

Parker River Clean Water Association

Newsletter

Fall 2012

PRCWA CANOE TRIP ENJOYED BY ALL

Over 40 kayakers and canoeists joined us in our annual boat trip on the Parker River in May. Great fun, great weather made this a very successful event! The one-way trip began off Middle Road near the Governor's Academy, meandered through the scenic salt marsh and ended at the historic site of the First Settlers Landing in the Old Town section of Newbury. PRCWA would like to thank the many volunteers who handled the logistics of caravanning cars to accessible boat loading points in Newbury. Special thanks to Yvonne Buswell, who scurried back and forth helping the boaters in the launch of boats, providing direction and refreshments to all those involved.



Buy Wood Locally

Due to the continued threat of the Asian Longhorned Beetle and the devastation that resulted to the forestry in the central part of the State, Mass officials are urging residents not to transport firewood from other locales. Please burn firewood where you buy it!





The Herring Gazette

All the News that is Fin To Print!

The year of 2012 may go down as a record year in Herring runs for those who have been keeping count through the depressing past decade here on the North Shore where yearly numbers have been in the few hundreds. On April 17, PRCWA volunteer fish-counters estimated over 2600 Herring passed over the counting board in one day off Central Street in Byfield! What brought this many Herring in from the sea to spawn this year? No one is quite sure. Some have speculated the unexpected results may have been caused by warmer ocean temperatures. Others have reasoned a shortened mid-water trawler season allowed a small opening for Herring to return in great numbers to spawn. Whatever the reason, we welcome back this fish that is vital to the economic and ecological needs of our region!

PRCWA Takes Part in Film Production - In association with Mystic River Watershed Association, PRCWA is taking part in a new documentary film production on the natural history and conservation efforts surrounding Herring, called "The Herring Dilemma." The documentary is the product of filmmaker, Shervin Arya of Illuminating Minds Media. Shervin spent the day filming shots on the Parker River with PRCWA members, who readily made canoes available to help in this effort. He came away greatly impressed by the beauty and tranquility of the Parker River. An impression shared by many of us in the area.

The MA Division of Marine Fisheries have stepped up efforts to monitor and restore the herring fishery on the Parker River. Major repairs are underway to fix a dilapidated weir under the Central Street bridge in Byfield, which may be causing an impediment to fish migration. Other plans include repairing fishway ladders and removal of beaver impoundments from Byfield to Georgetown, which will make it easier for Herring to make their upstream journey to spawn. Next year an electronic fish counter will be installed at the top of the fish ladder in Byfield to get a more accurate count. DMF plans on installing Passive Integrated Transponders or PIT tags on Herring to get a better understanding of their migration upstream. Thank you DMF staffers Brad Chase and new Newbury resident, Ben Gahagan for your roles in these restoration efforts!

More good news...The New England Fish Council approved Amendment 5 to the Fishery Management Plan. Congratulations to **Greg Wells and the Pew Trust** on their successful lobbying effort for the passage of this regulation that will limit bycatch and increase monitoring of River Herring on Industrial sized trawlers. PRCWA is a proud member of the Herring Alliance!



Around the Watershed

Kudos to PRCWA member Rich Lombard for installing 4 bluebird nests in the open meadows located in back of the West Street Athletic fields in Georgetown. The location is part of 220 acres of protected land managed by the Georgetown Water Department. Rich has been submitting data collected from nests located at Veasey Park in Groveland to the Cornell Ornithology Lab for many years as part of Cornell's NestWatch program for citizen scientists.

By finding and monitoring bird nests, NestWatch participants help scientists track the breeding success of birds across North America. Participants witness fascinating behaviors of birds at the nest and collect information on the location, habitat, bird species, number of eggs, and number of young. NestWatch has collected more than 100,000 nesting records. Combined with historic data, this information will help scientists address how birds are affected by large-scale changes such as global climate change, urbanization, and land use.



Rich reported 4 eggs from Bluebird's nest with a successful fledgling from the box. The nest box quickly transformed to a Tree Swallow nest, which produced another successful fledgling. Many thanks to Georgetown Water Superintendent, Glenn Smith who assisted in the installation of the nest boxes.



PRCWA ADDRESSES GULF OF MAINE INSTITUTE STUDENTS AT ADELYNROOD

On July 3rd PRCWA had the opportunity to speak to GOMI students about how the Adelynrood property in Byfield affects the surrounding watershed. Adelynrood is a retreat and conference center, located in a 9-acre peaceful wooded setting, owned and operated by The Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross.

GOMI team leader Dan Earle charged that youth need to understand that landscapes are not static, they change over time, and with careful observation they can be read like a book. If they get this, then they will have something to carry away and apply to future projects at their home sites.

PRCWA was joined by Newbury Town Planner, Martha Taylor and Sarah Haggerty from the Mass Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, who introduced the students to the BioMap 2 project. The youth seemed particularly interested in PRCWA's involvement with Blanding's Turtles and the procedure needed to document vernal pools and rare species. The discussion became a perfect segue into Sarah's information contained in BioMap 2. Martha brought plenty of maps and that gave the students a better understanding of the area. Overall, I feel the future looks bright with the caliber of students attending this conference.



Sarah Haggerty of MA Fish & Wildlife instructs students on BioMap 2

SCALA'S HAUNTED HOUSE IN SUPPORT OF TURTLE PROTECTION

One never knows who you are making an impression on, so we were surprised to learn last fall that a haunted house fundraiser was earmarking part of their proceeds to go towards our turtle research program. Lisa Scala of the Scala Art Center notified us that her son Sebastian knew of our work with the Blanding's Turtle restoration and wanted to help in some way. The Halloween party helped raise \$72 towards the effort of protecting this rare turtle in Georgetown. The funds were used to purchase turtle bait (canned sardines in soy bean oil) for trapping adult Blanding's this past spring. Way to go Sebastian!



Nightmare on Main St. Haunted House & Party!



Nightmare on Main St.

Haunted House & Halloween Party

at the Scala Art Center 28 West Main St. Georgetown MA 01833

Friday October 28th
5-7 Haunted House
7-9 Halloween Party

Come and visit Nightmare on Main St. if you dare!
Admission is \$3.00, recommended for ages 10 & up. Parental guidance suggested for under 10 years old.
Refreshments and fun!

Sponsored by Kids Art Club

Part of the proceeds will go to saving the endangered Blanding Turtles
Have a Happy Halloween!



2011 Haunted House Flyer

New Book on Sale by former Triton School Teacher!

PRCWA member and Middleton Stream Team Leader, Pike Messenger has published a book on his recollections of the Ipswich and Parker Rivers. Part of the proceeds from the sale of the book will help fund PRCWA programs. Visit our website for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Essex National Trails & Sails Two Weekends of Walks and Water

Birding Little River Nature Trail

Hosted by Parker River Clean Water Association

Saturday, September 22
@ 8:30 AM



Sat 09-22 8:30am-11:30am

Bird the Little River Nature Trail with Sue McGrath of Newburyport Birders. Adults only, no pets. The walk is 1 mile of easy terrain between Storey Avenue and Hale Street in Newburyport. Park and meet across the street from the trailhead at the Park and Ride Bus Stop.

Event capacity: 12. **Special Instructions:** Dress: weather appropriate and bring comfortable shoes, binoculars, bird guide, and drinking water. Heavy rain will cancel. Visit [Website](#)



Little River Nature Trail Walk

Hosted by Parker River Clean Water Association

Saturday, September 29
@ 8:30 AM



Sat 09-29 8:30am-11:30am

Walk the Little River Nature Trail with naturalist and registered Maine Guide Bob Metcalfe of New England Discovery. Family friendly, children over 6 with an adult OK. 1 mile easy terrain between Storey Avenue and Hale Street in Newburyport. No pets. **Event**

capacity: 20. **Special Instructions:** Dress appropriately, comfortable shoes, drinking water; a 1 mile walk over easy terrain - heavy rain will cancel. Visit [Website](#)



90 Storey Avenue
Newburyport 01950
978-462-2551

Directions: I-95 to Exit 57/Rte 113 E. (Note the large brown Little River Nature Trail sign 100 yards off the exit ramp on the right of Storey Ave/Rte 113E). Please park across the street at the Park and Ride lot, then walk to trail sign.

GEORGETOWN DAYS!!!

Come visit our tent during the Georgetown Days celebration, Saturday September 22nd at the American Legion Park in Georgetown from 2 – 7 PM. Lots of fun events for all!

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Researchers and volunteers recently released 61 Blanding's Turtle hatchlings from protected nests in our watershed. A volunteer from Georgetown helping with the release offered she understands the need to protect rare species and once documented a rare plant, the Common Bur-reed on Pentucket Pond. But alas, she sees no evidence of its existence today. Upon checking the NHESP website I found there are only 12 documentations of rare species located in Georgetown, some last reported in the 1800's.

The continued loss of rare species is not just limited to our area, but it is also a national problem. PRCWA feels it plays a small, but necessary part by protecting the Blanding's Turtle in our region. Turtles have been around since the age of the dinosaurs, but habitat fragmentation jeopardizes their survival. The Blanding's turtle is considered "threatened" under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), but petitions are ongoing in other states to have the species placed under the Federal ESA.

This leads me into talking about bill S. 1854 filed on behalf of Mr. William Pepin of Hampden County to undermine the MA Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP). Many enviros already feel MESA has been undermined enough. Currently, there are 17 exemptions to MESA and very rarely does a "taking" of rare species occur in habitat deemed Priority.

Mr. Pepin who manages a TV station in Springfield, MA is still determined to gut regulations filed under MESA because of his lost appeals in court under the Act. He has plenty of legislative sponsors willing to back him. He likens the staff at NHESP to Mafioso because of his refusal to adhere to mitigation over his property development. Mitigation to impacts from development is common in local permitting, but Mr. Pepin wants to throttle regulation meant to protect rare species at the State level with the only agency that can do so.

The bill was tabled during this last legislative session, but sponsors like Representative Gale Candaras are adamant about bringing back a similar bill in the next legislative session. Her moral outrage would be somewhat believable if it wasn't for the \$1300 Mr. Pepin has donated to her campaign coffers over the past several years.

PRCWA volunteers have testified on Beacon Hill in the past two years against this bill and will probably do so again. We have heard the arguments in favor of MESA, such as how some rare plants may provide the key to curing cancer or the cultural significance of rare wildlife to our heritage. My thought is ...if a higher being put people on earth to protect things that for unnatural reasons have trouble protecting themselves, could there be a better purpose for our existence?

– George Comiskey

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Parker River Currents

Membership Dues – It's That time!

Yes, it IS TIME to RENEW your membership, or JOIN the Parker River Clean Water Association. You are on our mailing list because we believe that you are interested in what we are doing – and have participated with us in some of our programs – or have attended one of our annual meetings. Please use the form below to return with your contribution - - and THANKS!

Please mail to: PRCWA, PO Box 798, Byfield, MA 01922

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

— \$15 Individual

— \$25 Family:

— #Adults, #Children_

— \$50 Supporting

— \$100 Contributing

— \$250 Sponsor

— \$500 Patron

— \$1,000 Benefactor