

WATERSHED NEWS

Finding ways to keep our water pure and plentiful

Serving the Community Since 1999

Fall/Winter 2017-18

State Water Plan Update

At the end of June, the Final Draft of a comprehensive State Water Plan (SWP) was released for a 120-day public comment period ending November 20.

Along with numerous other key stakeholders, PRWC has been an active voice at the table in the planning for the SWP. Our engagement has been as members of both the Water Planning Council Advisory Group and the SWP Science & Technical Committee. That committee was charged with assisting with the science behind the SWP. Our goal had been to export local watershed knowledge into the SWP with the desired outcome being that the SWP would provide for the assembly of critical water resource data and meaningful policies and pathways to balance the competing needs for our water resources. *We believe that the SWP overall meets this goal.* It was an honor for us to have participated in the development of the SWP while working alongside so many talented individuals. We applaud the State Water Planning Council for its leadership in developing the SWP.

You can locate a copy of the Final Draft of the SWP at the following link: www.ct.gov/water. Although it is a very large document, we encourage you to review as much of the material as you have the time for while underscoring that the executive summary will give you a good understanding of the SWP. The link above also provides you with an opportunity to review comments on the SWP as provided by PRWC and others.

Once revised to reflect the outcome of public comment, the SWP is scheduled to be submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly by January 1, 2018 where the Joint Standing Committees on Environment, Public Health, Planning & Development and Energy & Technology may conduct a joint public hearing on the SWP. Changes may then be requested before it returns to the General Assembly for proposed adoption. PRWC looks forward to approval of the SWP and future participation in its implementation.

Successful Launch of Youth Conservation Corps



Thanks to generous environmental grant support from the Connecticut Community Foundation and other supporters, we successfully piloted a Youth Conservation Corps program this summer. We were able to further on-the-ground conservation efforts by hiring a team of local high school students to work on projects throughout the watershed. *See page 2 for more photos of the team in action and to read about their accomplishments.*

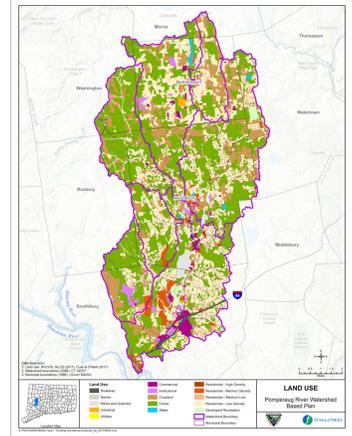
Watershed Based Planning Continues

Late this summer, field scientists from the consulting firm Fuss & O'Neill traveled throughout the watershed to conduct Visual Assessment Surveys of select rivers and streams on behalf of PRWC. This work is part of a larger effort led by PRWC to update and upgrade its Watershed Based Plan, a project funded in part by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection through a United States Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant and the Connecticut Community Foundation.

To best inform this Plan, current watershed conditions have been evaluated through the use of GIS mapping, bacteria and nutrient load potential has been estimated through computer modeling, and visual assessment survey data has been collected. The visual surveys have provided a general assessment of in-stream habitat, streambank, riparian buffer, and floodplain conditions; evaluated the potential for stormwater runoff to deliver soil, nutrients, and bacteria from the landscape to nearby waterways; and identified opportunities to implement green infrastructure to reduce stormwater runoff.

In regards to how the data will be used, Erik Mas, Project Manager and Vice President at Fuss & O'Neill said, "These data will help us better gauge the factors that may be contributing to reduced water quality conditions, and will allow us to develop site specific plans where measures can be implemented to minimize bacteria, nutrient and soil inputs into the Pomperaug River and its tributaries as well as to restore in-stream habitat."

Findings and recommendations will be shared during informational sessions slated to be held in Bethlehem, Southbury, and Woodbury early this winter. At that time, PRWC will seek community input to help refine the Plan which will serve as a road map for state and local agencies to implement protection and restorative measures to further protect and enhance local water resources. The final Plan is expected in late winter.



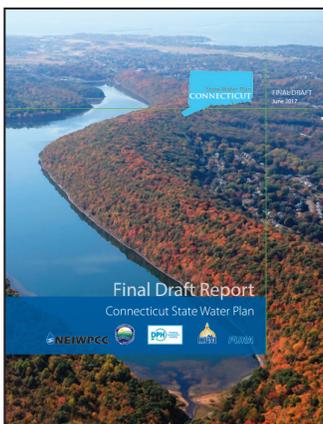
Current land cover map for the Pomperaug Watershed.

Science, Stewardship, & Restoration



In the 2017 field season, PRWC's volunteers and staff surveyed macroinvertebrates at stream locations throughout the watershed as part of a statewide effort to document high quality streams - three of the sites are new this year and preliminary results show they will be ranked high. The team also deployed data loggers to record summer stream temperatures in an effort to document cold water habitat as well as thermally stressed areas. This year also marked the launch of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program working throughout the watershed. Over the course of six weeks, the 5-member YCC crew diligently cleared more than a half acre of land area of invasive plants using only hand pulling methods and removed approximately 175 forty-five gallon bags (or 40 cubic yards) of invasive plant material from eight different work sites. In the process, the team learned how to identify 70 species of plants (native and invasive). The crew installed 380 stormdrain markers along 40 roads in Woodbury and Southbury, and they assembled and painted one rain barrel that was sold at the annual benefit in September. These activities were intended to help abate stormwater runoff and to improve riparian buffer habitat as well as stream water quality and to raise awareness among residents about where stormwater goes.

Water Resource Planning & Coalition Building



This year, PRWC has served as a technical resource and key leader in a number of water resource planning efforts on both the state and local level. These efforts include the development of Connecticut's first ever State Water Plan, an update/upgrade to the Pomperaug Watershed Based Plan to address factors potentially contributing to streams with known impairments; and facilitating discussions between municipal and utility representatives to establish drought and water conservation triggers to alleviate in-stream habitat stressors during times of low streamflow. Essential to each of these efforts has been PRWC's collection of scientific data and our ability to apply our research in partnership with stakeholders.

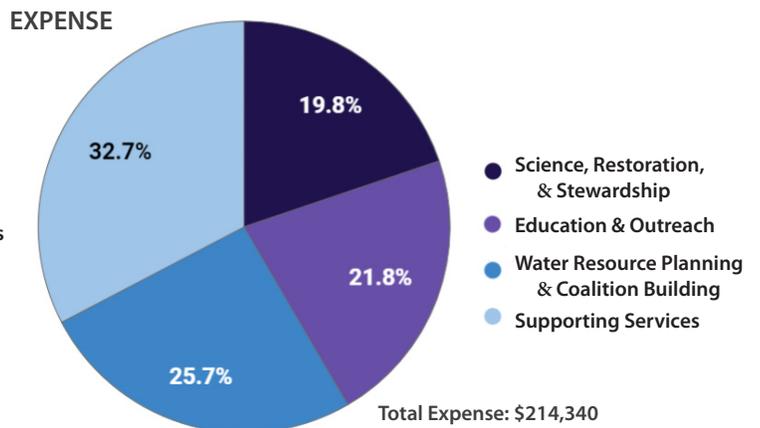
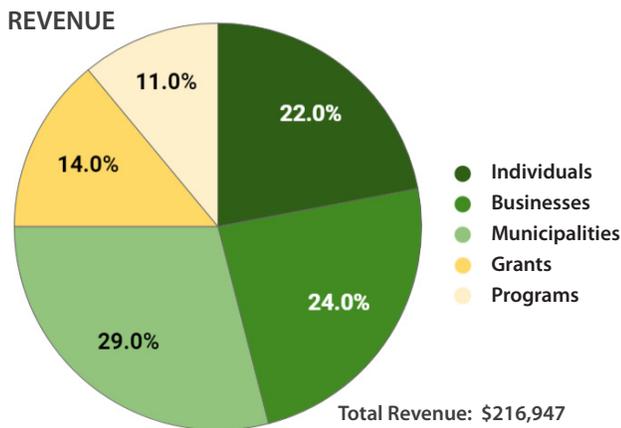
For more information and photos of our activities, visit www.pomperaug.org or follow us on Facebook.

Outreach & Education



Outreach and education programs have been strong over the past year! Highlights include: hosting Woodbury Earth Day with support from the town, an event that drew in 6000+ visitors; launching River Ramblers, a guided hike/walk series that kicked off during Connecticut Trails Day Weekend in June and that will continue next year; developing a water conservation education program in partnership with Connecticut Water Company, which they are teaching in schools in their 55 town service-area; leading hands-on water conservation activities at Woodbury's Parks & Recreation Summer Camp; facilitating a field trip to the Trolley Bed Preserve in collaboration with the After School Arts Program for third, fourth, and fifth grade students from the Children's Community School of Waterbury; introducing participants of the Western Connecticut Leadership Program to the charismatic creatures (fish and bugs) that reside in and rely on the Pomperaug; and raising community awareness about the watershed as an exhibitor at events like Woodbury Fall Festival, the Southbury Farmers' Market, Make a Splash Day at Woodbury Middle School, and so much more!

Fiscal Year 2017 Financial Summary



The charts above summarize our revenue and expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. Each revenue category is critical to the balance for the overall funding required for us to be successful in our mission. The expense summary shows how we utilize that funding support for our core areas of work. **You'll see that your financial support truly makes a difference and comes with our heartfelt appreciation!**



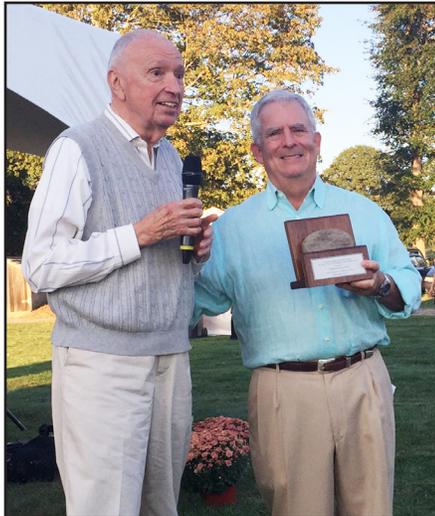
Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition

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*FY 2017 Financial Summary &
Donor Recognition List Inside!*



Dick Leavenworth Honored Recipient of the Dr. Marc J. Taylor Environmental Stewardship Award

At the end of September, PRWC held its annual benefit, JAZZ at the Lake, at Tranquillity Farm in Middlebury. Thanks to the support and dedication of many volunteers and donors, the generosity of our hosts Scott and Jean Peterson, our remarkable honorary chair Faith Middleton and our talented auctioneer Rick Richardson, some 240 supporters enjoyed a wonderful event.

During the celebration, Frederick "Dick" Leavenworth, of Woodbury, was presented with The Dr. Marc J. Taylor Environmental Stewardship Award. Dick was recognized as a tireless leader and advocate for protecting and enhancing the natural systems that make this corner of the world a special place. He has provided not only the Town of Woodbury but also northwest Connecticut with decades of conservation leadership that has effected meaningful protection and progress in the preservation of natural systems. *(Read more about Dick's achievements in the News section of our website.)*

In presenting the award, Vince McDermott, PRWC Board Chairman, remarked: "It is an honor for me to present Dick Leavenworth with the 2017 Dr. Marc J. Taylor Environmental Stewardship Award. The importance of his leadership and his conservation work cannot be overstated. He is a genuine man, highly regarded as a visionary and protectorate of all that surrounds us and one that we are all grateful to call a friend."

In accepting the award Dick spoke of the importance of everyone's actions toward environmental protection and stewardship. He emphasized the significance of Marc Taylor's ability to passionately fight for water resource and land protection as well as the need to prepare the next generation of environmental stewards. Dick spoke of his honor in receiving the award and to having joined a distinguished group of past recipients who include Margaret Minor of Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and Tom Crider of the Southbury Land Trust.



POMPERAUG RIVER



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