



Willimantic River Review

Fall 2011

Water Plans are Flowing

To promote a regional approach to multiple water issues, the Alliance sponsored a Water Supply Forum in May. This was an opportunity for representatives of Tolland, Mansfield, the University of Connecticut (UConn) and the Connecticut Water Company to share information with the public about their water supply issues and potential solutions. Tolland reported on the town's need for more water from their wells on the Willimantic River; CWC on their proposed regional pipeline through Tolland to Storrs; Mansfield on the need for water to supply the Four Corners area of Storrs; and UConn on their newly updated five-year water supply plan indicating the need for an additional source of water.

Since then, Mansfield and UConn have made renewed efforts to work together. Because the need for water has stalled both town and university projects, they are cooperating in the search for new sources of water. UConn estimates that it will need an additional 340,000 gallons per day by 2030. Mansfield sees a need for 170,000 gallons per day for the Four Corners area alone.

The Town and UConn are cosponsoring an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) of several potential water sources, including wells along the Willimantic River and in Mansfield Hollow, as well as possible reservoir supply from the Willimantic Reservoir in Mansfield or Shenipsit Lake in Tolland. The EIE is due early next year. Meanwhile, state bonding is now available for a new University technology park. This bonding will also provide funding for a water supply infrastructure once a source has been selected.

Riverwatch

WATER QUALITY REPORT CARD

Every two years Ct. DEEP submits a statewide water quality report to Congress. In this 2010 document, sections of the Willimantic River and some of its tributaries have a new classification as "not supported" for recreation because of excess indicator

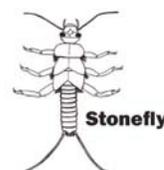
bacteria in the water. This does NOT mean that there are more bacteria. Rather, EPA has raised bacteria standards for supporting recreation. A waterbody must now be safe for swimming to be supported for boating and fishing.

The river is classified as "not supported" for recreation from the Route 32 bridge in Tolland downstream to the junction with the Hop River in Columbia. All of the Hop and Skungamaug Rivers and some smaller tributaries, are also listed as "not supported." For a complete list of impaired waterbodies in the river's watershed and a summary of water quality standards and classifications, visit the Conservation page on the WRA website.

Many other rivers and streams in the state are listed as "not supported" for recreation in this report. The sources of bacteria are unknown at this time, but Ct. DEEP is sampling rivers across the state to determine bacteria sources and remedies. Stormwater runoff is often a major culprit in this pollution problem.

WATER QUALITY TESTING

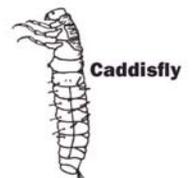
Faculty and students at E.O. Smith High School's Depot Campus are planning a water quality testing project in the Willimantic River's watershed this fall. If you would like to participate in a Rapid Bioassessment team, contact Shannon Rose at 860-487-2260 or srose@eosmith.org and search for these



Stonefly



Mayfly



Caddisfly

critters that can live only in healthy streams. For more information: www.epa.gov/waterscience/biocriteria.

Riverwatch (continued)

TOLLAND'S WATER DIVERSION PERMIT

State agencies have reviewed Tolland's Water Diversion Permit application to increase withdrawals from wells next to the Willimantic River. Ct. DEEP made a tentative determination to approve the application in August. The town applied for a maximum daily withdrawal of 511,000 gallons per day (gpd) to allow the wells to serve residents on the west side of I-84. The approved 25-year permit would restrict peak withdrawals to only 332,000 gpd because the increased withdrawals will affect the river, Greens Brook and nearby groundwater and wetlands. The current withdrawal permit allows up to 220,000 gpd for peak use. Current average daily use is 100,000 gpd, with peak withdrawals around 180,000 gpd.

STAFFORD'S WATER POLLUTION CONTROL PLANT

Stafford's Water Pollution Control Plant has been refurbished in a recently completed project. The plant's systems were upgraded and elevated above flood levels. This was just in time for this rainy summer, when the plant remained high and dry through storms that raised the river's level to flood stage.

EAGLEVILLE BROOK WATERSHED PLAN

This tributary to the river (at Eagleville Lake) is an impaired waterbody. It lacks any aquatic life due to streambank modification and stormwater runoff from developed areas upstream on the UConn campus and nearby areas in Storrs. The Eagleville Brook Watershed Plan to reduce stormwater runoff was recently unveiled by UConn's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). The plan's analysis and recommendations are available at <http://clear.uconn.edu/projects/tmdl>. A public presentation is planned for this fall.

UCONN WATER SUPPLY PLAN

UConn drafted a Water Supply Plan for the next five years in March. The Alliance submitted comments concerning this plan, which were addressed in the final version of the plan.

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL

This fall the Alliance is meeting with officials of several riverside towns and Ct. DEEP to request their assistance with an application for a National Recreation Trail (NRT) designation for the river. The Last Green Valley will submit this application to the National Parks Service along with one for the Quinebaug River. The nation's newest NRT designations will be announced in mid-2012.

Web Updates

Check out the WRA website's Conservation page! New items include the recent water quality report and the latest information on innovative projects to improve water quality in Eagleville Brook. Also a new list of resources for waterway protection.

Spirits of the River

At the annual meeting in April, WRA presented Spirit of the River honors to the following people: Betty Robinson for enthusiastic leadership on land and water trails along the river; to the Willimantic River Yacht Club for their steadfast stewardship of the river; and to Representative Gregg Haddad for his efforts to protect Connecticut rivers. WRA appreciate their contributions to the health and enjoyment of the river!

Calendar

The Alliance is now posting events on its **blog**. You can link to it from our website's Events page and find the latest posting. Explore along the Willimantic River during **Walktober**, a month-long series of walks and other outings sponsored by The Last Green Valley. Walks cosponsored by WRA are listed below. For the other events, visit www.thelastgreenvalley.org.

Saturday, October 1

Wonderful Waters of Wangumbaug Lake

Start on the shore with orientation to the lake's past history and today's community effort to protect its water quality. Then paddle 3.5 miles to several points of interest. Participants must be able to safely operate a kayak or canoe. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Community Center (from Rts. 31/275 junction in Coventry, go west on Lake St for 0.2 miles. Turn right at Community Center and follow signs to parking space). Information: 860-930-7515. Register at www.coventryrec.com. Sponsored by Coventry Parks and Rec. and WRA.

Saturday, October 1

Merrow Mill's 200th Anniversary Discover this 19th-century mill with mill historian Bill Jobbagy. Tour the small village and walk along Riverview Trail to see remains of the Merrow gunpowder and knitting mill. An easy 1-mile walk followed by a visit to the Mansfield Historical Society for the Merrow Mill Exhibit and anniversary cake. Meet at 1 p.m. (from Rts. 195/32 junction in Mansfield, go south on Rt. 32 for 0.8 miles. Turn right on Merrow Road, cross the bridge and turn right on Riverview Drive). Information: 860-742-9401. Sponsored by Mansfield Historical Society and WRA.

Sunday, October 16

Down by the Riverside Walk along a scenic stretch of the Willimantic River in Tolland's King Riverside Conservation Area to see Peck's Mill and other historical sites, then climb to a wonderful view of the river valley. Meet at trailhead at 1 p.m. (from Rts. 195/32 junction in Mansfield, go west on Rt. 195 toward Tolland. Cross the bridge over the railroad, then over the river. Immediately turn right on Dimock Lane. Parking lot is on the right just past the church). Information: 860-871-3601. Sponsored by Tolland Conservation Commission and Conserving Tolland.

Many Thanks to...

Ken Hankinson and Robin Rouelle for their help at the Water Supply Forum, and to Cynthia MacDonald for creating a wonderful power point show for our annual meeting. Her photos of last year's WRA paddling and hiking events are inspiring!

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Inquiries or submissions for the Spring 2012 Edition may be submitted to:

WRA, P.O. Box 9193
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or info@willimanticriver.org

View previous newsletters at:
www.willimanticriver.org

Willimantic River Alliance – Membership Form

Name _____
 Address _____
 Town _____ State _____ Zip _____
 E-Mail _____ Phone _____

Contact me about volunteer opportunities for the WRA

Mail completed form and check to:

WRA at P.O. Box 9193, Bolton CT 06043-9193

Memberships	Annual Dues
Senior/Student	\$ 5.00
Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
River Steward	\$ 50.00
Patron	\$ 250.00 (Lifetime Member)

Thank you for joining the Alliance! Your membership dues may be tax deductible.



Founded in 1996, the Alliance has a mission “to protect and preserve the Willimantic River through cooperative and educational activities that promote regional awareness, stewardship, and enjoyment of the river and its watershed.” As a coalition of citizens, officials and local agencies, the Alliance sponsors events such as regional forums and outings and publications, including a newsletter and website www.willimanticriver.org. Our email address is info@willimanticriver.org.

Willimantic River Alliance, Inc. is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt corporation. The Alliance promotes development of the Willimantic River Greenway, an official state greenway along the river's 25 miles from Stafford Springs to Willimantic. This regional project aims to connect recreational, historical and natural resource features along the river. These connections are being created by the nine riverside towns through natural resource preservation and recreation projects, such as linking trails and improving access to the river.

The river's watershed includes seventeen towns: (in Ct.) Andover, Ashford, Bolton, Columbia, Coventry, Ellington, Hebron, Lebanon, Mansfield, Stafford, Union, Tolland, Vernon, Willington, Windham, and (in Mass.) Monson, Wales.

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WILLIMANTIC RIVER ALLIANCE

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