



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...

- ◆ Odonate (Dragonfly and Damselfly) surveys conducted at **26 locations** along **9 river segments**
- ◆ Over **60 volunteers** worked **260+ hours** over **6 Saturdays** on the “One Step at a Time” workdays down Glendale Falls
- ◆ **72 hours** by **8 volunteers** and **6 yards** of material and **1 load** of rocks were donated to build the landing at the top of the Glendale Falls stairs
- ◆ **49 steps** were donated at **\$10 each**
- ◆ **26 volunteers** enhanced their skills during our trainings on invasive species identification, macroinvertebrate collection and photo-monitoring techniques
- ◆ **13 Walkin’ the Watershed Training DVDs** distributed and **23 miles of river** were adopted/re-adopted by volunteers
- ◆ **1804 waypoints** representing **24 different types of invasives species** were collected by our intern in **2 towns** (Worthington & Chester)
- ◆ **42 miles of road** and **34 stream crossings** assessed for impacts on the river
- ◆ **119 acres** permanently protected under a Conservation Restriction

Dragonflies: From River to Flight

Odonates, semi-aquatic insects, spend their larval (nymph) stage in clear, cold and rocky stream reaches before emerging into their flying adult stage.



Dragonfly emerging along East Branch Trail

Dragonfly nymphs are voracious predators typically spending much of their time burrowed in the sandy substrate at the bottom of the stream where they wait to ambush almost any animal of suitable size, including other insects, small fish and

tadpoles. Nymphs will spend anywhere from 1-4 years in their aquatic environments before climbing the riverbank, exposed rocks or logs to emerge into their adult forms.

When they first emerge, the adults are very soft and vulnerable – damage can be sustained from rain, falling debris and predators. To elude this danger, many species will fly into the surrounding woodlands to find relatively safe shelter among leaves and branches. Feeding on mosquitoes and flies, some adult species will often travel far from the stream as they feed and mature. Once mature, the dragonflies will return to the stream habitat to mate.

The presence of these odonates is typically indicative of relatively good water quality and riverine habitat. In 2010, the Committee sponsored rare Odonate surveys along several river segments. In addition, the Volunteer Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Program will gather these and other aquatic bugs to monitor long-term water quality trends in the Westfield River basin. Salt and road containments, silt from construction and erosion, and industrial and agricultural pollutants can significantly alter their habitat. They are also vulnerable to alteration of

natural flow regimes by dams and water diversion projects. Upland borders and habitat are also crucial to their well-being as they are critical for feeding, resting and maturation. Survey results and reports available on our website:

www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org.



Monitoring Macroinvertebrates - aquatic bugs - helps assess the long-term health of the river.

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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.

This past year one member stands out as being avidly involved in many of our projects and activities. She is Nancy Rich, Town of Chesterfield's Representative.



Nancy Rich sampling macroinvertebrates on the East Branch

Nancy joined the Committee after Matt Barron stepped down after many years of service. Although new to the Committee, Nancy wholeheartedly put her talents, interests, and efforts to good use.

In 2010, Nancy sampled about everything the Committee had to offer. She adopted a section of the river and recruited her neighbors to join her in Walkin' the Watershed. She rolled up her sleeves and got her feet wet sampling macroinvertebrates, monitoring turtle crossings, and maintaining the East Branch Trail. She also joined the Westfield River Watershed Invasive Species Partnership (WISP) Steering Committee.

After a very active field season, she readily offered her time and prowess to aid in the update of our kiosks and trail brochures. From splashing around in the river to serving as a key liaison for her community, Nancy has surely made the most of being a Member on our Committee.

Sincere thank you to all who work on behalf of the river,

~ Robert Thompson, Chair

Confluences of Strategies and Actions

Sitting on a hill overlooking the historic and scenic Warner Farm, the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee (WRWSAC) reflected on strategies to protect the Wild & Scenic Westfield River over the next 5 years.

Warner Farm includes the headwaters of Tower Brook and Porter Brook -- coldwater tributaries to the East Branch of the Westfield River, a mixed northern hardwoods, pine & hemlock forest, a waterfall and wetland area. Over 119 acres of the farm are now under a Conservation Restriction, in small part due to a Riparian Conservation Grant given by the Committee.



Set on the historic Warner Farm in Cummington, the Wild & Scenic Committee laid out the framework of a 5-year Strategic Plan.

The setting was a perfect confluence of the Committee's work and progress over the last five years with a renewed commitment to moving forward in a strategic manner that promotes efficiency, leadership, partnerships and sensitivity to the needs of the communities and river resources. Based on this retreat, the Committee prepared a 5-year Strategic Plan (2011-2016).

Key strategies and actions include:

- ◆ Sustain funding for Program Coordinator and Partnership River's projects.
- ◆ Maintain an active presence in the watershed and support the skills and enthusiasm of Committee Members.
- ◆ Monitor and assess riparian conditions to target stewardship of outstandingly remarkable resources.
- ◆ Build and sustain Stream Teams and encourage grassroots participation in monitoring and project implementation.

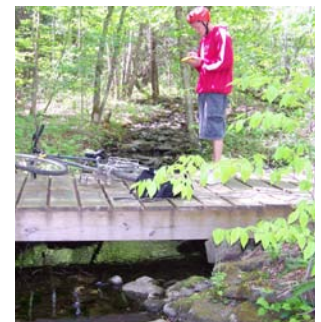
- ◆ Engage layers of community members through outreach and education to build partnerships, as well as provide tools and resources that encourage long-term protection, restoration and conservation of Wild & Scenic resources.
- ◆ Promote stewardship of scenic, ecological (fish & wildlife), historic and recreational resources.
- ◆ Work to establish additional segments of the East Branch Trail in coordination with local trail groups and landowners; support stewardship of existing and future trail segments; and identify and address recreational concerns and needs.
- ◆ Determine community interest in expanding Wild & Scenic designation to additional tributaries.

The Committee looks forward to working with our partners, volunteers, communities and others as we flow from plan into action. A summary of the 5-year Strategic Plan can be downloaded on our website at www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org.

Environmental Center

Where can you find diverse expertise in many fields, as well as many extra hands and minds ready to explore the realm of river and watershed conservation work?

Well, the Westfield River Environmental Center (WREC) at Westfield State University seemed like the perfect place. The Committee and WREC have agreed to:



Intern collects GPS location of trail features

Partner and implement projects, such as the Westfield River Water Quality Monitoring Programs, GIS mapping and data collection, natural resource research, monitoring and conservation;

Establish a workspace and share resources to encourage collaboration among the Committee, students, faculty and other community members;

Provide leadership and expertise to further interdisciplinary approaches, problem-solving, and understanding of the environment and resources of the Westfield River watershed.



Volunteer Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Training, East Branch, Cummington

“When I am out on the river, I talk to everyone I see in hopes they will become the eyes and ears for the river.”

- Meredyth Babcock, Interview Partnership Rivers News, Summer 2010 issue on “How Rivers Depend on Volunteers”

Road and Rivers: Where Pavement Meets Water

Roadways often follow the river’s course at the base of deep valleys. As a result, lower temperatures and lack of direct sunlight benefit the ecology of the watershed, but are often at odds with maintaining a safe driving surface. In an attempt to maintain passable roadways in areas along river corridors, vegetation will often be cleared to open the roadway to sunlight and allow space for snow removal. Clearing vegetation reduces shade to the watercourse, downgrades the wildlife habitat quality and increases water temperatures especially during the summer months. In addition, natural erosion control the vegetation offers is reduced threatening the integrity of the road and causing sediment and other containments to flow into the river.

Foresight Land Services, LLC evaluated 42 miles of roadway and 34 crossings in 7 towns as part of our engineering study to identify areas of runoff and erosion along the Westfield River. The study included cost estimates and conceptual designs to install, improve, or replace drainage and crossing structures in appropriate locations; recommendations on effective salt and sand application techniques and street sweeping methods; and examples of where riparian vegetation could be maintained to protect the river resources while providing safe passage on the roadway.

The WRWSAC will use this study to prioritize projects and future funding. Already, the WRWSAC pledged \$12,000 in matching funds to the Town of Becket’s *North Becket Village Infrastructure Improvements* Community Development Block Grant application. One component of the project will eliminate existing impervious pavement adjacent to Yokum Brook and replace it with a vegetated drainage area to filter the runoff before it reaches the river.



Paved drainage swale dumping road runoff into Yokum Brook in Becket

- Provide more funding and support to invasive control efforts within the area
- Increase resiliency of our natural habitats to climate change

In 2010, WISP focused on data gathering and outreach. Invasive species were mapped along roadways throughout the watershed. This information documents distribution and density of various invasive species, as well as assists in prioritizing early detection efforts and invasive free areas. A variety of informational materials were developed and outreach events, like the *Wild & Scenic Saturdays* invasive identification workshop, were held.

The WRWSAC provided funds to draft a guidance document for Conservation Commissions on permitting invasive species work in riparian and wetland resource areas. Conversations with local highway departments about tenacious invasives blocking sightlines and resulting in increased maintenance costs prompted WISP to organize a “Roads and Invasive Species” workshop with the Baystate Roads Program scheduled for May 2011.

Partners Pull Together to Manage Invasives

The Westfield River Watershed Invasive Species Partnership (WISP) works to:

- Heighten awareness of invasive species among partners, towns, governmental agencies, and the public
- Establish an early detection and rapid response protocols
- Make control efforts more sustainable



Walking through a field of invasives in Chesterfield

2010 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 ^{^*}	\$5,176
Meeting & Conference Expenses	\$1,604
Outreach & Education	
General Outreach & Education	\$949
Kiosks	\$2,385
Invasives Guidance Document	\$2,750
Resource Stewardship	
Riparian Conservation Grants	\$5,125
Volunteer Project Coordinator [^]	\$15,000
Stream Team Projects	\$1,041
East Branch Trail	\$276
Water Quality Monitoring	\$2,550
Riparian Species Surveys [^]	\$5,000
Glendale Falls [*]	\$3,042
Community Grants	
Drainage Project [^]	\$21,300
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$66,198

*A total of \$676 of these funds came from other donations
[^]A total of \$9,228 for work completed in 2010 and invoiced in 2011

In Appreciation...

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
 Town of Middlefield
 Hilltown Land Trust
 Becket Land Trust
 The Nature Conservancy
 Pioneer Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited
 Army Corp of Engineers
 Westfield River Invasive Species Partnership
 Friends of the Keystone Arches

Other Business Contributors:

Price Chopper
 Mike Cole, ABR Inc.
 Foresight Land Services, LLC
 Michael Wolski, Hilltown Artist

Volunteer Support:

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

Andrew Charig
 Nadine Battles & Chester Boy Scout Troop #120
 Bill Babcock
 Mike Brighenti
 Bob Copley
 Denise Cormier
 Jim Dodge
 Rob Draper
 Paul Fennessey
 Devin Galeua
 Karima & Hassan Gebel
 Mathew Goggin
 John Graef
 Moses Greenspan
 Bruce Hart
 Marc Hoehstetter
 Carol Jolly
 Sarah Prince
 Nancy Rich
 Karen Simon
 Dianne Snyder
 Bill Warren
 Cavanaugh, Emerson & Dalyan Wolski

Additional program and technical assistance provided by staff at the Division of Ecological Restoration, Department of Fish & Game

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
Town of Cummington	John Bye	VACANT
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

Looking Ahead... Fish-Friendly Culverts

Through a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Trout Unlimited has launched a 3-state project to create 60 miles of upstream habitat for native brook trout in 4 key watersheds, including the Upper Ammonoosuc, White River, Ashuelot River and Westfield River basins. The Westfield River Stream Crossing Improvement Project (WRSCIP) team will identify 10 river reaches to evaluate using a range of criteria, including habitat quality, protected lands, and culvert data. Based on these findings, resource managers working in the region, including WRWSAC members, will select 2-3 crossings to be replaced. The goal is to identify the target crossings by Spring 2011 and be in construction sometime in 2012.



In 2010, this culvert on Shaker Mill Brook was replaced with a fish-friendly crossing.



Westfield River Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee

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Note our new phone number!