

WPWA  
Executive Director Report  
9/27/2012

**Project Updates**

**Shannock**

The week of 4/8/12 RIDEM transplanted 1500 adult herring from the Saugatucket River to Worden Pond. RIDEM sampling in Worden Pond conducted the week of 9/9/12 confirms the presence of juvenile herring. This is the first migratory juveniles known to exist in the Pond since the Pawcatuck River dams were constructed in the 1800's.

**Lower Shannock Falls Project**

Modifications to the 3 fish passage rock weirs were completed the week of 9/2/12. The hydraulics at the site now fall within the full range of migratory flows (85cfs-350cfs). Project partners agree that no further fish passage modifications will be conducted at this site by WPWA. Flow verifications will be conducted by NOAA & USFWS, and presence/absence sampling will be conducted by RIDEM over the coming years to confirm performance and passability. The ownership of the weirs and the maintenance access is now solely RIDEM's as described in the easement between RIDEM and the Town of Richmond signed and recorded in 2011. WPWA retains no control over the site going forward.

**Horseshoe Falls Project**

The Lawson M. Cary Jr Memorial Fishway is now structurally complete including the needed river channel modifications to maximize attraction to the fish ladder entrance. Project partners have confirmed that all facets of the project meet or exceed passage and design criteria. The installation of the interpretive sign (to be installed in October) will fully satisfy our State Historic Preservation agreement & all Section 106 & NEPA requirements. Landscaping has been delayed due to discrepancies in some submittals. Work is now expected to occur the first week in October. The dedication monument is also behind schedule but Comollie granite is confident it will be complete and installed by the advertised 10/20 10am dedication ceremony. This will be an informal event and will not serve as the project's ribbon cutting. A ribbon cutting ceremony for all three Shannock fish passage projects is currently being planned and budget for by WPWA, Save the Bay and NOAA for Spring 2014.

**Kenyon Mill Dam Project**

This project is now a full year behind schedule. Delays are primarily the result of the NOAA's (sole funder) extensive engineering effort to achieve a full dam removal. In order to begin construction of the new dam and the fish passage rock ramp in June 2012, NOAA must complete its NEPA and Section 106 requirements. A verbal agreement has been reached between the project and the State Historic Preservation Officers. These components must be finalized for RIDEM and ACoE to sign the fully prepared permits. WPWA continues to work on behalf of the landowner, Kenyon Industries and the Towns of Richmond & Charlestown to obtain FEMA's approval for the minor change in flood elevations within the immediate project area (85ft of streambed). The increase is the direct result of the rock ramp structure itself and the increase is isolated to the structure itself. There will be no changes to existing surface water elevations behind the dam or below the proposed rock ramp. FEMA has given verbal approval

of the negligible floodplain impacts of the passage structure as have the owner's flood insurance provider.

Though the project is not fully permitted, the verbal feedback we have received from the permitting agencies provides us the confidence that the project will be shovel ready this winter. Contractors were pre-qualified for this project in 2011 in tandem with the Horseshoe Fish Ladder bidding process. A call for construction cost proposals will be made this Fall and costs obtained by year end. Bidders will be asked to provide an alternate water management plan as a alternate component of their bids to reduce the estimated \$500K cost to manage water via pipes and pumps. The expectation is that bidders will offer an option and price to divert the flow of the river through a temporary channel constructed in the adjacent wetland. While aggressive, we expect that to result in a \$250K cost savings. This option has been verbally discussed with the permitting agencies and we have received positive feedback. If this option is proposed by the contractors and selected by the project we will work with the permit agencies to formally modify our water management plan.

The conservative opinion of cost for construction (with 10% contingency) from our engineering firm is \$1.2million, which translates to a \$735K funding shortfall. This cost includes engineering oversight (\$100K) but does not account for anticipated cost savings through the potential alternate water management plan or reuse of existing materials (on and offsite) which our bidders will calculate into their bids. The bidding schedule should result in the best possible price as contractors are eager to secure 2013 contracts. We expect the low bid to reduce the \$735K shortfall by 30-40%. NOAA has secured the full \$735K for the project but will not obligate the funds through various funding outlets until the exact shortfall is identified through bidding. Before WPWA contracts with a construction firm, the needed funding will be obligated by contract (early 2013). Thus assuring we have the funds to support the construction contract. Construction contract signing is expected in Spring 2013 in anticipation of June mobilization for the July 1 regulatory start of in-stream work. Project should be substantially complete in winter 2013. Final completion is anticipated in Spring 2014.

**White Rock Dam** DEM is now working to secure funding through the ACoE to perform a feasibility study of White Rock, Potter Hill and Bradford dams. That study will include input from the USFWS on fish passage and stream continuity and could serve as a platform to launch fish passage improvements at those 3 sites on the Pawcatuck River. Passage exists at those sites but should be maximized to realize the full potential of the Shannock passage projects upstream.

**Campus Renovation Project** DEM has started the design phase for their portage path across the street from the WPWA campus. Poyer and Fox will review and comment on the current 10% design. We will advocate for some site enhancements like an outdoor classroom. Though we expect RIDEM will only include the necessary path repair components. Fox prefers to strongly urge RIDEM to include the enhancements in their current effort to avoid expense and replication of effort in the near future and implement the best possible project that maximizes the current use of the public access property.

**FEMA/USGS Mapping & Mitigation in the Watershed** *No known developments*

**Water Quality Monitoring** WPWA continued to monitor 11 lakes and ponds and 18 river and stream sites through the URI Watershed Watch Program. Due to changes in accountant practices

at URI, Watershed Watch was no longer able to give WPWA the deep discounts which we previously had enjoyed. In Sept. Watershed Watch sent a bill that was \$6,000 more than budgeted, based on last year's bill. Poyer and August will work with L. Green to see if we can adjust the bill a little more for this year. Next year it will be necessary to cut several sites monitored to keep this bill within reasonable limits.

**Habitat Studies** WPWA intern R. Thomas spent the summer assisting Poyer with several studies. These include temperature logging at 8 sites on the Beaver River and 4 sites on Brushy Brook; macroinvertebrate sampling at 7 sites on 5 streams; and monitoring of purple loosestrife on the Pawcatuck River. We were also able to release 2000 *Galeracella* beetles at the monitoring which were surplus from URI Plant Sciences.

**Kayaking Programs** Instead of a Source to Sea Paddle, WPWA did two kayaking trips on the Upper and Lower Wood River this season. Hamilton & Aube (as a volunteer) led a bioluminescent kayak trip at night on Ninigret Pond on September 14, 2012, where they saw many glowing jellyfish at night. There were nine paying participants and one member from the press who attended.

Due to the economy and cost cutting measures, there were no bookings by camp groups this summer. However, with the help of a portion of the Lattner grant, WPWA was able to offer underserved groups an educational experience through several kayaking programs. These included over 60 children and their families for two Operation Military Kids days; twelve students from Central Falls; 15 students from RYSE; and 22 residents in the Gateways program. Other programs included three school groups and an end of the year staff trip for ASRI. Poyer conducted two Introduction to Kayaking programs which were extremely well received. Hamilton and Poyer will be discussing advertising our kayaking programs for next summer.

**Hiking Programs** This program will continue in the fall. R. Massy has agreed to come back to do the popular birding series. D. Aube will lead this as a volunteer for WPWA. R. Masse has stated that he will begin the birding/hiking series after the new year and do one per month through May 2013.

**Browning Mill Pond in Exeter** The Trail Advisory Committee has granted another six month extension on this project. We do have an Eagle Scout candidate who has just received approval for the project. He anticipates completing the project by the end of October.

**Blowdown Clearing** WPWA completed tree removals on the entire Wood River and the Upper Pawcatuck River. Over 30 blowdowns were cleared by WPWA's contractor utilizing \$3500 in funding from the RI Trail Advisory Committee. C. Fox's oversight of the project served as the required 25% match to this state level funding. The full \$3500 + Fox's time served as a match to a federal grant administered by the RI State Conservation Committee under which trees were removed on the entire Usequapaug/Queen Rivers and a portion of the Pawcatuck. This project was well publicized and received by the public and WPWA was commended by local officials for providing the needed federal match on behalf of the various affected municipalities.

## **Public Outreach, Education & Access**

**Writing and Community Service Student** The final product from the URI students has been consistently disappointing. We do not plan to take part in this course in the future.

**Project Wet** Poyer has scheduled a Facilitators Workshop for Oct. in coordination with the RIDEM Aquatic Ed Program. The workshop is free and covered by funds from RIDEM. Poyer's time will be covered by the RI Rivers Council grant. Facilitators who successfully complete this workshop will be required to do at least one Project Wet training for teachers within the next year. Poyer will also be putting on an educators training by Dec. Hamilton will be taking part in the workshop so that she will be certified as a facilitator. Through an arrangement with RIDEM, all curriculum guides will be free at every workshop and training.

**RI Blueways Alliance** Next year members of Blueways will conduct a paddle to include all watersheds around the state, tentatively scheduled for the week of June 15, 2013. A small group plans to spend one night at the WPWA campus. Members of WPWA are invited to join them for the paddle through our watershed. Next year's Paddle RI will focus on the river sections covered by the new mapping project.

**Website** No major changes to the website to report. Aube's bio was replaced by Hamilton's.

**Newsletter** The Fall 2012 issue is currently being worked on. WPWA is currently accepting submissions from the board, members, associates, and the public at large for this issue, due to be released in mid-October. Please send your contributions to: [heather@wpwa.org](mailto:heather@wpwa.org).

**Merchandise** *No new developments*

**Constant Contact/Social Media** Hamilton has updated the WPWA Facebook page with photos, contact information, mission statement, etc. and is trying to gain "fans" and regularly update the page with news from the WPWA Campus and watershed, events, and random points of interest to members and the public. If you are on Facebook, please "like" us and share the page with your "friends". Millions of people take part in this form of social media, therefore this is an opportunity to get our logo out there, gain members, and share what we do with the public. If you have anything that you think we should share with our "fans", please send it to [heather@wpwa.org](mailto:heather@wpwa.org).

**Land Acquisition** *No new developments*

**Presentations & Conferences** D. Poyer gave two presentations teacher training programs in July. One was for the RITES program and the other for the SMILE program. Poyer also attend a conference for RITES which looked to integrate science with classroom experiences.

**Operation Military Kids (OMK)** This day long paddle and biological program was offered for free by WPWA thanks to grant funding from the Lattner grant and served more than 60 people over the two day event. It netted some new members and elevated the visibility of WPWA.

## **Stormwater Outreach Committee** *No new developments*

**Statewide Freshwater Wetland Restoration Strategy** DEM is moving ahead with the development of a coordinated Freshwater Wetland Restoration Strategy. They are targeting the end of September to have a draft strategy available for review. The advisory group information and support materials are posted on the web @ <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/wetlands/rsdev.htm>. WPWA will continue to be a key player in this process.

**Statewide River Restoration Strategy Team** WPWA is represented on this team that is coordinated by Narragansett Bay Estuary Program and Save the Bay under the umbrella of the RI Habitat Restoration Strategy Team (RICRMC) with the intent of shaping future statewide river restoration policies and priorities. The purpose is to create a coordinated statewide effort toward restoring RI's rivers with an emphasis on dam removals. The group is in the process of compiling a white paper with support from an NBEP intern that will detail past, present and future riverine restoration activities statewide. C. Fox serves as the Team's WPWA contributor.

**Watershed Counts** D Poyer and WPWA volunteer E. Torello were part of a committee that decided which fresh water indicators to use for rivers and streams. The committee produced maps using the indicators, with the final product presented on Earth Day in April at the State House. Poyer will be working with the committee this year to determine water quality indicators for ponds and lakes. WPWA received the first payment of \$3,500 in Nov., 2011. All funds go toward supporting D. Poyer's time invested in this project.

**Water Trail Mapping** Through a grant obtained by Blueways from RIF, WPWA completed two detailed maps of the Wood River. These maps are now available to download from our website. This was part of a larger project of twenty maps from 9 watershed organizations. All of these are posted on the Blueways website [www.exploreri.org](http://www.exploreri.org). The maps contain information about WPWA and should generate more interest in the Association. They also have information concerning the natural and human history of the rivers WPWA owns the files and can update or change them as needed. WPWA hopes to complete 3 or 4 more maps next year focused on the Pawcatuck River. Design costs will be \$650 per map. Poyer will research funding to cover these costs.

Fox and Poyer decided to take advantage of this mapping project because many people are using the internet almost exclusively to get maps and information about paddling routes. These maps will likely not cut down on River Guide sales any more than the internet use already does.

**Pawcatuck Estuary Water Quality Issues** Poyer attended a cleanup event in August at the Stonington sponsored by CUSH and attended by Congressman Courtney and STB. She discussed progress with the Wild and Scenic Study bill.

**Press Articles** An article about Aube's departure and Hamilton's arrival at WPWA was published in the Wood River Press. Several articles on WPWA's tree removal project and the Shannock project have been published over the last few months.

## **Partnerships**

**Wild & Scenic** The Pawcatuck Watershed Protection bill passed the House with no dissention on July 23, 2012. On the same day Senator Reed introduced a companion bill into the Senate. Sens. Whitehouse, Lieberman and Blumenthal joined as cosponsors. We are still waiting to hear if the bill will be heard by the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

**Southern New England Paddle Group /Rhode Island Canoe and Kayak Association** Jim Cole ran several trips for SNEP during the summer. He also gave short paddle lessons for beginners on the first Tuesday of the month using WPWA boats and campus. A donation of \$15 from each attendee was given to WPWA. Next year Jim will charge \$20 per person for the instructions. He will keep a portion of that to pay for the SNEP Meetup website. The rest will be turned over to WPWA.

**RI Environmental Education Association** D. Poyer is serving on the RIEEA website committee. This site will include a searchable database of all environmental organizations in the state.

**URI NEMO** WPWA continues to collaborate with this URI Coop Ext. project through the inclusion of content in our quarterly newsletter. Hamilton has contacted NEMO for a submission to the Fall 2012 newsletter.

**Narragansett Bay Estuary Program** *No new developments*

**Save the Bay** WPWA has been sub-awarded \$30K in Restore America's Estuaries money originally granted to STB that will be applied WPWA's Kenyon Mill Dam Fish Restoration Project. WPWA is in negotiations with STB to carry out the logistics of the 2014 ribbon cutting ceremony for the Shannock fish passage projects.

**The Nature Conservancy** *No new developments*

**RIDEM** *No new developments*

**HopArts** The annual HopArts Trail will be held in October. WPWA has been processing payments on their behalf over the last two months. Our fiscal agency fee was reduced in 2012 but the revenue for the fees does cover the expense of our time managing their funds.

## **Routine Business**

**Our New Admin Asst** Heather Hamilton was hired in late July and comes with a host of great qualifications that exceed the candidate requirements (see attached resume). This mother of two young boys is settling in quickly and brings a great skillset and attitude to this position. We look forward to Heather growing this position and bringing a fresh perspective to WPWA's office administration, member donor relations and recreational and educational programs!

**RI DLT** As anticipated a claim was submitted to the RI Dept. of Labor & Training by outgoing admin asst Danielle Aube. All related developments will be reported on by Fox verbally at the Sept meeting.

**Champlin Capital Revolving Fund** *No significant progress to report*

**Federally Mandated Audit** Our 2011 Audit is nearly complete and in the final draft phase. Many findings from previous years have been resolved. A full report and copy of the final version will be available to the board in October.

**Membership** WPWA's Membership Renewal letter will be sent out in late April to early May 2013. Revenue from this year's campaign is about \$4k less than we budgeted, but does exceed last year's response.

**Annual Appeal** Hamilton has ordered additional envelopes in preparation for the Annual Appeal, which should be sent out by the first week of November.

**Office Watershed Map** We're making slow but steady progress on this volunteer effort by Ed Poyer with support from Dr. August's GIS lab at URI. The working draft is hanging in WPWA's conference room for inspection and comment.

### **Watershed Concerns**

**Brushy Brook** *No new known developments*

**Renewable Resources Inc. (Potter Hill) Hydro Project** *No new confirmed developments*

**Loves Truck Stop and Country Stores** *No new known developments*

**Heather M. Hamilton**

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**EDUCATION:** **University of Rhode Island (URI), College of Human Science and Services**

M.A. in Education--May 2009 G.P.A 4.0

Elementary Certification, May 2005 and Middle School Science Endorsement, June 2005

**University of Rhode Island, College of the Environment and Life Sciences**

**B.S. Natural Resources Science (Wildlife Biology and Management), May 1999--G.P.A. 3.82**

## **HONORS:**

Dean's List 1995-1999, 2001-2009, URI Centennial Scholar, Ruth and Morton Grossman Scholarship (natural resources science merit award), Resource Development Merit Scholarship, Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, URI President's Award for Excellence in Wildlife Biology (1999), nominated for New England Outdoor Sports Writer's Association Award, nominated for URI President's Award for Excellence in Education (2005), ETS Recognition of Excellence (Praxis Test).

## **EDUCATION EXPERIENCE:**

**Mathematics & Reading Tutor:** February 2010-June 2010. Academic Advantage, Warwick, RI- Tutored elementary through high school students in reading, writing, mathematics, and SAT preparation. Effectively communicated with parents and teachers to increase students' academic success.

**Substitute Teacher:** September 2008-June 2009. Coventry Public School District, Coventry, RI.

**Grade 5 Teacher:** September 2006-June 2007. J.J.M. Cumberland Hill Elementary School, Cumberland, RI- Planned and implemented lessons and assessments for all elementary subjects, including, but not limited to Investigations Math Curriculum, science kits, literature circles, writers' workshop . Worked effectively as a member of grade level planning team.

**Grade 7 Science Teacher:** September 2005-June 2006. North Cumberland Middle School, Cumberland, RI- Planned and implemented science lessons and assessments for five life science classes. Utilized science notebooks, cooperative grouping, and hands-on labs and activities. Worked effectively as a member of a grade level team and coordinated with science department members.

**Student Teaching Grade 8 Science:** April-June 2005. Knotty Oak Middle School, Coventry, RI- Planned and implemented science lessons, including science kit creation, and assessments for classes that utilized science notebooks and cooperative literacy. Also participated in advisory and helped plan a senior citizen breakfast and "real life fair". Worked effectively as a member of a team of curriculum coordinators.

**Audubon Wildlife Educator:** May 2004 and October 2003, 2004. Marion Eppley Wildlife Refuge, West Kingston, RI and George B. Parker Woodland Refuge, Coventry, RI. Volunteered for Birding Festival and Owl Prowl events. Mist-netted passerine birds and owls and educated children and adults about bird migration and banding.

**Substitute Teacher:** September 2002. Substitute taught a split 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom for the Compass School in North Kingstown, RI (now located in Kingston, RI). Created and implemented lesson plans for a very diverse group of learners (high percentage of students with special needs).

**Summer Reading Program Volunteer:** July-August 2002. Volunteered for the Kingston Free Library's Summer Reading Buddies Program. Read to elementary students independently and participated in reading activities to motivate students to read during the summer.



**Rhode Island Reads Volunteer:** October 2001-June 2002. Tutored and mentored an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in science, math, language arts, social studies, and French through the RI Reads Program.

**Elementary Environmental Science Educator:** January-April 2002. Actively participated in the Science and Math Investigative Learning Experience Program for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade underprivileged students. Created and implemented lessons in an outdoor classroom setting during a weekend-long URI Alton Jones Campus program. Supervised students in overnight living situations.

**Undergraduate Teaching Assistant:** January-May 1999. Assisted Dr. Peter Paton, URI, with field lab exercises, corrected exams and homework, and helped students with independent field projects for a wetland wildlife college course.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

**Environmental Scientist:** September 1999-2005. Supervisors: Charles Horbert and Martin Wencek, State of RI Department of Environmental Management. Performed technical, biological field and office work for the Freshwater Wetlands Program. Duties include wetland edge verification, aerial photo interpretation, assessment of proposed alterations in freshwater wetlands, and preparation of evaluations, reports, and recommendations based on technical findings. Serve as a liaison between the Division and the public to educate them about and minimize deleterious effects on freshwater wetlands.

**Biological Technician:** April 2000-2006. Supervisor: Suzanne Hoover-Paton, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Charlestown, RI. Conducted anuran call count surveys and saltmarsh bird surveys at four National Wildlife Refuges in southern Rhode Island. Established sample stations based on suitable habitat, conducted surveys, entered data, and created final reports for U.S.F.W.S.

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

RI Association of Wetland Scientists (member January 1999-March 2005)

National Science Teachers Association (member May 2004-May 2007)

RI Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (member January 2005-2007)

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

**The 6 Write Traits Workshop:** November 7, 2006. Cumberland High School, Cumberland, RI.

**Educator's Guide to Differentiating Instruction-Appelbaum Institute:** August 29, 2006. J.J.M. Cumberland Hill Elementary School, Cumberland, RI.

**Floating and Sinking Science Kit Training:** November 17, 2006. East Bay Educational Collaborative, Warren, RI.

**Differentiating Instruction- Supporting All Students Workshop Series:** December 6, 2005. West Bay Educational Collaborative, Warwick, RI.

**Oceans a la Carte Oceanography Workshop:** November 19, 2005. University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI.

**Lions-Quest Advisory Curriculum Training: Skills for Adolescence, Lions Club International:** May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Knotty Oak Middle School, Coventry, RI.

**WOW! Wonders of Wetlands Curriculum Workshop:** April 29, 2005. Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Bristol, RI.

**RI Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development- Differentiating Instruction Workshop Series: Adjusting Questions & Cubing:** March 9, 2005. Winman Junior High School, Warwick, RI.

**Project WILD Curriculum Workshop:** January 29, 2005. Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Smithfield, RI.

**Project WILD Aquatic Curriculum Workshop:** January 29, 2005. Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Smithfield, RI.

**Rhode Island Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Pre-Service Teacher Conference:** January 27, 2005. University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI.

**RI Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development- Differentiating Instruction: Tiered Assignments:** January 12, 2005. Winman Junior High School, Warwick, RI.

**JASON Expedition Disappearing Wetlands Teacher Workshop:** November 2004. URI School of Oceanography, Kingston, RI. At this two-day teacher workshop, I was the lunchtime guest speaker and presented a talk/slide show about the functions and values of wetlands for the attendees.

#### **COMPUTER SKILLS:**

Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Power Point, Microsoft Publisher, e-mail, the internet.

#### **INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES:**

Kayaking, bird watching, hiking, gardening, reading, general crafting, sewing, and tennis.

#### **REFERENCES:**

Available upon request.