



# Willimantic River Review

Spring 2009

## New Alliance Logo

The Willimantic River Alliance has a new logo! We appreciate graphic artist Mike McChesney's generous donation of his time and talent to create it for WRA. Watch for our logo on boats, cars and WRA publications. Logo decals for your boat, car, or whatever, will be available for a donation to WRA at local events or by contacting the Alliance at [info@willimanticriver.org](mailto:info@willimanticriver.org).

## Spring Paddling Tips

**Water levels** can make or break a canoe/kayak trip on the river. Before going out, check the USGS Willimantic River stream gauge (in South Coventry) at the Alliance website's Recreation page, Paddling section. **Launch sites and maps** are also in this section. **Safety tips:** state law requires that between October 1 and May 30 each person must wear a life jacket (PFD), and year-round there must be a PFD aboard for each person. Bring an extra rope and paddle, and tell someone where you plan to launch and take out. If you are a beginner, the safest place to try river paddling is in the slow current at River Park's handicapped-access boat launch (parking lot is next to the Plains Road bridge in Mansfield).

**Calling all kayakers!** Mark your calendar on Wednesday, April 29 for "**From the Garage to the Water,**" a multi-media program by Sue Audette, kayaker extraordinaire. Learn everything you wanted to know about kayaking (for all experience levels). This program starts at 7:00 p.m. at the French Club on Club Road (off Rt. 66) in Windham near the Willimantic Country Club golf course. Donations would be appreciated by the sponsor, Columbia Canoe Club. For information call 860-456-4906.

## Fishing Season Opens

The river is stocked with trout, and the first day to try for a big one is Saturday, April 18. Fishing licenses and the 2009 Ct. Angler's Guide are available at all Town Clerk offices. Year-round fly fishing (catch-and-release) is available in the Cole Wilde Trout

Management Area that extends from the mouth of Roaring Brook downstream to the Rt. 74 bridge. Access is on the north side of this bridge or from North River Road in Tolland or from the westbound I-84 rest stop in Willington. Check the Alliance website's Recreation page for more information.

## River Watch

**Speaking up for the river** The Alliance submitted testimony to the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency in March expressing its concerns about possible significant impacts of stormwater runoff from a church development project on Jones Crossing Road. The proposed buildings and large parking lots are close to Clark Brook, which flows directly into the Willimantic River. This development has the potential to create high-volume surges of stormwater containing sediments and pollutants. This type of runoff could impact the hydrology and aquatic life in the brook and the river.

Although retention basins have been proposed, the Alliance recommended additional Low Impact Development (LID) techniques that would slow and/or reduce stormwater runoff and thus lessen the adverse impact of this development on the affected waterways. The Alliance suggested that the applicant, St. Paul's Collegiate Church, consider a wider buffer zone for Clark Brook as well as additional LID measures in the project's design and construction activities. Examples included using permeable pavements and maintaining natural vegetation buffers (not lawns) next to ponds and the brook. Information about LID techniques and examples are available at [www.nemo.uconn.edu/tools](http://www.nemo.uconn.edu/tools).

The Willimantic River has recovered from serious pollution and sedimentation problems, and it is important to maintain its improved status for the benefit of aquatic life in the river. One way to ensure this is to prevent stormwater damage to Clark Brook and the river.

## TMDL Action

The Ct. DEP has developed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan for Eagleville Brook (a tributary of the Willimantic River). Under this plan, the University of Connecticut has initiated activities to address excessive stormwater runoff into a brook that has lost its aquatic life. Two examples: Professor Jack Clausen will install a demonstration “green roof” on the Gant building’s plaza on North Eagleville Road. Ct. DEP will monitor the site to determine if the plants in the demo area will reduce the rate of stormwater runoff and improve its water quality. The University’s CLEAR (Center for Land Use Education and Research) is launching a study of the impervious surfaces on campus and will recommend long-term and short-term solutions to moderate the impact of stormwater runoff from these surfaces into Eagleville Brook.

**Help Wanted!** Two high school students have launched a campaign to mark storm drains in Willimantic with a warning that anything going into a storm drain also goes into the Willimantic River. Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator, Jean Pillo, is helping them acquire 1000 storm drain markers. Through Jean’s efforts, the Eastern Ct. Conservation District has applied for a grant from the Rivers Alliance of Ct. to purchase the markers. Installing so many markers may sound like a lot of work, but with more hands to help, the students can make short work of this project. Sign up to help by contacting Jean at 860-928-4948.

**Get involved!** The Alliance is looking for additional representatives for its board of directors, especially from the lower river area. We meet once a month, discuss river-related issues, and plan the Alliance’s advocacy actions, workshops and recreational events. We welcome your input whether or not you wish to join the board. Our meetings are at the Tolland Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month. You can always contact us at [info@willimanticriver.org](mailto:info@willimanticriver.org).

## Source to the Sea

The Last Green Valley is sponsoring Source to Sea events to highlight water connections and resources in the Thames River Watershed. Events along the Willimantic River are listed here. For more information about these and other events, visit [www.thelastgreenvalley.org](http://www.thelastgreenvalley.org).

### Saturday, April 24

**The Mighty Willimantic** “Water Powered Textile Mills along the River from Stafford Springs to Willimantic.” Enjoy an exhibit of maps and photographs by Jamie Furness at the Windham Textile and History Museum, on Main Street across from Windham Mills. Fridays through Sundays from 10 to 4 until June 21. Information: 860-456-2178.

### Saturday, May 2

**Upper Willimantic River Paddle** Canoe or kayak down this beautiful stretch of river for 8 miles from Tolland to River Park in Mansfield. Sponsored by the Alliance and AMC Ct. Chapter. For experienced paddlers with their own boats. Bring water and lunch. Life jackets required. Call 860-429-3206 to register.

### Saturday, May 16

**Midriver Trail Walk** Enjoy a 2- or 4-mile guided walk along the Willimantic River Greenway. Meet at 1 p.m. at Merrow Meadow Park on Merrow Road, and walk through the Spring Manor Trail, Mansfield Depot village and Lynch Landing to River Park. For ages 12 and older. Sponsored by Mansfield Parks and Recreation Dept. Registration required at 860-429-3015x204 or [kaufmanjs@mansfieldct.org](mailto:kaufmanjs@mansfieldct.org).

### Saturday, May 30

**Willimantic Riverfest** Family paddling down the river from Eagleville Dam to Willimantic, whitewater demonstrations, exhibits, music and food. Sponsored by The Chamber of Commerce and Willimantic Whitewater Partnership. Information: [www.windhamchamber.com](http://www.windhamchamber.com) or 860-423-6389.



**Willimantic River Alliance – Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

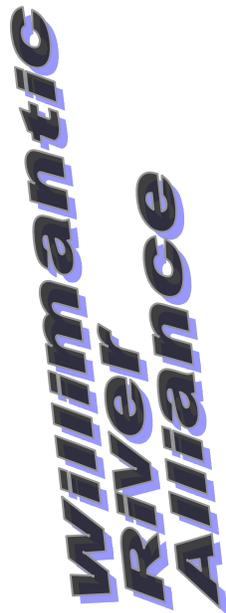
Contact me about volunteer opportunities for the WRA

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](http://www.willimanticriver.org). Our email address is [info@willimanticriver.org](mailto: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.

**Spring 2009**

**WILLIMANTIC RIVER ALLIANCE**  
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