

MATTABESSET MATTERS

Dedicated to the Protection and Preservation of the Mattabeset River Watershed

COGINCHAUG - INCLUDED!

At the annual meeting MRWA members voted in favor of amending our Certificate of Incorporation to include the Coginchaug River basin in the MRWA's purview. In a prior meeting, the Board of Directors approved this amendment and a change to the bylaws. With the submittal of the revised incorporation documents to the Secretary of State, and our receipt of the Secretary of State's acceptance, the legal requirements are now complete. The process to lead and support watershed improvement activities in the Coginchaug Watershed is just beginning and is sure to grow with time. We welcome the support of the people of the Coginchaug area.

ANNUAL MEETING HELD The MRWA Annual Meeting was held on March 19th in the deKoven House, Middletown. Steve Grant, outdoor staff writer for the Hartford Courant, gave a superb slide show of his renowned river adventure on the Connecticut River. At the business meeting, the MRWA's status and accomplishments of the past year were reviewed. (see the president's annual report.) The Amendment to our Certificate of Incorporation for the Coginchaug expansion was unanimously approved. Three directors, Steve Schiller of New Britain and Dick Schmidt and Doug McKain of Berlin were elected to additional three-year terms. A new director, George Frick of Durham was elected. George had suggested the Coginchaug expansion and lead major efforts to remove junk from the main stem - and now he is on our Board. Also, ample time was available to have some refreshments and chat with other attendees.

Ninth Annual Mattabeset River Week: June 7-15,2003

Join the MRWA and Middlesex County Soil and Water Conservation District in celebrating the Ninth Annual Mattabeset River Week by taking part in several river-related activities this June. River Week began as a local way to help celebrate National Rivers Month. Over the years the activities have increased in number and variety. This year's MRWA's activities include a river clean up, a canoe/kayak trip, hikes and a stream assessment session. There is also free fishing day in Connecticut, Saturday June 7th. Please see the enclosed flyer for more details. Hope to see you at one or more events during River Week - and as always we encourage you to bring a friend!

MATTABESSET MATTERS

***Mattabesset Matters* is the newsletter of the Mattabesset River Watershed Association (MRWA), Incorporated. The mission of the MRWA is to protect, preserve and restore the Mattabesset River Watershed. A key role of the MRWA is to be the advocate for the river and its watershed, speaking on its behalf. Our watershed includes the towns of Berlin, Cromwell, Durham, Guilford, Madison, Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, North Branford, Plainville, Rocky Hill, Southington, and Wallingford.**

A community grassroots organization incorporated in 1997, the MRWA has IRS 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit organization. In accordance with the bylaws, our members elect directors to lead the association. The current directors are Karen Beaulieu, James Creighton, George Frick, John Hall, Guy Hoffman, Douglas McKain, Steven Schiller, Richard Schmidt, and Christine Sprague.

Citizens may assist the MRWA's goals by reporting problems to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. For erosion/turbidity problems, call the DEP's Water Bureau, Permitting, Enforcement, and Remediation Division at (860) 424-3018. For oil and chemical spills call the DEP hotline at (860) 424-3338. For other river issues, call your Town Hall or us' at 828-0803.

For more information, including back issues of *Mattabesset Matters*, visit our website at <http://www.geocities.com/mrwact>. Please contact us if you want to be on our mailing list, or would like a copy of our canoe guide.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT NEEDED

We are always in need of help, as the watershed needs much work and has an active restoration plan. While any type of help is appreciated, of greatest need are "task leaders"- individuals who take on a task, handle the associated issues, get help as needed, and bring the task to completion. This role is challenging and rewarding. Contact Paul Woodworth (860-346-3282) if you are interested.

CONTEST RESULTS

Local students responded enthusiastically to the contest in our last issue, researching watershed facts. The winners of our contest are Sean Orcutt and Maggie Kearns of Berlin High, sharing the \$75 first prize and Matthew DeBacco of Rocky Hill High School, getting the \$25 second prize. (Answers: Wasel Reservoir is at the highest elevation. The alewife is anadromous. The eel is catadromous. E. Coh indicates health risk. Boggy Meadow is the name of the tidal marsh. The osprey is the fish-eating hawk. "Mattabesset" is a Native American name. Oil washing off streets is non-point source pollution. The watershed is about

MRWA 2003 MEMBERSHIPS - JOIN UP NOW

It is already almost mid-year, it is now past time to renew your MRWA membership, if you have not done so yet. We would appreciate it if you would use the membership form and mail it as indicated. You might also encourage a friend to be a new member. Thanks!

MATTABESSET RIVER WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION



**Mattabesset River Watershed Association, Incorporated
2003 Annual Report**

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Mattabesset River Watershed Association is to protect and preserve the waters and riparian habitat in the Mattabesset River Watershed for the benefit of present and future generations.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Beaulieu, Cromwell

James Creighton - Treasurer

John Hall, Middletown

Guy Hoffman, Berlin - Vice President

REPORT OF THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES - MARCH 2002 TO MARCH 2003

The Mattabesset River Watershed Association has been incorporated with IRS 501(c)(3) status since 1997, and has established itself as a positive force for the watershed. With the support of its members, citizens, conservation organizations and governments, we have had noteworthy accomplishments towards the improvement of the Mattabesset. The highlights of the past year Expansion to Include the Coginchaug Watershed - The Board of Directors voted to expand the MRWA oversight to include the Coginchaug River drainage basin. This is a major change, expanding our area of interest from 70 to 110 square miles and from 10 towns to 15 towns. As a tributary of the Mattabesset, the Coginchaug River is properly part of the Mattabesset River Watershed. To accomplish this change, the Board has approved a revision to our bylaws; an amendment to our Certificate of Incorporation will be presented for member approval at the annual meeting.

"Management Plan for the Mattabesset River Watershed" - This plan, developed by the Middlesex County Soil and Water Conservation District and approved by dozens of stakeholders in 2000, continues to be of great benefit to the watershed. It serves as the guiding light for improving the Mattabesset River Watershed, aligning perfectly with our mission. The MRWA has been an active supporter in the implementation of the tasks in the Plan.

The Mattabesset Stakeholders Group encourages and oversees the Plan's implementation.

Under the plan, the initial actions emphasize public awareness of the watershed and education on watershed issues. The Town of Berlin committee, which includes three MRWA directors, has addressed many of the 20 tasks in Phase 1. In the past year the committee has installed 65 signs to identify tributaries at road crossings, moved the CDOT to install 10 signs on state highways, mailed an educational brochure to 500 streamside landowners, initiated actions to establish a 100' regulatory review area, and provided a watershed display at Berlin's library. Under the Berlin committee, a study of bacterial sources is active, funded by the town. The Plan has also been incorporated in Berlin's Plan of Conservation and Development, and the Town Council will monitor its implementation. Efforts in Cromwell, Rocky Hill and Middletown have begun to similarly implement the plan. The Mattabesset Stakeholders Group is also supported the Hartford County Soil and Water Conservation District, CT DEP, US EPA, USGS, NRCS, and other stakeholders.

"Mattabeset Matters" - Guy Hoffman coordinated the production of three issues of our newsletter, which has a mailing list of 200. "Mattabeset Matters" provides the essential communications to people who have interest in our mission.

Heavy Trash Cleanups - George Frick and his Friends of the River, along with Mattabeset volunteers, removed some significant eyesores from our river, an effort requiring special equipment and brawn. A riverbank dump was "undone". Several major attacks on trash used George's 38-foot canoe, equipped with a jib crane, to remove countless tires, a safe, a cast iron cook stove, a baby buggy, large drainage pipes, a crane sheave, various iron pipes and similar junk.

Mattabeset River Weeks - The eighth annual Mattabeset Rivers Weeks in June included a river cleanup in Cromwell (removing a large volume of trash that floated into forested areas when the river was at flood level), a benthic invertebrate' (riverbed insect) presentation by Guy Hoffman, a headwaters hike to Mount Higby lead by Jim Creighton, and a canoe trip from Sawmill Pub lead by Paul Woodworth.

Summer Evenings on the Mattabeset - Jim Creighton organized a very successful series of canoe/kayak trips on eight evenings in July and August. The turnout was impressive, with typically over 20 boats launching and visiting the tidal marsh and Connecticut River. The launch site was behind the Sawmill Pub, which was ideal for socializing after trips on the water - and promoting the MRWA's mission.

Advocacy for the Mattabeset Watershed - We continue to speak on behalf of the watershed when issues arise. All citizens are encouraged to participate in this key role.

Cromwell Riverport Festival and Berlin Fair - Led by Karen Beaulieu, the MRWA had a kiosk at the Cromwell festival in September to educate citizens on the issues of the Mattabeset, with the aid of our new tabletop display. In October, we again shared a booth at the Berlin Fair with the Berlin Land Trust for the three-day event.

Wood Duck Nest Boxes and Osprey Platforms - The MRWA placed three more wood duck nest boxes, and now we maintain a total of 13 along the river. While wood duck nest boxes have proven to be quite successful, we are still waiting for ospreys to use our three nesting platforms.

Success with Grants - We continue to receive grant support to carry out our mission. Under an \$8000 from the Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, Paul Woodworth and Matt Merrill are assisting the MRWA and implementing tasks in the Plan. Sam's Club of Berlin and Wal-Mart of Cromwell each granted \$1000, to be used in part for storm drain curb markers, stating "DO NOT DUMP - DRAINS TO RIVER". A \$2500 grant from the New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund is being used in Berlin to protect Hatchery Brook from residential impacts. The MRWA floor display unit is complete, thanks to an \$800 grant from Northeast Utilities and graphics development from the Hartford County Soil and Water Conservation District, and is in Durham's library.

Mattabeset River and Tributary Signs - In addition to the 75 signs in Berlin discussed above, the CDOT installed about 12 "Mattabeset River" on state highways. The MRWA recently sent letters to municipal leaders offering direct support to acquire signs, as this is a highly effective awareness task. Also, huge "Mattabeset River" signs have been installed on Route 9 and I-91. At the river's mouth, the MRWA has received all approvals for a "Slow - No Wake Zone" sign, and the CDOT has installed a "Mattabeset River" on the bridge pier at the MRWA's request. Let all know that the river is here!

All members, directors, volunteers, *and* other supporters of the Mattabeset River Watershed Association can *be proud of* the efforts they have *put forth* to allow the organization to succeed. *We thank you and hope for your continued involvement in the future.*

Richard Schmidt, President 03/19/03

FACTS ABOUT OUR WATERSHED

- The main stem length of the Mattabeset River is about 18 miles, and it falls about 460 feet in elevation.
- Historically, its source is Smith Brothers Pond in Southington. A technical view today might consider its source to be Merimere Reservoir in Meriden, based upon the greatest waterway length and watershed area.
- Its mouth is on the Connecticut River, where it forms the border between Middletown and Cromwell.
- The Coginchaug River is the predominant tributary of the Mattabeset River, and some people view the Coginchaug as a separate watershed.
- The total area of the watershed is 109 square miles, including 39 square miles in the Coginchaug River sub-watershed.
- Willow Brook in New Britain is the tributary that drains the next largest area - 11 square miles.
- Other major tributary brooks are Belcher Brook in Berlin (includes Hatchery Brook and Crooked Brook, draining eight square miles) and Sawmill Brook in Middletown (includes Fall Brook and Roaring Brook, draining seven square miles).
- Nine reservoirs for public water supplies impound its waters. The largest is Shuttle Meadow Reservoir in New Britain, which is approximately 200 acres in size. The highest is Wasel Reservoir in Southington, at an elevation of 512 feet above sea level. Others are Adder, Merimere, Kenmere, Hallmere, Mount Higby and Laurel Brook reservoirs, and Harts Ponds.
- Over 40 lakes and ponds are in the watershed. The largest is Silver Lake in Berlin/Meriden, 150 acres in area. Myer Huber Pond in Guilford is a source of the Coginchaug River.
- Important watershed brooks by town include: Newington (Webster and Rockhole); Rocky Hill (Little/Cold Spring and Saw Mill); Cromwell (Cold Spring, Coles, Willow, and Chestnut); Durham (Pannalee). The Coginchaug River is important especially in the towns of Durham, Middlefield, and Middletown.
- Boggy Meadow (also called Cromwell Meadows) is a large marsh that comprises the last few miles of the river. Its water level changes with the tide in the Atlantic Ocean, and the fact that it is freshwater (tidal waters are generally salt water) makes this an uncommon wildlife habitat.
- Wadsworth Falls in Wadsworth Falls State Park in Middlefield is a significant waterfall of the Coginchaug River.
- The watershed lies in three counties and 15 towns, of which 8 towns have more than 33% of land area in the watershed.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete and mail to: Mattabeset River Watershed Association, P.O. Box 7174, Kensington, CT 06027

- | | |
|---|---|
| Name: | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors or Students - \$5 |
| Street: | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership - \$10 |
| Town: State: | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership - \$15 |
| Zip: Phone: | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Membership - \$35 |
| E-mail Address | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron Membership - \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like information about protecting the watershed | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Membership - \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in volunteering for clean-ups and other activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership - \$500 |

HOW CAN I HELP THE MRWA? - HERE'S A LIST OF IDEAS

- **Inform others of river issues, perhaps get them to join the MRWA**
Write grant requests
- **Get your employer to be a corporate member**
- **Write articles for Mattabeset Matters, or provide photos or sketches**
- **Help fold, label, stamp, and distribute Mattabeset Matters**
- **Be our webmaster**
- **Obtain water samples (when water analysis program is active)**
- **Report problems to the CTDEP**
- **Check construction sites for proper erosion and sedimentation controls**
- **Support our cleanups**
- **Conduct your own river cleanup - involve others**
- **Conduct your own river cleanup - by yourself, telling no one**
- **Assist in member communications**
- **Serve as liaison to school science department(s)**
- **Design our "Season's Greetings" card to members**
- **Assist in "Mattabeset River Watershed Management Plan" tasks**
- **Communications - be our liaison with local newspapers**
- **Assist in mapping or photography**
- **Monitor osprey activity on the nesting platforms in the tidal marsh**
- **Restore or maintain wood duck nest boxes in tidal zone**
- **Monitor catch basins to see if cleanout is overdue**
- **Join in on MRWA activities, such as hikes or canoe trips**
- **Speak (or question) in support of the river when situations arise**
- **Just enjoy the river**

MATTABESSET RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



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