



inside this issue: Sami Izzo Award • Spring Tree Planting • New Website Launch
Watershed News • Green Up Event

CURRENTS

working together for the health of the white river watershed

spring 2007

mission

The White River Partnership (WRP) brings together people and local communities to improve the long-term health of the White River watershed.

contact us

White River Partnership
99 Ranger Road
Rochester, VT 05767
phone: (802) 767-4600

Fax: (802) 767-4777

email: info@whiteriverpartnership.org

web: www.whiteriverpartnership.org

newsletter design: Suzanne Church,
Blue Door Communications

staff

Mary Russ, Executive Director

board of directors

Ron Rhodes, President, South Pomfret

Walter Hastings, Vice President, South Royalton

Peter Leonard, Treasurer, Randolph

Abby Armstrong, Secretary, Sharon

Josh Hanford, Rochester

Geo Honigford, South Royalton

Becky Hooper, West Hartford

Carl Russell, Bethel-Gilead

Report from the ED

—Mary Russ, Executive Director



Betsy Shands (middle)

In 2006 the WRP celebrated 10 years of helping local communities balance the cultural, economic and environmental health of the White River watershed. Successes include planting over 14 miles of trees along the river; restoring more than 6 miles of eroding streambanks and unstable riverbeds; partnering with nearly 50 agencies, organizations, towns, and schools; and receiving local and national recognition for our on-the-ground programs.

In 2007 the WRP plans to build on this decade of success by evaluating watershed health through our Water Quality

Monitoring Program; restoring wildlife habitat through our Trees for Streams Program; engaging communities in watershed restoration planning through our Corridor Planning Program; and raising awareness about watershed issues through our Outreach, Education, and Stewardship Programs. So far in 2007, we have launched a new website; drafted a new mission statement; and coordinated an ongoing education series. You will find more information about these initiatives as well as our ongoing programs in the following pages and on our new website.

2007 has also brought some staffing changes to WRP central. In February, Betsy Shands took a new job as the School Programs Manager at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS). As a WRP volunteer since 2001, Betsy was a member of the original Board of Directors and a water quality monitor. As Outreach Coordinator, Betsy managed the Outreach and Education program and coordinated both the Trees for Streams and Water Quality Monitoring programs. Although we will miss Betsy's enthusiasm and dedication, we wish her well and look forward to partnering with her and VINS in the future!

We have enlisted help from a number of folks to continue Betsy's work, including Mike Bald, who will manage the 2007 Trees for Streams program, and Tammy Henry, who is conducting a landowner outreach campaign this spring. In addition, Kathy and Peter Leonard are volunteering regularly to maintain the membership database. For more information about these super-workers, as well as our 3 new Board members, see the *New Faces at the WRP* article on our website.

As we prepare ourselves for the next 10 years of good work, it is clear that our success as an organization is a direct result of our members' involvement and strong commitment. So, whether you renew your membership, attend an education event, plant a tree, or join the Board, we hope you will continue to stay involved. We look forward to seeing you in 2007! ●●

calendar

Monthly Work Group Meetings:

First Tuesday: Forestry Work Group, 7pm at Whitcomb High School in Bethel

Second Wednesday: Upper River Stream Team, 6pm at Ranger Station in Rochester

Second Thursday: Board of Directors, 7pm at Fish Hatchery in Bethel

Last Wednesday: Down Stream Team, 7pm at Old Sharon Academy in Sharon

Upcoming Events and Volunteer Opportunities:

April–May: Plant a tree. Our Trees for Streams Program includes over a dozen opportunities to plant trees throughout the watershed in late-April and early-May. Visit the website for specific dates, times, and locations.

May 6: Green Up event, membership meeting, and BBQ. Help the WRP clean up the mouth of the Third Branch at Peavine Park in Bethel from 1:00 – 3:00. At 3:00, members will vote on proposed amendments to the current WRP bylaws. Afterward, everyone is invited to stay for a BBQ until 5:00 — food will be provided. Visit the website for event details.

June 2: Non-Native Invasive Plant ID Walk. Join the DST for a walkabout in the Royalton area to learn more about identifying and eradicating non-native invasive plant species, including Japanese knotweed, chervil, garlic mustard, giant hogweed, and more. Visit the website for event details.

June–August: Monitor water quality. Since 2001, WRP volunteers have monitored water quality at over 20 sites along the White River and its tributaries. If you are interested in helping us with the 2007 monitoring season, please contact us!

Contact the WRP at (802) 767-4600 or visit the website at www.whiteriverpartnership.org for more information about these opportunities.

Help us update our mailing database!

For some time, we have been sending you our biannual newsletter. Our goal is to keep you informed of our activities, but not to burden you with mail that you would rather not receive. To ensure that our funds for printing, postage, and staff time are spent efficiently, we need your help! **Should you wish to continue receiving our newsletter, kindly return the enclosed postcard by April 30.** Thank you!

2006 Sami Izzo Award



Dan McKinley and Mary Russ

In 2006, the WRP presented the Sami Izzo Award to Dan McKinley. The award is given to individuals in recognition of their significant contributions to the WRP and our community. Sami Izzo

was a tireless, committed, and enthusiastic supporter of the WRP. She was the first chair of the Down Stream Team and served on the Executive, Steering, and Outreach committees of the WRP Board of Directors. She not only contributed her thoughts, but also energized us with her can-do attitude that helped us see that doing more was possible.

Dan's contributions to the WRP are significant. A fisheries biologist with the Green Mountain National Forest in Rochester, Dan has been involved with the WRP since its inception. Dan served on the first Board of Directors and from 2000 through 2005 was the WRP Projects Manager. Since 2005, Dan has continued this work on a volunteer basis — making site visits; designing restoration projects; writing permits; and overseeing project implementation. In addition, Dan is an active volunteer with the Upper River Stream Team.

According to Board member Geo Honigford, Dan's energy and enthusiasm exemplify Sami's example: "I can think of no one better that fits into Sami's example and has enhanced the health of the White River as much as our honoree Dan McKinley. Dan is all of what Sami was: full of energy, lively, dependable, and fun. He is a pure joy to work with and his energy for and love of the White River help motivate others to try a little harder. Dan has taught the Partnership members and citizens of the White River valley more about how rivers work than any other person on the planet. He truly is Mister White River." Thank you, Dan, and congratulations! ●●

NEW WRP Website Is Launched!

Since 2006, the WRP has been working with Blue Door Communications and Hypsometry to redesign our website — and now you can see the results online! In addition to highlighting information about our on-the-ground work, the new website allows us to keep you up-to-date on all of our upcoming events, projects, and programs. Visit the

site to learn more about our ongoing Education Series; to get directions to the next Forestry Work Group tour; or to see *New Faces at the WRP*. Check it out!

Go to:

www.whiteriverpartnership.org



Watershed News

Short Hills Restoration Project

During Fall 2006, work began on the Short Hills Restoration Project (Project) in Granville. Funded by grants from the Fish America Foundation, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, and the Conservation

We hope you'll help us plant trees this spring and witness how the river can restore itself naturally

Reserve Enhancement Program, the Project goal is to protect the stream corridor — based on its 400-foot-wide meander belt width — for nearly half a mile, deploying a “passive” geomorphic-based restoration strategy.

The Project — the WRP's first “passive” geomorphic restoration effort — employs three steps. In September, the WRP and its partners stabilized the upstream-most meander bend using “fish-friendly” “J-hook” log vanes. Afterward the National Wildlife Federation's Ryan Case organized students from the Green Mountain Valley School and volunteers from the Upper River Stream Team to harvest and plant native willows along the bank to prevent erosion. This spring, the WRP will be planting nearly 2,200 native trees and shrubs to finish the Project — as a result, the site is the focus of the 2007 Trees for Streams program! We hope you'll help us plant trees this spring and witness how the river can restore itself naturally, given the opportunity and room to do so.

The WRP is implementing the Project in partnership with the Short Hills Ski Club, the VT Agency of Agriculture, the VT River Management Program, the U.S. Forest Service, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Corridor Planning on Ayers Brook

In December 2006, the WRP hosted a kick-off public meeting for the Ayers Brook Corridor Planning Project (Project). Funded by a grant from the UVCF's Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund, the Project goal is to work with the communities of Brookfield, Braintree, and Randolph to develop a comprehensive management plan that will effectively restore Ayers Brook.

Ayers Brook is the focus of a corridor planning effort because 4 years of water quality monitoring data show elevated *E.coli*, temperature, and sediment. In addition, stream geomorphic assessments show that Ayers Brook is in the process of widening, which results in severely eroding banks. Potential solutions to these problems include restoring streamside vegetation; replacing under-sized culverts and bridges; and conserving the river corridor — the river, its banks, and the flood plain on each side — to reduce future conflicts.

The public meeting was designed to educate the community about the Project and to encourage local involvement. Since December, the WRP and its partners have been meeting with individual landowners to identify opportunities to improve the stability of Ayers Brook on their properties. The projects identified will be the basis of a comprehensive management plan, which the WRP and its partners, including the VT Water Quality Division, the VT Agency of Agriculture, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Two Rivers

Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, and Bear Creek Environmental, will work together to implement.

Stewardship Group Updates

The WRP has three active stewardship groups: the Down Stream Team, the Forestry Work Group, and the Upper River Stream Team. These groups of volunteers — organized by sub-watershed or topic — initiate activities in their own communities to improve watershed health. Here's what they have been up to recently:

The **Down Stream Team (DST)** is soliciting local support for a project at the mouth of Broad Brook in Sharon. The project will raise the elevation of the water just below the River Road culvert to improve fish passage. In addition the DST is collaborating with the Central Vermont Invasive Plant Coalition to organize a non-native invasive plant identification walkabout in the Royalton area in June.

For the past year and a half, the **Forestry Work Group (FWG)** has coordinated a forest tour series designed to highlight various aspects of land use in the watershed. In Fall 2006, the FWG organized tours in Randolph Center and Bethel to spotlight various forestry management techniques that enhance recreation and wildlife respectively. Going forward, the FWG is developing a publication for watershed residents, which presents the lessons learned during the series.

The **Upper River Stream Team (URST)** is collaborating with the VT River Conservancy, the VT Land Trust, Redstart Forestry and others to identify the resources available in the upper White River valley to conserve farmland along the river. The URST plans to develop a brochure for upper White River valley residents, which highlights these resources. ● ●



Get Involved!

The WRP is a nationally recognized and award-winning watershed organization because of the involvement and strong commitment of our devoted community members and partners. We depend on hundreds of volunteers each year to accomplish much of our important work. Here are a few ways that you too can get involved with the WRP this year — no experience necessary!

- Volunteer in the office — We need help processing bulk mailings on an as-needed basis.
- Become a town liaison — We are recruiting volunteers to distribute newsletters and other outreach materials around their towns as well as to communicate about WRP programs and events with their town governments.
- Join a stewardship group — Get involved in your “sub-watershed” by joining a local Stream Team or working group.

To find out more about how you can get involved and support the work of the WRP, please call us at (802) 767-4600 or email info@whiteriverpartnership.org.

Join the White River Partnership

The WRP depends on contributions to support our good work in the watershed. Please become a member today by making a tax-deductible donation.

Yes, I would like to join the WRP. Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to the “White River Partnership” and mail to: 99 Ranger Road, Rochester, VT 05767.

Green Up Event

Since 1970, Green Up Day has brought Vermonters together to clean up roadside litter. This year, the WRP has organized a Green Up event on May 6 to clean up the White River — at Peavine Park in Bethel. Following the clean up, the WRP is convening a general membership meeting to vote on a series of bylaws amendments. Afterward, the WRP will be hosting a BBQ to round out a day of work and fun. **For complete details, see the “Upcoming Events” notice on page 2.**

The WRP bylaws set forth a wide range of details relating to our organization’s governance. The current bylaws were drafted in 2001, thus some of this information has become outdated. The proposed amendments update the bylaws to reflect our current operating status and include a new mission statement: **“bringing together people and local communities to improve the long-term health of the White River and its watershed.”** For a complete copy of the proposed bylaws amendments, please call (802) 767-4600 or email info@whiteriverpartnership.org. ●●

99 Ranger Road
Rochester, VT 05767

working together for the health of the white river watershed



Non-profit Organization
POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 5
Rochester, VT 05767