

Wild & Scenic 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

WESTFIELD RIVER

Committee



**WILD & SCENIC
WESTFIELD RIVER
COMMITTEE**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Town of Becket

Vacant ,Vacant alt.

Town of Chester

Robert Thompson, Chair; Dave Pierce, alt.

Town of Chesterfield

Carl Cignoni Vice-Chair; Denise Cormier, alt.

Town of Cummington

Amy Pulley ; Eliza Dragon alt.

Town of Huntington

Vacant, Jeff Penn, alt

Town of Middlefield

Carol Waag; Terry Crean, alt.

Town of Savoy

John Tynan ;Vacant alt

Town of Washington

Ed Neumuth, Vacant alt.

Town of Windsor

Jim Caffrey, Secretary; David Zink, alt.

Town of Worthington

Vacant; Susan Warner, alt.

Additional Members:

Westfield River Watershed Association

The Trustees of Reservations

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

National Park Service

Associate Member:

Westfield River Environmental Center

Westfield State University

Letter from the Chair

It is hard to believe that 2018, our 25th Wild & Scenic anniversary has come and gone. It was a great celebratory year for the Committee. As Chair, I would like to thank all of the dedicated folks who make up the Committee, as well as those involved in the activities we sponsor. Without your commitment, inspiration, and



hard work we could not succeed. We welcomed Carl Cignoni as Chesterfield's new representative. Nancy Rich, who served for many years, has moved on. Her enthusiasm, local knowledge, and energy will be missed. Virginia Martell of Worthington and Roy Bryant of Washington have also stepped down. Thanks to Nancy, Roy, and Virginia for all they have done for the Westfield River. Our relationship with the MA Division of Ecological Restoration continues to evolve as they expand to facilitate wonderful improve-

ment projects all over the state. This gives the Committee new challenges including finding ourselves without the incomparable Carrie Banks as our dedicated coordinator. We are still in transition reorganizing and sharing tasks. Our partnership with the National Park Service is still strong, thanks to Liz Lacy, Park Service Rep. We are indebted to her for all of her historic knowledge, dedication, and guidance going forward. Finally, I would like to recognize Westfield State University Foundation, with a special thanks to Louann D'Angelo, Director of Faculty Grants and Sponsored Programs, for assisting us with financial matters. Enjoy 2019, go outside, enjoy the River, and become involved,

Robert Thompson, Chair



Cover:

*Bill Warren Kayaking
the Chesterfield Gorge.*

*photo left: Bear sign is an
indicator of healthy habitat.
W&S has wildlife cameras
to loan!*

OUR MISSION

*To preserve, protect and enhance the special
qualities and outstanding resources of the
Westfield River Watershed in concert
with local communities.*

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

General Expenses

General Operations \$11,051

Outreach & Education*

Watershed Blitz \$18,212
Wild & Scenic Film Fest
50th & 25th Anniversary

Stewardship

Stream Teams \$24,628
River Internships \$6,006
Monitoring \$5,273

Riparian Conservation

Riparian Conservation Grant? \$24,465

Community Grants

Friends of Keystone Arch Bridge Documentary \$5,947

Program and technical assistance provided by staff at the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, Department of Fish & Game and the National Park Service.

*A total of \$2,250 of these funds came from other donations.

photo right: Andy Myers of Chester and Jeff Penn Huntington's W&S rep., visit the Chester/Blandford state forest with DCR and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, working in collaboration to advance the ambitious Highlands Footpath in the Westfield valley.



photo left: Westfield River interns, Julie Sobon & Jeremy Hatfield conducting visual surveys on the West Branch

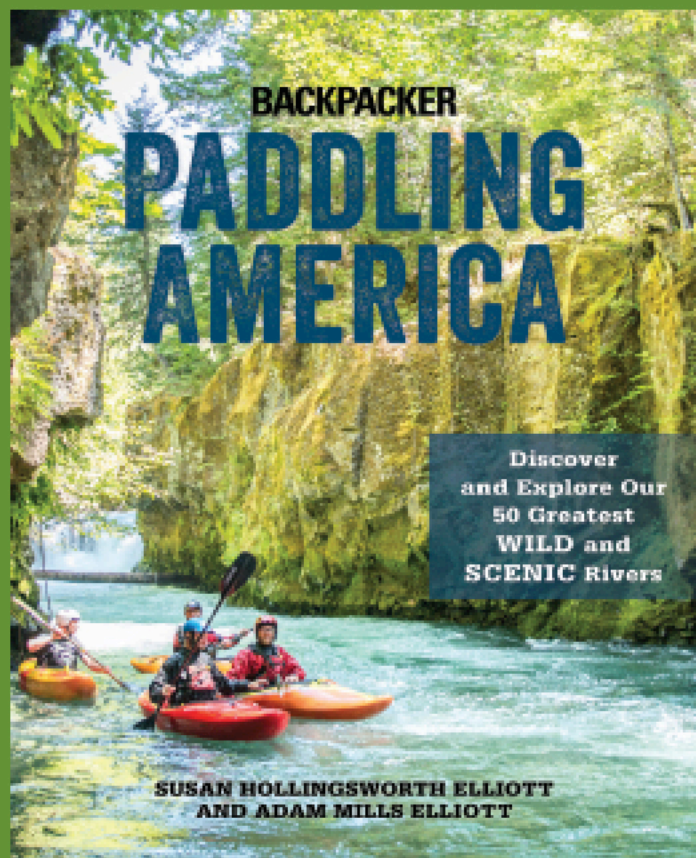


photo above : New book, "Backpacker Paddling America" The Wild & Scenic Committee connected the authors with local paddlers resulting in a segment of the West Branch of the Westfield River being highlighted. Take a peek at this exciting 50th anniversary guide book at your local library & bookstore.





White Water Race 2018

photo by: Kelly Smith Wright

What better way to celebrate 25 years being Wild & Scenic than with a three foot dragonfly, who depends on water quality and an abundance of macroinvertebrates to feed on, in your boat. Puppeteer Meredyth Babcock and painter Michael Wolski were joined by seasoned paddler Charles Murry to run the Westfield White Water race. Which happens to be the longest, continual running, white water race in the country!!

Families to the River

The Westfield was one of three Wild & Scenic Rivers to receive funding from Patagonia and River Network to offer a special program for the W&S anniversary. Partnering with Becket and Huntington libraries the committee was able to offer a fanciful two-part family program. Younger children and their parents headed to the river to search for and learn about the unique organisms adapted to living in running water. Step two was to take over a section of the library to make shadow puppets with all the neat creatures they found as their inspiration. The kids and their parents worked together to perform some truly amusing vignettes on a fancy shadow puppet stage made by local puppet company, Marmalade Productions.

Cindy Delpapa Department Ecological Restoration

photo below: Sanjana, Sonya and Sidharth Bansal delight in exploring Becket's Shaker Mill Brook. by Anurag Bansal



photo left: Thad, Lance & Crystal Ostaff spend the day seeing what lives in Sanderson Fall Brook.



Bumble Bees along the Westfield

There was a special focus on native bumble bees in the wetlands and river meadows. While our native bee populations are dropping, the summer survey did find two rare bees in Cummington- a significant find and an indication of the healthy biodiversity of our watershed

Each year the Committee offers internships to college students. This year one student intern focused on a special native bee project by cataloging species and plant diversity in three riparian meadows within the river corridor along the East Branch Trail.



The Beecology App

As part of our Wild & Scenic Saturday series professor Roger Gregear shared his passion for Bumble Bees. Giving an evening lecture followed by a full day training volunteers along the East Branch Trail. Teaching them how to identify native Bees and how to upload sightings through the Beecology App. The W & S committee works to preserving and improving the riparian habitat for all who call it home.



photo: Ciera Bilodeau & Matt of Multicultural Community Services volunteer to help clean the banks of the Westfield River.

Find your way to the river, define the way in which you protect the wild places that inspire and empower you. We, at the Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee, are happy to hear from you. What does your river stewardship look like and how can we help?



photo above: Intern Julie Sabon identifies a Bumble Bee on the East Branch Trail. Top Right: W&S Volunteers break for lunch.

photo below : New Chesterfield town rep. Carl Cignoni paddles the stunning Fisk Meadows. off route 143 in Chesterfield MA.





photo: Cindy Delpapa of DER talks water quality

West Branch Watershed Blitz

In celebration of our 25th anniversary we completed visual surveys on the last of our 78 designated miles. Concluding a five year exploration with landowners, volunteers and interns of every designated segment. Our 2018 walks took us from Chester to Huntington along the West Branch. From these we selected segments to highlight during our annual Blitz. Carrie Banks and Cindy Delpapa from the Department of Ecological Restoration invited community members to ponder water quality, how it's tested, why it matters, what happens when it's constrained. They stressed how important local eyes on the river can be when something goes wrong. Julie Richburg and Amy Pulley looked at the dance between pollinators and plants along the river corridor. The Howlets turns over every stone to marvel at frogs & Newts and Dave Pierce offered a historic Arch Bridge tour.

Save the date Sat. September 28th 2019 Watershed Blitz



W&S Committee Reps, Marie Raftery, Amy Pulley and Carol Waag explore the Stream Table with intern Jeremy Hatfield

Sharing the Wonder

John Burns shows off the *Platanus occidentalis* leaf. Found in flood plains of large river systems like the Westfield. The bark comes off in large plates, characteristic of many trees in the tropics where it serves as a defense against the buildup of epiphytic plants like ferns, bromeliads, orchids, vines, etc. which get really heavy when the trees/branches get loaded. By shedding the bark in large plates, these epiphytes fall off as well. Suggesting that this species evolved from a tropical relative and has adapted to survive in the more temperate north!



photo: John Burns 2018 Watershed Blitz By Bill Warren

photo: Charlie Eiseman Arch Bridge Trail 2018 Watershed Blitz



Charley Eiseman invited folks into the world of Leaf miners. Two species were encountered, *Ophiomyia Parda*, which feeds on asters and was named, by Owen Lonsdale, for the leopard's spotted pattern of frass, and *Phytomyza Tigris*, which mines in foamflower leaves and was named, by Eiseman, due to stripes on the puparium. (last hardened pupa skin)

Cummington Fair Stream Table

UMASS River Wize program shared their amazing interactive stream table. Allowing us to demonstrate river dynamics. Ponder, why vegetation is vital to bank stability, what happens when you undersize culverts or don't properly align bridges? Town reps, interns and community members got a chance to play in the water, creating scenarios and became "River Wise" helping our towns make more informed choices.

Conservation and Protection

Over the years, student interns have assessed road-stream crossing to identify culverts and bridges causing significant barriers to flow and passage. These inadequate crossings are also vulnerable to damage and even complete failure during flood events. This summer the Committee entered into agreements with Becket, Cummington and Windsor to begin the process of redesigning the worst of these road stream crossings. Knowing our W&S towns have limited capacity to manage contracts and projects, the Committee both provided over \$40,000 in funds and managed the contracts and projects from beginning to end. The work also included preparation of grant applications to help fund the next phases of the culvert replacements. The Windsor application was awarded significant funds and another just missed being selected. With last year's application as a starting point, the towns are in good shape to apply for the next round of funding to fix their degraded culverts. Bring better prepared and resilient to the inevitable pressures of a changing climate.



photo left by Karla Reinertson: Dave Pierce, devoted president of Friends of the Keystone Arches, brings a group out to admire the historic Keystone Arch Bridges. These magnificent structures span the west branch of the Westfield River. The committee is committed to working with Mass Fish & Wildlife to preserve and protect them.



photo: Wild & Scenic Film Festival partner, Berkshire Environmental Action Team, fill the house at the Berkshire Community College.

First Annual Wild & Scenic Westfield River Film Fest

To celebrate the W&S Rivers act turning 50 and the Westfield 25, the committee decided to fund five showings of inspiring Wild & Scenic films. The Gateway Enterprise & Outdoor Club were proud to host the first annual Westfield Wild & Scenic Film Festival. "We were happy to be able to open the event to the public in our communities, which don't often have access to many cultural or experiential events like this throughout the year. It brought together a wide variety of locals and visitors who were very impressed at the quality and content of the various films. Some technical snafus presented an unexpected opportunity for the Enterprise Club students to shine in their problem-solving abilities and customer service skills. It was a great opportunity for partnership and a creative and engaging use of our school facilities."

Jeanne LeClair Gateway Economic Development

photo: Emerson Wolski left, was inspired by the film, Elwha Undammed; Whats a River for, shown as part of the first annual Wild & Scenic Westfield River Film Festival, to visit the site of the historic Elwha dam removal in the Olympic National Park.



photo: Gateway Enterprise Club members, Maria Pless, Caden Boeri and Jeanne LeClair, present raffle winner William Beamer, of Washington MA., a beautiful satchel donated by Peak design



Moho Design in Great Barrington creates our 25th anniversary organic tee shirts

With Thalweg Appreciation

Our supporters and contributors are too numerous to list here. Your help is invaluable to the health and well-being of our watershed.

*All our extraordinary Specialists
Susan and Adam Elliott
Friends of the Keystone Arches
Hilltowns Land Trust
Highlands Footpath Collaborative
Hilltown Collaborative
Gateway Enterprise & Outdoor Club
Alice's Kitchen at Honeyhill farm*

*The Common Table Chester MA.
Trustees of Reservations
UMass Dept. of Geosciences
Westfield River Watershed Association
Action Sports and Travel Pittsfield MA.
South Yuba River Citizen League
Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Westfield University*

Volunteers head up the Newman Marsh Trail, in the Chester/Blandford State forest, to repair water bars and uncover overgrown stone stairs. A workday in collaboration with the Highlands

Footpath and Jacobs Ladder Trails. We are thrilled to be working alongside Highlands Footpath Inc. as they expand & improve trails along the river and overlooking the Westfield River valley.



**WILD & SCENIC
WESTFIELD RIVER
COMMITTEE**

PO Box 393, Huntington, MA 01050

We are in the River and on the Web!

Learn about your watershed, places to go, & things to do, join the email list volunteer@wildscenicwestfieldriver.org

Visit our website at

www.wildscenicwestfieldriver.org