



Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Who We Are

We are a member-supported organization dedicated to ensuring that the natural beauty of the Wood and Pawcatuck river watersheds is maintained for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations. Incorporated in 1983, WPWA plays an ongoing role in public policy formulation. As watershed council for the Pawcatuck WPWA has legal standing to advocate on half of its resources and user communities.

We work with local, state, and federal agencies to encourage a watershed-based approach to environmental management and resource use. Our campus, located on the Wood River, provides public access to anglers and paddlers, and serves as a jumping off site for a host of environmental education programs targeted at youth, and our supporting membership.

What We Do

Our major role is helping people understand the link between their quality of life and the quality of the natural environment that surrounds and supports them, with the watershed as our teaching tool. Our actions are a blend of advocating on behalf of the natural, bountiful wonders of the watershed to improve management and sustainable use. Rolling up our sleeves we directly engage in activities that benefit the watershed, its residents and user communities.

Core Areas of Focus

Clean, Cool, Abundant Freshwater

The most precious resource on planet Earth is water. People, plants, and animals all need water to live, and we all need it clean to thrive. Some native species, like brook trout, also need it cool. We see the protection of this critical-to-all-life resource is our primary mandate.

Thriving Native Plants and Animals

One of the joys of living in the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed is the great variety and abundance of plant and animal life with which it is blessed, both in the water and on land. We see the preservation of this variety and abundance as critically important to the watershed's long-term health.

A Healthy Saltwater Environment

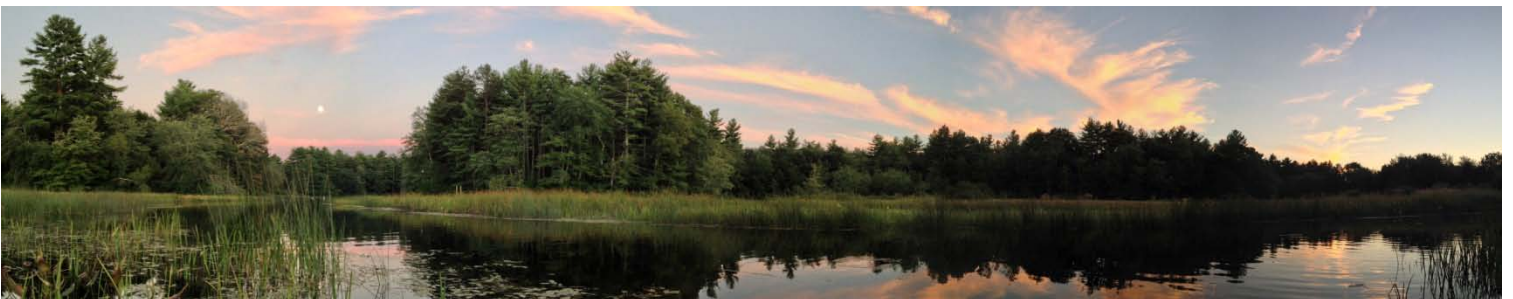
The lower Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay are the gateway to the ocean and the doorway to the watershed for migratory fish.

Plentiful Access to Recreation

Recreational access to hiking trails, paddle craft launch sites, and fishing areas are important to the quality of life for both residents in and visitors to the watershed. People find peace and tranquility on its waters and in the natural beauty of its lands.

Helping People Care About the Watershed

Interacting directly with watershed resources helps people create emotional bonds, such as respect, affection, and pride. These bonds provide a powerful means for inspiring a sense of stewardship for watershed resources.





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The Watershed

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed totals 194,000 acres (300 square miles) and covers about 25% of the land mass of RI. Located in southwestern RI and southeastern CT, the watershed encompasses all or parts of the towns of Charlestown, Coventry, East Greenwich, Exeter, Hopkinton, North Kingstown, Richmond, South Kingstown, Westerly, and West Greenwich in RI; and North Stonington, Sterling, Stonington, and Voluntown in CT.

The major rivers in the watershed are the Beaver River, Chipuxet River, Queen River, Pawcatuck River, and Wood River. All of these are under consideration for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Other tributaries are the Ashaway River, Brushy Brook, Meadow Brook, Tomaquag River, Green Falls River and Shunock River.

The watershed is well known for its trout waters, scenic paddle routes, and abundant natural habitats. It contains four state management areas: Arcadia, Burlingame, Carolina, and Great Swamp. In addition there are numerous protected parcels held by The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society of RI, and local land trusts.



WPWA Activities

- ❖ Dam removal and fish passage projects along the Pawcatuck River
- ❖ Attained passage of Wild and Scenic Study bill by US Congress
- ❖ Currently developing a Flood Resiliency Management Plan
- ❖ Twenty-seven years of water quality monitoring on 40 sites in the watershed
- ❖ Conducted specialized studies such as macroinvertebrate sampling, stream temperature and fish assemblage
- ❖ Provided education programs for students from all over the state
- ❖ Conducted teacher training programs with a focus on watershed science
- ❖ Serve on numerous committees regarding environmental and safety issues
- ❖ Clear downed trees on the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers
- ❖ Provide kayak field trips for many organizations
- ❖ Redeveloped our campus on the Wood River to provide better services to our members and the public
- ❖ Provide many recreational opportunities for local and state residents of all ages

