

WATERSHED NEWS

Finding ways to keep our water pure and plentiful

Serving the Community Since 1999

Spring 2016

Shaping Connecticut's State Water Plan

The planning effort for the State Water Plan is underway and PRWC is an active "voice at the table" in many aspects of its development, which is led by the Connecticut Water Planning Council. Under Public Act 14-163, the Council was charged with the development of a State Water Plan that is to be submitted to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly by January 1, 2018.

The Public Act identifies 17 requirements for the State Water Plan relating to the environment, public health, planning and development and energy and technology. While each requirement is significant, three are particularly meaningful to PRWC in that the requirements serve to highlight the importance of our core work related to science, research and educational outreach:

- (1) Identify the quantities and qualities of water that are available for public water supply, health, economic, recreation and environmental benefits on a regional basin scale considering both surface and groundwater.
- (2) Recommend the utilization of the state's water resources, including surface and subsurface water, in a manner that balances public water supply, economic development, recreation and ecological health.
- (8) Inform residents of the state about the importance of water resource stewardship and conservation.

PRWC is applying our data and research to the development of the State Water Plan and is underscoring the future local and regional water resource planning needs for our watershed and others across the state. Our participation allows us to highlight what we see as being the most relevant issues including the review of registered water diversion permits and the impact of groundwater withdrawals on stream flow. When completed, the State Water Plan may lead to key water resource policy changes that would be supported by new state laws and regulations.

To learn more about the development of State Water Plan and to stay connected with new information, the state has launched the following website: www.ct.gov/water.

PRWC Hosts Woodbury Earth Day

Woodbury Earth Day is preparing for its 21st Annual Earth Day Celebration. As the largest Earth Day celebration in Connecticut, you won't want to miss this fun celebration with earth-friendly activities for the entire family!



Woodbury Earth Day will feature 130+ vendors, a Main Stage, a Community Stage, a Kids' Activities Tent, and some of the best food trucks in Connecticut. Among the many talented performers and engaging presentations, The Regulators and HannaH's Field will rock the audience while Bring the Hoopla gets them moving. Caseus Cheese Truck, Hardcore Sweet, El Camion and several others will be serving up your favorite eats and Aquarion Water Company will provide drinking water to help wash it all down.

While thinking global and acting local, visitors will enjoy a lively vendor fair including artisans, farmers and growers, environmental organizations, and home improvement services, along with demonstrations like the Live Birds of Prey presented by Audubon Sharon.

Woodbury Earth Day is presented under the leadership of PRWC, and a team of dedicated community volunteers. Event sponsors include New Morning Market, Aquarion Water Company, O&G Industries, USA Hauling, Eversource, The Farm of Woodbury, Brown Tufts Montessori School, Civil 1 Engineering, Woodbury Chevrolet, Power Home Remodeling Group, and Energy Conservation Specialists - Aero seal, Renewal by Anderson, Splash Car Wash, and Secor, Cassidy & McPartland PC.

Visit our News & Blog at WWW.POMPERAUG.ORG for expanded articles, additional photos, and to learn more about our past, current, and upcoming activities!



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Reviewing Towantic Energy's Water Management Plan

Historically low river flows and groundwater levels observed during Fall 2015 underscore the importance of proactive water resource management and planning. As reported in our last newsletter, PRWC has been an active participant in advocating for the protection of our water resources in matters pertaining to the future operation by Towantic Energy, LLC of the 785 mega-watt electric generating facility in the town of Oxford. The water supply for the facility would rely mostly on water from a public drinking water source drawn from the Pomperaug Watershed.

The Connecticut Siting Council approved the construction of the facility and, in so doing, required that Towantic update its Water Supply/ Management Plan. When issued, PRWC voiced its concern that the Plan did not adequately address the need to protect our water resources. Most notably PRWC feels that the Plan lacks (1) the required detail needed on securing supplemental out-of-basin water supply that would serve to augment local water resources during periods of drought and high water demand, and (2) the required planning for the facility's water use during drought or other events so as not to unfairly burden existing water customers and cause increased negative impact on stream flow and aquatic health.

With the support of the Southbury First Selectman's office, PRWC will continue to discuss its concerns with Towantic officials in an effort to address these water management planning deficiencies. Doing so is consistent with the commitment made by Towantic within the Plan for: "Communication and coordination with PRWC to facilitate understanding of the dynamic natures of the project's water demands."



In September 2015, a significant stretch of the Weekepeemee River at Three Rivers Park in Woodbury was completely dry. Other streams throughout the watershed also experienced dry channel conditions last fall.

Out and About: Conducting Research and Motivating Stewardship

PRWC prides itself in its research and restoration activities as well as its outreach and education initiatives. In a typical year PRWC conducts an average of 55 programs a year reaching upwards of 150,000 people with water conservation and environmental stewardship messages. Among PRWC's recent activities were presentations to Connecticut Watershed Conservation Network Conference and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) Regional Planners Commission, the Western CT Leadership Program, and the Waterbury Garden Club. Topics included River Smart, Towantic Power, Drought Planning, and the State Water Plan.

With the help of Rachael Caron, 2015 Dr. Marc J. Taylor summer intern, PRWC further extended its environmental stewardship message at the local Farmers' Markets and similar community events like Woodbury's Fall Fest and Southbury's Volunteer Fair. Caron, a Woodbury resident in her junior year at the College of William and Mary, also helped further our research and restoration efforts that include stream temperature monitoring, macroinvertebrate surveying, streamside buffer planting, and stormdrain marking.



Rachael Caron, 2015 summer intern, joined up with Southbury Public Works and UCONN's Cooperative Extension program for a release of weevils to control Mile-a-Minute vine at Ballantine Park in Southbury.

FirstLight Models Shoreline Erosion Prevention

This winter, Earth Tones Native Plant nursery installed an array of erosion prevention measures at the Shepaug Dam canoe portages in Southbury. A ribbon cutting and tour of the rain gardens, swales, and resurfaced trails is slated for Saturday April 30 at 9:00 AM. Attendees are invited to learn about these and other “RiverSmart” practices they can adopt at home. The event coincides with Housatonic Valley Association’s 10-day Source to Sound paddling trip.



Lisa Turoczi of Earth Tones points out a new rain garden at the Shepaug Dam canoe portage on Lake Lillinoah in Southbury.

Community Foundation Honors Collaborations

On August 20, 2015, Connecticut Community Foundation’s Trustees honored the two recipients of its first-ever Trustee Fund Award: River Smart CT, a collaboration of several local environmental organizations and land trusts (including PRWC and Housatonic Valley Association), and Almost Home Summer Camp, an educational and recreational summer program in Waterbury.



PRWC joined with River Smart CT partners in receiving first-time Trustee Fund Award from the Connecticut Community Foundation.

UConn “Water Credits” Research Project

On October 23, PRWC met with Professor Stephen Swallow and a team of researchers from UConn’s Agricultural and Resource Economics program and showed them around the watershed to help them get familiarized with the local hydro-geography. Pomperaug Watershed, with its abundant scientific data, will be a case example in this latest research project focusing on resource economics and water allocation.



PRWC and “Water Credits” reasearch team from UCONN toured the watershed last fall.

Southbury Receives FEMA Grant for Floodplain Restoration

At an August press conference, Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty and Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy joined the Town of Southbury in announcing receipt of a grant award made through FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to fund the acquisition and demolition of nine properties in Southbury in a flood-prone area of town.

Over the course of six months during 2011, each house suffered flooding above the first floor elevation, resulting in property damage, ground erosion, loss of personal belongings, and structural damage to the houses. The grant will allow for the houses to be removed and for the parcels to be designated as open space along the Pomperaug River.

Senator Murphy stated that he is “glad that Southbury can finally move forward with this project and help residents transition these dangerous, flood-prone properties along the Pomperaug River into a safe, public space for all residents to enjoy.” Senator Blumenthal underscored that, “[this is] the best course of action for public safety, the environment, and for taxpayers.”



State, federal, and local officials joined together in announcing a FEMA grant award given to the Town of Southbury to mitigate flood hazards; funds were used to buy out nine homes and get the homeowners out of harm’s way.

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Communities need clean water to be vibrant, healthy and sustainable. Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition's volunteers, Board and Advisory Council members, and staff are working on your behalf and those you care about, to ensure continued access to clean water. *We cannot do this critically important work without you.*

Please help us maximize your support by making an online donation to PRWC during Give Local on May 3-4. Your gift will be amplified by matching funds and bonus prize opportunities. Donate online at: www.pomperaug.org.

GIVE LOCAL
 Greater Waterbury &
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Presented by:
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Volunteers in Action

Last summer and fall, 500 stormdrain markers were installed by volunteers like 6 year old, Brody Dugas (below) of Southbury. Will you help us with the next 500 markers this season?



In September, volunteers joined PRWC for its 10th Annual Macroinvertebrate Survey. The focus of this project is to help the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection document high quality streams throughout the state. A special "Gettin' Buggy" kids program (above) was added as part of the activities this year.

PRWC Signs Grant Contract with State

In March 2016, PRWC signed a grant contract with the State of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection that awards PRWC with approximately \$52,000 to be used to update its Watershed Management Plan. The Plan aims to develop site specific plans for remediating stream pollutants like bacteria and restoring instream habitat.



Carol Haskins and Len DeJong, PRWC staff, and Susan Peterson from CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection look on while John Lacadie, PRWC Secretary, and Vince McDermott, PRWC Chairman, sign a grant contract with the State of CT.

Thank you to our generous newsletter sponsor!



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