

WATERSHED NEWS

Finding ways to keep our water pure and plentiful

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Spring 2015

Water Resource Advocate in Power Plant Application Review

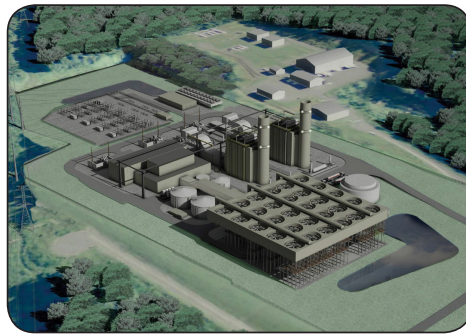
PRWC has been an active participant in advocating for the protection of our watershed resources, including drinking water supplies and in-stream aquatic health. We are a designated “party to the proceedings” for the application to construct a 785 mega-watt dual-fueled combined cycle electric generating facility in the Town of Oxford. The Connecticut Siting Council is the governing entity overseeing review of the application by Towantic Energy, LLC to construct the power plant.

While the site for the proposed construction is outside the geographic boundary of our watershed, the required water demands for operating the facility are proposed to be supplied by water resources within the Pomperaug Watershed. The water demands for the facility can vary greatly depending on the type of fuel used to power the plant, the ambient air temperature, and directives by ISO New England.

In reviewing those water demands and referencing research conducted by PRWC and its partners, PRWC has determined that there is potential risk to both water supply availability and critical river flows needed to protect aquatic health. PRWC represented its position by submitting written testimonies and in cross examinations during the Siting Council’s proceedings. We also engaged directly in meetings with Towantic Energy. This process allowed PRWC to be a “voice at the table” representing the Pomperaug River and Aquifer.

PRWC has requested that the Siting Council consider, among other items, the following three key elements related to water supply and river protection in making its decision on the application: (1) an existing water supply interconnection agreement that brings supplemental water from another source into the Pomperaug watershed must be renewed; (2) during periods of drought or other events that cause water use restrictions, the power plant should be subject to use restrictions so as not to unfairly burden other water users; (3) a requirement for an approval of the application should be a comprehensive, measurable and enforceable water management plan for the facility. Should the Siting Council approve of the application and require a water management plan, PRWC has offered its assistance to review and comment on the plan.

To learn more of PRWC’s engagement with the application and for copies of our testimony, please visit www.pomperaug.org or visit the Siting Council website at www.ct.gov/csc/ and search for Docket 192B. A decision from the Siting Council is anticipated in May.



Artistic rendering of the electric generating facility CPV Towantic Energy, LLC has proposed for construction in Oxford, CT.

Macroinvertebrate Survey Volunteers Set State Record

At the end of March, PRWC learned that its volunteers set a record in the statewide volunteer effort to document healthy streams. As part of the “River Bioassessment by Volunteers Program” overseen by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Coalition volunteers surveyed aquatic macroinvertebrates (“river bugs”) as a measure of stream health. Some bugs are very sensitive to pollution in their environment, so finding them is good. Finding at least four of these “most wanted” bugs is a strong indication of a very healthy river. PRWC volunteers found 11(!) of the most wanted, pollution sensitive river bugs in Good Hill Brook in Woodbury. They found more most wanted bugs than ever documented by volunteers in the 16 years of the state-wide program. That’s pretty cool!



Ryan and David Laird of New Milford surveyed Good Hill Brook at Grassy Hill Road in Woodbury in September 2014.

Please know that while this result shows that this is a very healthy stream, we cannot claim that Good Hill Brook is the healthiest stream in Connecticut. Macroinvertebrates are just one measure of stream health. We can however say that Good Hill Brook has to be up there in the list for being one of the most biodiverse! Please help us keep it that way! Visit www.riversmartct.org to learn how to do your part. For complete survey results, visit www.ct.gov/deep/rbv.

POMPERAUG RIVER



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The Pomperaug Watershed

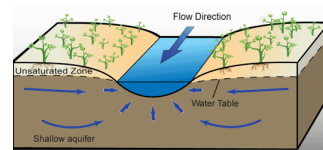
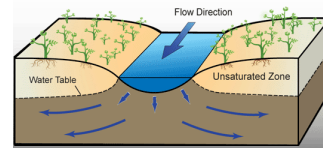


South Brook Removed from State's Impaired Waters List

Readers may recall that PRWC submitted comments on the draft copy of Connecticut's biannual Water Quality Report to Congress, which was released in August 2014. When responses to the public comments and the final report were released in December, PRWC was pleased to note that South Brook in Woodbury had been removed from the list of impaired streams. This stream had been listed as impaired in the "Aquatic Life Support" category, which, in the report, was attributed to "Flow Regime Alterations."

PRWC's comments provided evidence from the United States Geological Survey's Precipitation Runoff Modeling Study that this was a naturally existing condition. The underlying geology causes South Brook to "lose" water to the ground because the water table sits lower than the bottom of the stream (most rivers "gain" water from the ground). Because this condition is not a correctable, man-made alteration to the stream, it was removed from the impaired waters list. PRWC is developing a Watershed Based Plan to identify actions necessary to restore conditions in other impaired stream sections to a "swimmable" and "fishable" status.

The final 2014 Water Quality Report to Congress is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/ctdeep303d>.



(Image source: Geoscience Australia, www.ga.gov.au)

Differing in their proximity to the water table, "losing streams" drain water into the ground (top) while "gaining streams" are supported by groundwater (bottom).

Trout Fishing Season is Open Statewide

The opening of the trout fishing season in Connecticut was moved up a week this year, making a lot of people happy! Fishermen (and women and children) set to the streams on Saturday April 11th to cast their lines into the Pomperaug River with great success. And it's no surprise. The Pomperaug River is a trophy trout stream that is well stock by Connecticut Fish and Wildlife with brown, rainbow, and brook trout. Plus, there are a number of tributaries that support wild brook trout populations. Just ask outreach director Carol Haskins where they are. She knows; and she might just share this knowledge if you are extra nice and can help her catch one of those wild brookies!



Fishermen lined the banks of the Pomperaug River at Three Rivers Park in Woodbury on Opening Day of trout fishing season.

Planning to fish in the Pomperaug Watershed? Here are a few things to remember:

- Get or renew your fishing license and carry it with you.
- Respect private property as well as public areas.
- Be safe! If you go out alone, please tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.
- The creel limit for trout in the Pomperaug Watershed is two trout per day; there is no size limit.
- Pick up after yourself! Keep fishing areas free of litter so the next angler can enjoy the spots as much as you did.
- Show us your beautiful fish! Share your pictures on Facebook or Instagram using #PomperaugFishing2015 or email them to outreach@pomperaug.org.

Nonnewaug Students Complete Community Conservation Projects

Over the past year, PRWC and Audubon at Bent of the River (BOTR) have been working with Joshua Goldwag and Maureen McCarthy – both juniors from Nonnewaug High School – on community conservation projects as part of their participation in UCONN's Natural Resource Conservation Academy (NRCA). They were among 22 students from across the state to participate in the NRCA program this year, which engages high school students in land use and natural resource conservation.

The NRCA program begins with a week-long, summer field experience at UCONN, led by assistant extension educator Laura Cisneros, in which students are exposed to a wide range of topics about the environment including units on climate, water, forestry, soil, fish and wildlife, landscape ecology, and habitat protection. Upon completing the field experience, students are challenged to go back to their communities and work with a community partner to develop a service project that will help the environment. After six months of hard work, the students present posters on their projects at the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources held at UCONN in March; the students are trying to win one of the three Horace C. Eriksson Forestry Scholarships, which range from \$2,000 to \$8,000. At this time, all of the students are recognized for their participation in the program and graduate to become Connecticut Conservation Ambassadors.

Working with PRWC and BOTR, Goldwag and McCarthy took on projects that helped the organizations meet their conservation goals. Goldwag's project to study a local bluebird habitat sought to determine whether the distance of bluebird nesting boxes from trails affects nesting success. He analyzed data previously collected by Audubon and gathered additional data to answer his research question. The results showed no correlation at all. "By doing a project like this," says Goldwag, "sometimes you learn as much when your hypothesis proves to be wrong as when it proves to be right."

Leslie Kane, center director at BOTR, said, "Josh's project was important in helping us answer a question that many of us had been wondering about. We had the data, but hadn't had the chance to review it. With him on our team, we were able to do so."

McCarthy's outstanding conservation project landed her a first-place scholarship prize of \$8,000, applicable should she attend UCONN. She focused efforts on evaluating and promoting the benefits of large woody debris that was installed in a section of the Pomperaug River where it flows through the Audubon property in 2012. Supplementing fish survey data previously collected in the project area, McCarthy used wildlife cameras to further document how fish and wildlife are using these structures. She went on to incorporate her video footage into an educational video about the importance of woody debris in streams and rivers. The video can be found on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wUgTLYo3yY>. McCarthy also created an informational brochure that is available at the Audubon at Bent of the River and in local libraries.

"Maureen was a tremendous asset in highlighting the recent restoration effort and raising awareness about the benefits of woody debris in streams and rivers," says PRWC outreach director Carol Haskins. "We could not have done this without her."

To learn more about this year's student conservation projects or the NRCA program, visit <http://nrca.uconn.edu>.



Josh Goldwag and Maureen McCarthy were recognized for their outstanding community conservation projects done through UCONN's Natural Resource Conservation Academy program.

The Scene on the River: Annual Benefit

Come gather with friends and neighbors at Woodbury's Mill House Antiques and Gardens on Saturday June 13th to celebrate PRWC's mission and accomplishments at The Scene on the River: Annual Benefit. The event will feature performances by State Troubadour Kristen Graves, Femina Melodia, Bower-Richardson Sisters of Song and Dance, and Garden Fairy Rachel Miller. Guests will enjoy fine food and wine, as well as silent and live auctions in the beautiful Mill House gardens alongside the Nonnewaug River.

We are delighted to have Connecticut Public Radio's popular host and executive producer Faith Middleton return as our Honorary Chair. Faith, a two-time winner of the Peabody Award and of other distinguished honors, has been an outstanding supporter of PRWC and passionately shares our dedication to the environment.

Be part of "The Scene." Tickets (\$75 per person) are available now and we're actively seeking sponsors (\$50 and up), auction items, and volunteers to make this event a great success. Call 203-263-0076 or visit www.pomperaug.org for more information. Rain date is June 14th.



The Scene on the River

Saturday June 13, 2015 from 4:30 to 7:30 PM
Mill House Antiques & Gardens, Woodbury CT

POMPERAUG RIVER WATERSHED COALITION, INC.

39 Sherman Hill Road, C103

Woodbury, CT 06798

Email: info@pomperaug.org

Non-Profit Organization

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Southbury, CT 06488

Help Us Safeguard Water Resources for Generations

A healthy, vibrant, and sustainable community needs clean water. PRWC's volunteers, as well as members of our Board, Advisory Council, and staff are working on the behalf of you and those you care about to ensure continued access to clean water.

We know you support our goals. Please help us maximize your support by making an online donation to PRWC during Give Local on May 5-6. Your gift will be amplified by matching funds and bonus prize opportunities. Donate online at: www.pomperaug.org.

GIVE LOCAL
Greater Waterbury &
Litchfield Hills!
May 5 - 6, 2015

Presented by:
Connecticut Community Foundation

Cleaning Up Trash and Marking Stormdrains in Woodbury

On April 11, PRWC teamed up with the Woodbury Conservation Commission for its biannual town-wide clean-up. Volunteers gathered at Hollow Park Pavilion to get their road assignments, gloves, safety vests, garbage bags, and stormdrain markers (small signs to remind people storm drains flow to nearby waterways, so please no dumping). Altogether, more than 80 volunteers cleaned up and installed 125 stormdrain markers along 20 roadways. After the clean-up, volunteers were treated to Dick Leavenworth's famous chili and an opportunity to warm up around the charcoal grill where clean-up organizer Jeff Sherman cooked hot dogs for everyone.



Boy Scouts from Troop 54 in Woodbury gear up to collect trash under bridges. Their best find of the day was a soggy \$100 bill!

Thank you to everyone who participated this spring! If you missed it, you can always clean up along your own roadside or join the Conservation Commission in October for the Fall Clean Up event.

Streambank Restoration Continues at Cedarland Park in Southbury



Last summer, volunteers began work on a project to restore the streamside buffer along Spring Brook, which flows through Cedarland Park into the Pomperaug River in Southbury. This season, PRWC will continue to remove invasive plants and plant native species along the brook. Work will also begin on stabilizing and revegetating the bank of the Pomperaug River at the edge of the park.

If you would like to volunteer to help with this project, please contact us at outreach@pomperaug.org. We will need help with weeding, watering, and planting all summer long. For additional information about this project, visit www.pomperaug.org.

Thank you to our generous newsletter sponsor!



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