

For the past half-decade, and then some, WPWA has focused much of its efforts on very large projects that opened up a lot of habitat for migratory fish, and improved public access. Member support, while perhaps small in the overall financial scope of the millions of dollars expended on habitat restoration, was huge with regard to implementation. The reality is that funders want to see grassroots “people support” for the work they are backing. WPWA members provided enthusiasm and support at levels that were, well, gushing over the top of the dam.

While our efforts in river habitat restoration and public access improvement continue—for instance dealing with the few remaining barriers in the lower Pawcatuck River—we want to ramp up efforts to improve programming offered to you, our valued members, and the public.

To get there though, we need the involvement of members who are willing to volunteer some time, and bring along their creative effort, so we can establish a Program Development Committee that will explore and develop new program ideas. What this means is that we need you, and your ideas for exciting and interesting new member programs, to serve on the committee. We also need program volunteers, so that once new programs are developed, we have the people power needed to provide them to fellow members and the public. So if you prefer to be on the action end of the process, don’t worry, there are plenty of opportunities to join in on the fun. But if you like to plan and want to expend some creative energy, serving on a Program Development Committee will be a fun place to be for you.

We also need members who want to help WPWA in membership development and fund development activities. These are critical areas for WPWA—without funding we can’t accomplish much in the watershed, and if we don’t have members, well, what’s the point anyway? If “asking” for money or “recruiting” are scary—or heaven forbid, boring thoughts, put them aside, there are many ways you can help, and they aren’t necessarily boring. It’s a bit difficult for me to summarize the needs here in any meaningful way in this short space, but if you have an interest in helping in fund or member development, contact the WPWA office so we can arrange to talk personally. Members serving in either of these areas is helping their organization in ways above-and-beyond the norm, and so I say “Thanks” in advance.

Bottom line? You, our members, are the most important asset of this organization. WPWA needs your financial support as members for sure, but it gets so much sweeter if you engage in giving some time and energy to helping the organization do all the great things that you joined to partake of in the first place.

So, have we caught your interest? Piqued your desire to wade into the deeper waters of environmental grassroots action? I sure hope so. Send us an email, addressed to info@wpwa.org. Let us know in a couple of sentences or a short paragraph what your interests are, and an appropriate board or staff member will follow up to see how we can, together, continue to support WPWA and it’s vital mission in the watershed.

Alan Desbonnet
WPWA President