



Two River Access Points Improved by Con Edison

Access facilities to the Deerfield River at Gardners Falls (picture above) and Wilcox Hollow (below) have recently been improved by Consolidated Edison Co, present owner of the Gardners Falls Dam and hydroelectric plant.

Under the re-licensing of the Deerfield River power dams in the 1990s, Northeast Utilities (the owner at that time) agreed to

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Deerfield River Watershed Open Space Forum

Saturday, November 16, 2002
Mohawk Trail Regional High School

Program:

8:30 – 9 AM: Registration

9:00 Welcome and Today's Agenda:

Chris Duerring, EOEA Team leader

Gisela Walker, DRWA President

9:10 Why do we care? Regional open space planning to guide development in our landscape, protect wildlife, biodiversity, and water quality: Scott Jackson, Wildlife Biologist from UMass Extension

9:45 Present land protection efforts in the watershed:

EOEA funding for Dodson Associates and the COG: goals and benefits to the towns; degrees of fragmentation in the watershed; tie in with the Land Trust : Chris Duerring,

10:00 Open Space Planning in Three Dimensions

Results of an inventory of natural, cultural and recreational resources for a five-town area of the Deerfield Watershed: Peter Flinker, Principal with Dodson Associates.

10:30 15 min. break

10:45 - 11:45: What do YOU care about?

Attendees separate by interest to discuss and annotate on GIS maps the places and problems they most care about.

Natural resources: Bill Labich

Cultural resources: Sarah LaCour

Recreational Resources: Peter Flinker

11:45 – 12:00 Opportunities for the future: How your input will be used in the watershed-wide, open-space plan.

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch , Exhibits, DRWA Annual Meeting.

Concurrent sessions: Taking Action

1.00 – 2.30: Town and Regional Initiatives:

Some good examples from within and without the Deerfield River Watershed.

Moderator: Gisela Walker

North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership:

Leigh Youngblood,

The Highland Communities Initiative of the TToR: Jocelyn Forbush,

Tannery Wildlife Refuge, VT:

Edie Mas

Forum program continued:

The Community Preservation Act: What can it contribute to our land preservation efforts?

Dorrie Pizzella, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition.

CPA advocates from Buckland and Continued — page 2



New lab boss:

Marjo Iken at work totting up bacterial colonies in the DRWA laboratory.

Water Quality Monitoring

Another year of monitoring the river and its tributaries is under our belt. We are slowly but surely accumulating valuable information to help us and decision makers assess the health of the watershed.

This summer's bacteria sampling at 11 unofficial but popular swimming holes confirmed the results of previous years: It is generally safe to swim in the watershed's streams, but not always after a rainstorm. See graph for illustration.

New this year was paid staff: Thanks to Marjo Iken, the program and the lab ran smoothly and well. Bob Walker helped us again in the lab, although I hear this was his last year with us. All who worked with Bob will miss him and his dry humor (so appropriate in a wet lab...).

I also want to thank the dozen or so volunteer collectors who make this program feasible, and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust for its financial support.

Marie Françoise Walk

Deerfield River Fecal Coliform colonies/100ml - 2002 season						
Site	8 Jun	23 Jun	14 Jul	28 Jul	11 Aug	25 Aug
Cold River	0	80	22	6	22	40
Deerfield Academy	54	LE	NS	25	17	22
South River Mouth	23	620	9	13	8	21
Stillwater	NS	740	NS	15	13	12
Potholes	39	>100	126	350	NS	NS
Wilcox Hollow	68	400	NS	50	59	65
Zoar Gap	7	10	5	6	3	6
Green R. Cov. Bridge	36	68	36	15	9	54
Sunburn Beach	31	192	32	116	60	49
North R. above BBA	16	120	17	60	29	236
West Branch	3	17	15	NS	1	134

NS=Not Sampled LE=Lab Error
400+ = Over Swimming limit

Ashfield: Their experiences.

1:00 – 2:30 Private Landowner Workshop:

Preservation options for landowners, now and in perpetuity. Will your children want it, maintain it, preserve it, or will it be sold for development? **"Conservation Tools for Landowners"** will start you on this process. Mark Zenick, Director, Franklin Land Trust; Robert Levite, Esq. UMass Extension.

River Access..from page 1

make Wilcox Hollow a handicapped-accessible facility as part of the complicated settlement. But after review with local and state regulators and representatives of the DRWA, the original construction plans, which included a wood ramp down to the water's edge, were revised and cut back to minimize the environmental impact and better reflect usage requirements. The old dirt ramp for river access at Wilcox hollow had eroded and the road to it from Route 2 was rutted and subject to washing out, so some improvement was badly needed.

The Wilcox Hollow access point is only a few hundred feet downstream from the hydroelectric plant turbine discharge point, which means that the river condition there can change from a gentle flow of about 150 cubic feet per second to a torrent of ten times that when all three turbines are operating. There are signs and alarm horns to warn of a water release, but the spot is not without hazard.

Because of that hazard, plans for development at Wilcox hollow narrowed to correction of erosion problems at the access ramp and improvement of the road and parking areas. For handicapped-accessibility, the company has improved a ramp on the Buckland side of the river above the dam, providing better access to the calm reach of the river between the #3 plant and the Gardner's Falls Dam.

The access facilities work well for the kind of watercraft for which they are intended - lightweight or "cartop" fishing boats, kayaks or canoes. The ramps to the water are faced with loose, round stones and trailer access to them is blocked. There are spaces nearby for a few cars at both locations.

Wilcox Hollow Road is about a mile east of Shelburne Falls on the south side of Route 2. The Gardner Falls dam ramp can be reached off Conway Road just south of Shelburne Falls before crossing the railroad tracks.

Polly Bartlett.

C a p t i o n s
The new ramp at Gardners Falls dam provides access to quiet w a t e r t h a t stretches about half a mile upstream. The adjacent steel structure i s a

Survey for Rare Fishes in the Deerfield River Watershed

By Alex Haro,
S.O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory,
U.S. Geological Survey,
Biological Resources Division, Turners Falls, MA

This spring I received a small grant from the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to survey seven sites in the Connecticut, Westfield, and Deerfield River watersheds from which several rare freshwater fish species had been historically collected. Five of these sites were in the Deerfield watershed and (luckily for me) close to my home in Greenfield: on the Deerfield River mainstem at the Route 5 & 10 bridge, the Green River at the Colrain Road bridge and the Greenfield Meadows, and the Glen and Mill Brooks (tributaries of the Green).

The species of interest at these sites were small minnows; the northern redbelly dace (*Phoxinus eos*), the eastern silvery minnow (*Hybognathis regius*), and the bridle shiner (*Notropis bifrenatus*) which are state listed as (respectively) Endangered, Special Concern, or in decline.

Armed with two small-mesh fyke nets (shaped like very large minnow traps) and a backpack electrofisher (which temporarily stuns fish with high voltage), I was able to sample most of these sites several times during June through September of this year. The fyke nets were set in slow moving water (i.e., river pools and beaver ponds) while the electrofisher was used in shallow streams. I had enthusiastic (and much appreciated) assistance from Pat Serrentino, Jennifer Strules, Bob Packard, and my two graduate students, Leah Brown and Tim Sullivan, all of whom made the work a lot easier and more fun.

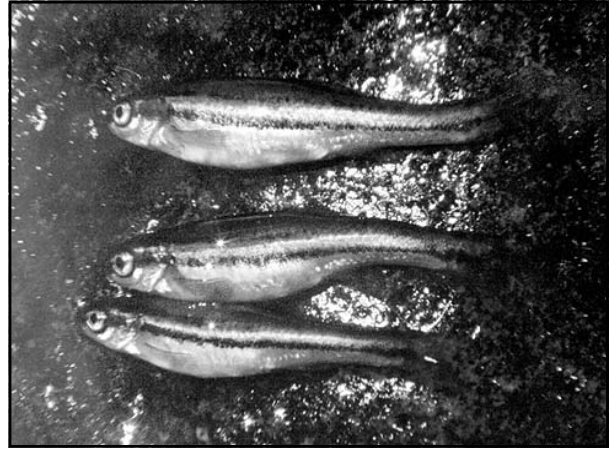
To date, I have recovered only one rare species from the historic sites; at least half a dozen northern redbelly dace were found in each of two collections on the Glen Brook. This species had been collected from this site previously in 1966 and 1979; the population is small, but appears to be stable. This small dace is very similar to the much more numerous blacknose dace (*Rhinichthys atratulus*); thus we had to collect, sort through, and individually examine several hundred blacknose dace before we were able to identify the first redbelly dace! Bridle shiners and eastern silvery minnows have not been collected from any of the historic sites to date.

However, on July 14th, Pat Serrentino and I led a DRWA walk at Tannery Falls in Savoy (upper Deerfield watershed), and just for fun I brought my fyke nets along to demonstrate them in nearby Tannery Pond. To my surprise, I collected over a dozen bridle shiners after having fished the nets for only two hours. Occurrence of this species in this type of habitat (an old mill pond now maintained by beaver activity) was not entirely unexpected; the bridle shiner prefers slower moving water with plenty of aquatic vegetation. A lack of introduced predator species (i.e., bass) in this pond may also make this isolated habitat a refugium for bridle shiners.

I have also collected several fathead minnows (*Pimephales promelas*) in the lower Green River, which have never been collected in the Deerfield watershed previously. These fish were probably introduced from fishermen's bait buckets, as has happened in other watersheds lower in the Connecticut drainage, and they have probably become established in the lower Green River.

I'm hoping to continue this work next year, possibly sampling more historic sites for these and other species, and especially to target some natural ponds at higher elevations where bridle shiners and redbelly dace might be more common than we have

previously thought. Anyone wishing to receive a copy of the final report for this year's survey (due in late November) is welcome to contact me at: Alex_Haro@usgs.gov.



Northern redbelly dace *Phoxinus eos*, collected from Glen Brook. Photo credit: Bob Packard

Be a friend of the Deerfield Join the DRWA

Name

Street.....

City/state.....Zip.....

Annual membership:

Individual \$15, Family/Business \$25

Contributing \$50, Sustaining \$100,

Patron \$500

Join!

Contribute!

Renew!

President's message:

During our gorgeous fall seasons we are particularly aware of nature's beauty that surrounds us in brilliant colors. But open land is not only beautiful for us to look at. It drives our local economy from tourism and recreation to firewood and agriculture; it keeps our water and air clean, and allows wildlife and flora to thrive. Development may not grow as fast as in eastern Massachusetts but grow we do, and we want to do it right. The forum also offers individual land owners a program focusing on tools to preserve his/her family lands or retain those lands in the family's hands. Land protection therefore is in everyone's interest. The DRWA is proud to collaborate with the State's Watershed Initiative and the Highland Communities Initiative to bring you a Forum that will answer many of your questions around land preservation.

There are land preservation efforts going on in almost every town in the watershed and the forum will bring them together and help you get involved. Please come and participate and bring your 'places of the heart' to be put on the map.

We would like to add at least two members to our board. If you would like to serve, please let me or one of the other board members know.

The forum will also serve as annual meeting of the DRWA.

Gisela Walker, *President*

DEERFIELD RIVER CURRENT

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The Deerfield River Watershed Association is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation, protection and care of the Deerfield River and its tributaries in the interests of its adjacent communities. Its activities include water quality monitoring, educational programs, administration of volunteer programs and participation in regulatory matters affecting the river.

Officers:

Gisela Walker, *President*

Marie-Françoise Walk, *Vice President*

Pat Serrentino, *Secretary*; Cynthia Caparaso, *Treas.*

Board Members:

Carrie Banks, Polly Bartlett, Robert May,
Karl Meyer, Ted Merrill, Richards Steinbock

www.deerfieldriver.com

Nominees wanted:

Friend of the Year Award

Last year this coveted prize went to long-time DRWA member and supporter Polly French. Who will it be this year? If you know someone who has helped the watershed in a significant way, please send your nomination with a short paragraph to Françoise Walk, 63 Washington Street, Greenfield MA 01301 or mf.walk@verizon.net. Remember you can't nominate current board members! We will announce the winner at our annual meeting.

Deerfield River Watershed Association, Inc.

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