



Northfield Riverbank Views

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Volume 6 No. 1

Volunteers needed to update the 2008 Stream Team Reports

In 2008, GNWA members and friends conducted a Shoreline Survey Report and Action Plan of Mill Brook, Bennett Brook, Miller's Brook and Pauchaug Brook with help from the Riverways Program of the Mass Department of Fish and Game. Thirty five volunteers, citizens of Northfield, Bernardston, and Orange, including PVRs students and faculty, were involved in the survey and in making recommendations for short term and long term actions/goals. The teams considered water quality, education and outreach, recreation and access, land protection, habitat and wildlife.

Five years later, it's time to get out and update our findings. Several action items have been addressed by the town and there may be new issues to tackle. The Northfield Open Space Committee has offered to disseminate the Stream Team Reports as part of the new Open Space and Recreation Report Action Plan recently approved by the State.

We need your help! Please contact Jenny Tufts at jentufts@comcast.net or 498-2202 with offers to join the 2013 Stream Teams in your neighborhood. This is a fun and very rewarding activity that will ensure the health of our watershed in a very direct way! And read on for other important volunteer activities.

King Philip's Hill

Every year there is winter debris to clean up on the trails around town, including the trail on King Philip's Hill. Volunteers are needed to help maintain this trail. There are signs to repair and a picnic table to move! Sadly, one of the benches GNWA members installed in 2008 for walkers to rest and view the river was pushed over the steep embankment. It does take an ongoing commitment to keep this trail passable and user-friendly! The Northfield Trails Association has offered to help with this work but we can always use more hands. If you can help contact jentufts@comcast.net.



Water Monitoring Project

Starting in late May a team of GNWA members will be collecting samples of river water from the Pauchaug State Boat Ramp on a biweekly basis as part of the Connecticut River Watershed Council's bacteria monitoring project. Samples are

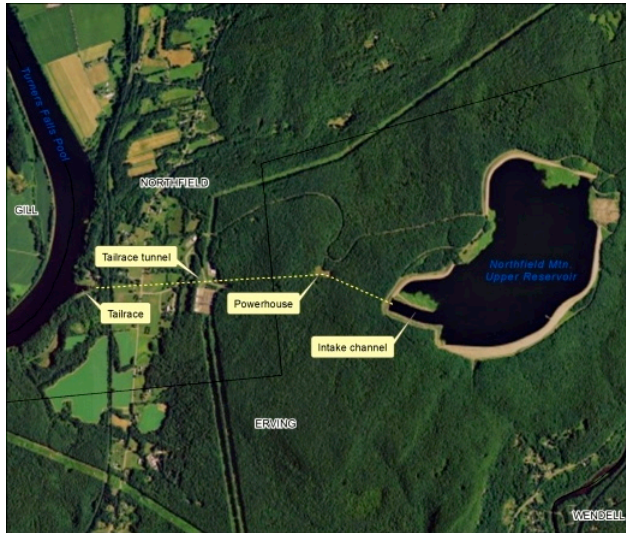


CRWC Water Sampling Turners Falls

tested primarily for E. coli bacteria and results are posted at a new website (<http://connecticutriver.us/site/content/sites-list>) designed to help recreational users determine whether it is safe to swim or boat on the CT River. The website utilizes a color coded system to alert people on the levels of unsafe bacteria which could potentially make you ill. There is an expense associated with this effort. If this is work you want GNWA to continue please consider a specially earmarked donation.

Relicensing of Northfield Pumped Storage Project

Excerpts from a letter to the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission dated January 30, 2013 and submitted in person by Jennifer Tufts, GNWA President at a public hearing concerning the Application for relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project:



The river and its tributaries have defined this town as sources of power, transportation, boating and swimming, river views, wildlife and game, not to mention valuable sources of water and food. Water quality must be a priority of the corporations that harvest water for power generation. We call for a good faith sharing of the profits from hydroelectric power generation to be reinvested locally to fund programs to modernize sewage treatment plants and stop the preventable dumping of pollutants into the river... This is exactly the time for bold planning and investment in the future of the river. Therefore, GNWA supports both the Connecticut River Watershed Council and the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee in the call for serious studies on the feasibility for a closed

loop reservoir system (alternative lower reservoir) and other mitigating systems that will cause less disruption to the natural flow of the Connecticut River and protect its fertile floodplains from erosion or pollution. Large infrastructure projects have served this country well in the past and must not be ruled out as solutions to the problems of today. . . We call upon regulators to require a state of the art and thorough Environmental Impact Study as a basis for this relicensing. Anything less is unacceptable to our members. Our concerns include the effects of the dams, constant but unpredictable water fluctuation, barriers to migratory and resident fish as well as warming of the river from VT Yankee Nuclear Power Facility which is dependent on Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project as a consumer for its electric power generation. Our riverbanks provide essential habitat for scores of aquatic species. Specifically, we would like to see a more vigorous effort from First Light Hydro Generating Company and TransCanada Hydro Northeast to improve the Turners Falls fish ladder and canal and the conditions in the river that will benefit spawning habits of shad and other native species. . . . the lack of predictability in the draw down of water by the pump station and heavy silt are a major impediment to boating at the Northfield Pauchaug Boat Ramp. GNWA would like to see a deepening commitment to recreation including increased funding and development of riverside trails and additional boat launches. . . GNWA views this scoping and relicensing process as an opportunity to plan for a better quality of life along the Connecticut River over the next fifty years. Provisions will need to be in place to deal with increasingly severe weather events that are now the norm. Climate change threatens to challenge all of us in ways we can hardly imagine. It is impossible to predict the demands our residents may have for precious local natural resources as fuel costs climb and demand for food and water grows nationwide. Government and power suppliers will need to be more flexible in responding to changes at the local level. . . While we have the chance to speak to both the federal government and the utility companies - whose headquarters and personnel are often very removed from our town and our state - the public wants reassurance that management of these power systems will be responsive to local needs and concerns. We will be following these negotiations closely in the months and years ahead and urge the development of creative and responsible initiatives that will serve the public good well into the 21st Century.

CR Monitoring



GNWA is monitoring two town-held Conservation Restrictions (CR's) on Brush Mountain at the Town Forest and the Richardson property off of Alexander Hill Road. This is the second year that GNWA has assisted the Conservation Commission and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust with this responsibility for ensuring that the terms of the federal Forest Legacy Program CR's are respected. The Town Forest property at the top of Gulf Road is a valuable public resource for walking, hunting, snowmobiling, and general recreation. Also under the terms of the CR a Forest Stewardship Plan has been put in place to manage for a healthy forest which means a healthy watershed. Jenny Tufts and Mike Berry walked the property boundaries on April 13th in the snow (!) putting up new boundary signs and looking for any changes since last year's inspection. The good news was that there did not seem to be much more damage to the hemlocks from the steadily advancing woolly adelgid. The two heard a barred owl and noted the ongoing work of a prospective Eagle Scout who is staking out a scenic walking trail with the help of GNWA member, Bob Pasteris.

GNWA Calendar

Saturday May 4th

Invasives Workshop with Joan Deely
– 9:30 am at PVRs

Saturday, August 3rd

Paddle & Picnic on the Tufts' pond –
12:30 – 3:30 at 152 A Mt. Hermon
Station Rd (Sunday, August 4th
Rain Date)

September 2013

GNWA Annual Meeting (date and
location to be announced)



Think Globally--Act Locally

**Count me a friend of
The Greater Northfield
Watershed Association**

Name _____

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All dues/donations are
entirely tax deductible.

Please write check to:

**GNWA
P.O. Box 44
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My interests are:

- ___ Wildlife
- ___ Wetlands
- ___ Recreation
- ___ Land-use planning



Greater Northfield Watershed Association
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