



Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee

“to preserve, protect and enhance the special qualities and outstanding resources of the Westfield River watershed”

A Year by the Numbers...

- ◆ Leveraged \$62,500+ in grants, donations, in-kind and volunteer services
- ◆ Conducted 30 trail user interviews and counted 126 trail users over 8 days on East Branch Trail
- ◆ Distributed information about Rock Snot, Emerald Ash Borer, and Asian Longhorned Beetle to over 20+ businesses and 125 river users
- ◆ Sponsored booths at 8 community events and 7 Watershed Waltz puppet shows at elementary schools in the Hilltowns
- ◆ 38 volunteers enhanced their skills at 5 Wild & Scenic Saturday trainings on invasive species identification, geology, collection of macroinvertebrates, and photo-monitoring techniques
- ◆ 40 Walkin’ the Watershed Training DVDs distributed and 36 miles of river were adopted/re-adopted by volunteers who conducted visual surveys of their adopted river segments
- ◆ 6 volunteers collected 15 samples from 3 macroinvertebrate monitoring sites
- ◆ 130+ volunteers contributed over 480 hours of volunteer service

Tropical Storm Irene:

Imagine 35,000 cubic feet of water per second – or basketballs – going by you every second! This was the peak flow on the West Branch of the Westfield River during Tropical Storm Irene. Anyone living near a river or stream sensed the power of water as they heard rocks and boulders grinding as they tumbled downstream. During the flood, land eroded away and silt was deposited in the adjacent



Flows from Tropical Storm Irene along the Swift River in Cummington

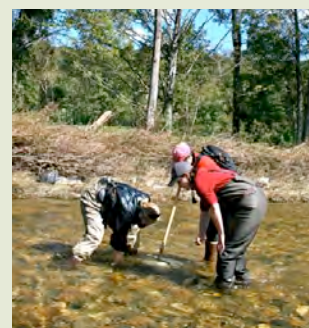
floodplain. Channels and confluences were reshaped and gravel and sediment bars reformed.

Although we were struck by the destructive nature of the flood event, in the eyes of the river these transformations are vital. Floodplain forests, the endangered Tiger Beetle and other critters rely on floods to reinvigorate their habitat niches; for instance the newly exposed gravels and cobbles provide perfect Brook Trout spawning habitat.

Following the historic flooding, the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee was consulted by communities, landowners and agencies and served as a resource on flood recovery efforts (see related article, *Stream Crossing Standards Lead to Safer Roads*, page 3). In the upcoming year, the Committee hopes to collect your stories and images captured during and post-flood to feature in future educational and interpretative exhibits.

The severe and widespread flooding from Tropical Storm Irene effectively precluded a normal sampling year for our volunteer macroinvertebrate monitors, in which data is collected to assess waterbody conditions and trends over time. Rather, this year

presented a rare opportunity to assess the effect of an historic flood event. From mid-September to mid-November, 15 samples were collected from 3 historic monitoring sites. These data will be compared to data collected in previous years to determine the effect on macroinvertebrate communities, as well as determine how long their recovery takes after a flood of this magnitude.



Volunteers sample Macro-invertebrates to determine effects of the flood and length of time needed for them to recover.

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MEMBER PROFILE

Our Committee and the river benefit considerably from our active and engaged Members. These representatives appointed by their respective town, organization or agency offer many talents and skills.



Bob Thompson instructs a Westfield State University student in monitoring techniques

Leadership is the ability to motivate and enlist the aid and support of others for a common goal. Bob Thompson’s leadership has led to many productive and successful partnerships to preserve the Westfield River watershed. Bob has been involved in the river’s conservation efforts for over 15 years, serving as Chair of the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee for the last 7 years. He has also served on the Town of Chester’s Conservation Commission and Board of Health.

In 2005, Bob founded the Westfield River Environmental Center at Westfield State University. In the last two years, he facilitated a formal collaboration between the National Park Service, Division of Ecological Restoration, Wild & Scenic Committee, and Westfield River Environmental Center to tap into the resources, skills and technical expertise each organization had to offer.

Not only does Bob work behind the scenes, but he also likes to get his feet wet. You can often find him along the river casting a fishing line or collecting water quality and macroinvertebrate samples as part of the ongoing monitoring efforts in the watershed.

Finding Your Track Along the East Branch Trail:

Our partnership with the Westfield River Environmental Center was bolstered by the involvement of several Westfield State University interns. With their help, we have created historic and tracking guide brochures for the East Branch Trail which will be housed with our new trailhead informational kiosk – one of several to be installed in the upcoming year. A geology guide to the Westfield River Valley is in the works for 2012.

Trailhead informational kiosk at the Chesterfield Gorge, start of the East Branch Trail.

Another intern conducted 30 extensive trail user interviews and counted 125 trail users over 8 days during the summer. This information will help us determine how best to tap into the skills of our trail stewards to address the concerns and needs of the trail users.



Come and explore the National Wild & Scenic Westfield River!

Join us in 2012...

- **Adopt-A-Stream**
- **Monitor River Critters**
- **Become a Teen River Clean Volunteer**
- **Grab your gloves for a Trail Work Day**
- **Meander with us on our Wild & Scenic Saturdays**



Visit our website www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org to find more details about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities!



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!
Prevent the transport of nuisance species. Clean all recreational equipment. Particularly waders/boots. www.ProtectYourWaters.net

River Users Key to Preventing Spread of Invasive Species:

In March 2011, Rock Snot – aka Didymo – was found in the West Branch of the Farmington River in Connecticut. In some regions, this aquatic algae has smothered river bottoms and killed off aquatic life. Although not yet found in Massachusetts, there is a strong likelihood of it spreading over the border as the algae likes to attach itself to clothing and outdoor gear, especially

felt-soled waders. Similarly forest pests like the Asian Longhorned Beetle and Emerald Ash Borer have been found in nearby regions and are easily transported via firewood.

As part of the early-detection and response efforts of the Westfield River Invasive Species Partnership (WISP), the Committee sponsored an outreach intern who traveled throughout the watershed interacting with 125+ river users and distributing information to over 20 recreational businesses, as well as attending several events in the Hilltowns and Westfield River Valley.





In collaboration with the Westfield River Watershed Association, the Committee cosponsored 7 performances and workshops of the Watershed Waltz Puppet Show for elementary schoolchildren. The performance was recorded by a professional videographer and will be available on DVD for teachers, families and others to enjoy. The Committee will also showcase the DVD at upcoming outreach and educational events. Find details at our website, under upcoming events: www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org

"I learned wetlands are good because it catches all the water and cleans it like a sponge. And what we did was so fun making models of the watersheds and getting are hands goeey."

- Sage, 4th Grader

Stream Crossing Standards Lead to Safer Roads

For the past decade the Massachusetts River Continuity Partnership has worked to restore fish passage and habitat connectivity at poorly designed stream crossings, including surveying 1000+ culverts and bridges and replacing several priority crossings in the Westfield River watershed. These efforts have been expanded throughout the Northeast and states have adopted Stream Crossing Standards into the design and permitting of new road and stream crossings.

Tropical Storm Irene put many of these new crossings to the test. The new crossings successfully provided passage for flow, sediment, and debris stirred up by the floods, as well as maintained safe passage for emergency personnel and residents. In some cases, these crossings had failed repetitively due to the inability of the crossing to pass high flows and materials moved by our rivers and streams during floods.



After previous floods washed out the road over Bronson Brook in Worthington, local partners replaced it with this bottomless arch culvert. Photo-monitoring documented that Tropical Storm Irene washed a large tree down to this crossing and the tree passed easily through this span.

In an effort to reconnect critical linkages for fish and wildlife, as well as address some of the problem crossings, the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee is providing a \$10,000 grant to the Pioneer Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited's (PVTU) Culvert Improvement Project. The grant will help fund engineering and permitting of 2-3 stream crossings in the

Before the flood, volunteer surveys determined this road crossing created a barrier to fish and wildlife and was undersized. Three months later, the stream crossing washed out during Irene. Ironically, fish were able to travel through the crossing, but the DHL delivery person and neighbors had no way to cross the stream.



watershed. The goal is to reconnect 10+ miles of coldwater habitat for the Eastern Brook Trout. Two of the culverts in the Kinne Brook watershed targeted for this project washed out during Tropical Storm Irene. The Town of Chester Highway Department would like to see these crossings replaced with permanent structures meeting the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards in order to avoid washouts and reduce maintenance in the future.

"The greatest way to effect change is to set the example. A personal desire to maintain the Westfield River has the capacity to ignite others' desire to do the same. Working with the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee helps inform people how to experience the beauty of New England Rivers while working to protect both them and the many dependents, such as the stoneflies and mayflies..."

- Romina Gotzmann, Essay submitted as part of Teen River Clean Project – a summer program sponsored by the Committee to cleanup trash and dump sites found by Stream Team volunteers.



2011 Annual Financial Report

Project funding provided through the National Park Service's Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Program (except as noted)

Operations & General Expenses

General Operations	\$5,000
Meeting & Conference Expenses*	\$1,685

Outreach & Education

General Outreach & Education	\$1,173
Kiosks	\$10,226
Invasives Outreach	\$1,602
Watershed Waltz	\$3,625
Westfield River Environmental Center	\$5,000

Resource Stewardship

Stream Team Projects	\$16,470
Trail Stewardship*	\$1,172
Water Quality Monitoring	\$756
Project & Trail Mapping	\$1,673
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$48,382

*A total of \$827 of these funds came from other donations

Committee Members

Town of Becket	Mercedes Gallagher, <i>Treasurer</i>	Bill Babcock, alt
Town of Chester	Robert Thompson, <i>Chair</i>	Dave Pierce, alt
Town of Chesterfield	Nancy Rich	Denise Cormier, alt
Town of Cummington	John Bye	Matthew Gallert, alt
Town of Huntington	Jeff Penn, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	VACANT
Town of Middlefield	Carl Lafreniere	VACANT
Town of Savoy	VACANT	VACANT
Town of Washington	Roy Bryan	VACANT
Town of Windsor	Jim Caffrey, <i>Secretary</i>	VACANT
Town of Worthington	VACANT	Jim Dodge, alt

Additional members of the Committee include representatives from:

- Westfield River Watershed Association
- The Trustees of Reservations
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- National Park Service

Additional program and technical assistance provided by staff at the Division of Ecological Restoration, Department of Fish & Game, and National Park Service's River Restoration Specialist

In Appreciation...

Volunteer Support:

Volunteers who contributed on-going service or support to Stream Team projects.

June & Bill Babcock
Joseph & Eric Brown
Eila Bell
Molly & Chuck Braun
Dick & Jane Carnes
Jack & Diane Cennamo
Robert Coler
Denise Cormier
Mark Damon
Caron Dewey
Kevin Doyle
Susan Dworkin
Carole Fisher
Steve Fisk

Jay & Patricia Fortier
Spring Furlow
Jaclyn Gauger
Karima Hassan Gebel
Romina Gotzmann
Carolyn Hawthorne
Pam Howland
Carol Jolly
Lisa LaCroix
Susan McIntosh
Ed Neumuth
Margaret O'Neal
Linda Powers
Sarah Prince
Julian Raista
Sally Soluri
Cathy Stillerman
Laura & Rich Stinnette
Liz & Mike Stevens
Kester Warlow-Harry
Michelle Vigeant

Bill Warren
Shirley Winer
Worthington Sustainability Committee

Project Partners:

Division of Ecological Restoration, MADFG
National Park Service
The Trustees of Reservations
Highland Communities Initiative
Westfield River Watershed Association
Westfield River Environmental Center, Westfield State University
Division of Watershed Management, MADEP
MassWildlife, MADFG
Pioneer Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Army Corp of Engineers
Westfield River Invasive Species Partnership
Friends of the Keystone Arches

Other Contributors:

Price Chopper
Becket General Store
Kushi Institute
Mike Cole, ABR Inc.
Michael Wolski, Artist
Glen Corbiere, Photographer
Keith Herzig, Photographer
Jeff Penn, Historic Postcards
Steve Howes, Cummington Historical Society
Worthington Historical Society
Peter Banister, Chesterfield Historical Society



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