Share Challenge grant and to update Wild & Scenic Stewardship Plan • Created maps to catalogue ORRs in each of the 10 Wild & Scenic Communities with assistance from WSC intern
<i>WRWSAC will engage community members by targeting outreach efforts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published 5 issues of “<i>Westfield RiverNotes</i>”— a bi-monthly electronic newsletter with 1-2 topics of interest on river/watershed issues – distributed to communities • Recruited and trained over 65 Stream Team volunteers, including residents, families, town officials, and river users • Updated Wild & Scenic display board and exhibited at annual Westfield River Symposium, Western Massachusetts Flyfishermen Club Spring Workshop, Cummington Fair, Highland Communities Initiative Conference, Chesterfield Library, etc. • Press releases in local media outlets, including meeting/event announcements and information regarding the <i>Walkin the Watershed</i> Stream Team Surveys • Published summaries in Town Annual Reports • Sent letters of support or concern on behalf of the river (see bullet under <i>Maintain Active Presence</i>) • Attended public hearings/meetings regarding river-related projects (Section 7 site visits, USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Westfield River Forest Partnership Mtgs, etc.) • Worked with MassHighway to identify, review and make recommendations on proposed bridge/road work along the W&S river (see bullet under <i>General River and Resource Protection</i> for complete list of projects)

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<i>Review zoning and overlay districts and update Rivers Protection Bylaws</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked on reviewing and updating draft Model River Protection Bylaw through Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant received by PVPC
<i>Maintain an active presence and advocate strategically, skillfully, and boldly for the river and the Wild & Scenic Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held monthly meetings in rotating towns • Sent letters of concern and/or support on behalf of the river and resources (Keystone Arch Bridges, Forest Reserves, Partner Support Letters, Russell Biomass, Section 7 Projects, etc) • Participated in the Westfield River Highland Forest Partnership
<i>General river and resource protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and assisted with several projects falling under Section 7 review (including Banks Stabilization on the East Branch in West Cummington, 2 bridge projects on Depot Brook in Washington; McNearney Road crossing on Shaker Mill Brook in Becket; Maple St Bridge Rehabilitation over the West Branch in Chester, Old State Road Bridge and Bank Stabilization projects on West Branch in Chester; East River Road Bank Stabilization Project on Middle Branch in Chester; Huntington Bridge Project over West Branch) • Jim McCartney, NPS/Trout Unlimited Stream Restoration Specialist, provided technical assistance to community projects in Becket, Chester, and Washington • Assisted Westfield River Environmental Center in development of Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) • Coordinated with land trusts and agencies to identify, prioritize and research key areas along the East, Middle and West Branches