

Reminding PG&E

We have continued to review, with the able assistance of attorney Jonas Kron, the settlement agreement and operating license governing flows on the Deerfield. We discovered that PG&E National Energy Group had not been complying with an article of the agreement calling for regular reports on the number of peaking flows below the #2 dam in Shelburne. This clause had been aimed at protecting one stretch of the river from too frequent cycling up and down of water levels.

When our direct contacts with PG&E did not result in a constructive response, we took the next step and wrote to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. It responded promptly, wrote to and met with PG&E (plus the DRWA and representatives of other signatories to the agreement), and PG&E assured us that the required information would be provided by the end of June. PGE met the new deadline and the data is in hand.

We shall continue to follow up on this and other issues regarding how PG&E is running the river. Our overall concern is that the new flow regime instituted by PG&E under utility deregulation is having a detrimental effect on recreational access to the river (particularly for fishermen) and that it may be doing biological damage to the river.

Robert May

Bio-diversity Field Trip Catches Shad Spawning by Moonlight

It was a dark and stormy night. NO it wasn't. It was a warm and starlit night with American shad splashing up a storm, beavers spanking the water when we blocked their den by accident and a really surprised bald eagle when we put the million candle power flash light on it while looking for our landing zone. That's the kind of

Inside:

Page 2: Water test results.

Page 3: Hike and Bike Schedule

Page 4: New Flow Phone System

PG&E hosted the Deerfield River Team at its #5 dam in Monroe, MA. After a presentation on generating operations on the Deerfield, team members from the DRWA and many government agencies donned hard hats to tour the generation facility. In the photo above, the team crosses the footbridge over the dam. Below, PG&E's Matt Cole explains changes and improvements in the #5 unit.

night our Shad Spawning by Moonlight bio-diversity field trip turned out to be. We launched into the Deerfield River just below the Route 5 crossing in Greenfield at around 7:30pm, got the three canoes and two kayaks headed in the right direction and drifted with the flow down to the confluence with the Connecticut. Naturalists all, we began to list the species we knew as we encountered them. Silver maples and poison ivy along the banks, cedar wax wings overhead and something called a veerie (it's a bird they tell me) that we never saw but only heard. At the mouth of the river we stopped regrouped and got an update on shortnose sturgeon **Shad — from page 1**

research (our only federally listed endangered species of fish in Massachusetts) from trip participant Don Pugh, who works at the Conte Anadromous Fish Research

Water Quality Looks Good

The 2002 water quality monitoring season is underway. We sampled for dissolved oxygen, pH and alkalinity April 21, and switched to fecal coliform bacteria sampling in June.

pH looks low this year. This may be due to pH-meter electrode problems (electrodes are very fussy and only worked at all this year thanks to Bob Walker's experience). We'll keep an eye on the situation.

Bacteria levels on June 8 and July 14 were low everywhere, well within swimming standards. Of course we did not observe any swimmers in June as it was raining and cold. But there were lots in July. The abundant rains preceding the June collection are probably responsible for the low counts: we do get high counts after a rain that follows dry weather, but long rain periods tend to wash out the watershed and also dilute any bacteria counts in the river. The mid-July counts in dry swimming weather are worth celebrating.

Marie (Marjo) Iken of Conway has been hired as our new water quality monitoring program coordinator. Welcome Marjo, and thanks to all volunteers for filling in the gap in staff when we needed you!

Zoar Gap continues to be our poster site for cleanliness, followed closely by the West Branch in Readsboro. Swimmers take note!

Marie-Françoise Walk

The results so far this year:

Deerfield River Fecal Coliform Counts

Site	Test date		
	June 8	June 23	July 14
Cold River	00	8 0	22
Deerfield Academy	54	LE	NS
South River Confluence	23	620!!	9
Stillwater	NS	740!!	NS
Potholes	39	>100	126
Wilcox Hollow	68	400!!	NS
Zoar Gap	7	10	5
Green R Covered Bridge	36	68	36
Sunburn Beach	31	192	32
North Riv. above BBA	16	120	17
West Branch	3	17	15

NS= Not sampled

LE= Laboratory error

!! = Violates safe swimming standards

Center. Now, as darkness falls upon the water, we drift down the rain-swollen Connecticut to the shad spawning grounds just below Fourth Island. We tuck in out of the current just below the island at a place remembered as T.I. eddy. So named because of all the fisheries research conducted here by the Texas Instruments Company as part of the environmental review for the once proposed Montague nuclear power plant. This eddy where we sit, watch and mostly listen to the shad spawn, would have been the site where the cooling water for the plant would have come from.

It's really dark now and numerous American shad are on the surface of the water creating the next generation of shad. About 300,000 shad have been lifted over the Holyoke Dam at this point in the season and more than a few have chosen this spot to lay their eggs. No nest is made. The female swims along the surface and a male or two chase after her to fertilize the eggs as she releases them. The eggs drift with the current and settle to the bottom where they hatch in only a few days. We continue to listen, watch and try with little success to shine the light on the fish. We know they are there, we can hear them. We also hear from a beaver that apparently lives in the bank we were blocking with our canoes.

Now we drift along under the railroad bridge at the end of the East Deerfield rail yard and listen to the rumble of the locomotive as the cars are strung together to form a train. The splashes from the shad become less frequent as we make our way to our take out at Moody's Landing. We've thought ahead and left a yellow rain jacket on a stick stuck into the beach to help find the spot. Don scans the shoreline with the big light from time to time as I get nervous that we've missed the landing. Turn the light on again and something big, really big drops down from the tree top. It's an immature bald eagle and I'm not sure which one of us was more surprised.

In a few more minutes and we find the yellow raincoat, pull in and load the boats. In the west, across the hay field, above Moody's house we can see that the planets are in alignment and we depart to go our separate ways, the end to a pleasant trip down the river.

John O'Leary

Summer/Fall, 2002

HIKE AND BIKE YOUR WATERSHED

Sat. July 20

10:30 am- 2:30 pm Catamount Cave Loop. Ever popular hike with lunch at the lake. Bring flashlight for exploring caves. To reach starting point, take Adamsville Road from Rt 112 in Griswoldville about a mile to Lively Rd. EastCatamount Road is a quick left from Lively Rd. Steep and dirt. Follow it to the end. Park on left.

Leader: Muriel Russell, 624-3311

Sat. Aug 3 10 am-2 pm

Canoe and Swim at Sherman Reservoir. Bring your own canoe, flotation device, lunch and bathing suit. Be prepared to watch your own kids as there are no lifeguards or rescue boats. From Rt 2 in west Charlemont take the Zoar Rd north toward Readsboro VT for about 14 miles. Pass the Yankee Atomic plant and the VT state line. The picnic area and launching site are about a half mile north of the VT line.

Leader: Ted Merrill, 625-9765

Sun. Sept. 8 9 am-2 pm

Dunbar Brook. Hike on woods trail along beautiful brook then climb on trail to Raycroft's lookout with view of upper Deerfield River valley. Options exist for return hikes. Meet at Shunpike Park on Rt 2 west of Charlemont.

Leader: Polly Bartlett, 625-6628

Sun. Oct 6. 1-3 pm

Davis Mine, Rowe, Meet at the Country Store, Jct of Rt 8A and 112 in Charlemont. We will visit the Rowe Historical Society first to learn about the extent of the mine then visit the site itself.

Leader: Chris Duerring, 773-7899 week days only

Mon. Oct .14 9 am-2-pm

Bike from Marlboro, Vt. along the Green River to Greenfield. "All down hill." Easy with frequent stops. Height of foliage season. Meet at Skyline Restaurant parking lot on Rt 9, Marlboro, VT. 8 am for breakfast. Preregister for car spotting.

Leader: Marie Francoise Walk, 774-7025

Our Gardener Needs Help!

Polly French, who maintains the Watershed Gardens in Shelburne Falls as a fundraiser for the DRWA, needs help in the gardens a couple of hours a week this summer and will need help next spring, starting in April, with potting and tagging plants for sale, propagation, etc. If you'd like to help - and learn a few things from a master gardener - or would like to know more, please call Polly at 625-9602.

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!

New Service Provides River Flow Information

USGen New England, Inc. is replacing 888-FLO-FONE with a new Flow Information System from Waterline. 24-hr flow forecasts based upon predictions of load demand, and available supply to the New England region are available.

Information for Deerfield and Connecticut Basins facilities can be accessed on an online web page and through a new toll-free telephone number. Both services are provided by Waterline through its "FlowCast" program. Flow information can be found online at:

www.H2OLINE.com

Follow the "FlowCast" page link, then click on US Gen New England, Inc. for the site code list. Flow information is also available by dialing Waterline's free National telephone hotlines:

1-800-452-1742 for the Angler's Edition

1-800-452-1737 for the Boater's Edition

At the prompt, dial-in the six-digit site code for the specific river reach of interest.

CODE SITE

505124	Somerset Dam, Somerset, VT
505125	Searsburg Dam, Searsburg, VT
505126	Harriman Dam, Readsboro, VT
255121	Sherman Dam, Rowe, MA
255122	No. 5 Dam, Monroe Bridge, MA
255123	Fife Brook Dam, Florida, MA
255124	No. 4 Dam, Shelburne Falls, MA
255125	No. 3 Dam, Shelburne Falls, MA
255126	No. 2 Dam, Shelburne/Conway MA

The old FLO-FONE will inform users of the new system, giving the website address, site codes, and toll-free numbers.

Deerfield River Watershed Assoc., Inc.
PO Box 13
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

DEERFIELD RIVER CURRENT

Published by

Deerfield River Watershed Assn. Inc.

P.O. Box 13

Shelburne Falls MA 01370

Editor: Ted Merrill

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-Francoise Walk, *Vice President*

Pat Serrentino, *Secretary*; Cynthia Caporaso, *Treasurer*

Board Members:

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

On the Board

Introducing Carrie Banks

After spending many summers along the Deerfield River, Carrie Banks decided to pursue a career in rivers conservation. During the summer of 2000, she interned with DRWA and the Deerfield River Watershed Team. In addition, Carrie's senior thesis was on river safety issues on the Deerfield River.

After she graduated from College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, ME, Carrie returned to Western Massachusetts. Currently, she works as a coordinator for the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Committee and she just finished working on a Storm Drain Stenciling project in the Connecticut River Watershed. DRWA is delighted to have her with us as a board member.

