The River Connects Us.

Connecticut River Watershed Council

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Did you know?There are FREE items in CRWC's online

store! www.ctriver.org

FARMS, FLOODS & YOU – What's the Connection?

arms rely on clean water and we rely on farms. The Connecticut River valley has some of the richest soils in the country thanks to ancient glaciers and the ongoing flow of our rivers. As long as rivers continue to flow through our lives, it is up to all of us to protect both the land and rivers.

TRINITY FARM: PLANTING THE ROOTS OF A SOLUTION

During the flooding of Tropical Storm Irene, Trinity Farm in Orford, NH had an acre of land wash downstream. The O'Donnell family, excited to be starting new careers as organic farmers, were concerned that such a massive loss of farmland could occur again. They contacted CRWC, seeking advice on how to stabilize their land to prevent the same thing from happening in future storms.

Ron Rhodes, River Steward for northern VT and NH, suggested planting trees to stabilize the river banks. The root systems of trees and other plants hold onto soil and prevent erosion. Plants



Trinity Farm in NH lost an acre of land during Tropical Storm Irene flooding – not good for the farm or our rivers.

also help remove excess nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants from water runoff before it reaches our rivers and streams. Even better, the plants provide habitat and food sources for wildlife and shade the river, keeping it cool for fish. Talk about a win-win-win!

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service prioritizes preventing river bank erosion and provided a grant to Trinity Farm. But there was a problem.

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Welcome Back Atlantic Salmon and Atlantic Sturgeon

Recent reports from CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) show that both Atlantic salmon and sturgeon are spawning naturally in the lower Connecticut River again. The multi-state and federally supported Atlantic salmon stocking program ended in 2013. The few salmon returning to the Connecticut River are now simply tagged and released to continue their migration upstream to spawn. A recent discovery of salmon redds – nests where eggs are laid – prove that salmon are returning



and spawning all on their own now, though in very small numbers. Unfortunately, this finding does not signal any new hope for restored salmon runs.

It was widely accepted that Atlantic sturgeon had been gone from the lower river for hundreds

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Mission

CRWC works to protect the Connecticut River basin's diversity of habitats, communities and resources. We celebrate our four-state treasure and collaborate, educate, organize, restore, and intervene to preserve the health of the whole for generations to come.

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Did Paddle ever make it to the Sea?



Replica of the original *Paddle-to-the-Sea* carving.

In 1992, Bea Austin and her family placed a small one foot hand-carved wooden canoe into the Connecticut River. Inspired by the book and film *Paddle-to-the-Sea*, the canoe was red and yellow and the paddler inside had a beard and green life vest. The hope was that, similar to the fictional tale, this tiny canoeist would someday reach the Atlantic Ocean. "I used to

do woodcarving when I was

younger and I've always loved the tale of *Paddle*," notes Bea. "So, I had to make one of my own."

It was March when Bea and her family huddled on the river bank where the Ashuelot River meets the Connecticut River in Hinsdale, NH. There was still ice along the river's edge. "It got hung up on branches so my husband leaned in with a long stick to free it. It tipped bottom up, went under the ice, and that's the last we saw of it!"

"I was hoping it would be found along the way, I'd be contacted and could plot its progress." But in the 24 years since the Austin family launched *Paddle* on his journey,



Have you seen this carved boat on its way to the sea?

there's been no word. "I won't give up hope of someday getting it back. It would be a dream come true."

If you or someone you know has seen Paddle on his way to the sea, let us know. Bea and her family will be thrilled to hear of their long-lost friend. Email <u>editor@</u> ctriver.org or call 413-772-2020.

CRWC Steward Appointed to CT Council on Environmental Quality

An important part of the Council's work is to ensure that our perspective and expertise is heard in as many forums as possible. We directly engage in talks and debates about how to implement our vision of economic and ecological abundance. The technical expertise and diverse experiences of CRWC's staff have earned us a number of seats at important regional and national tables.

Most recently, CRWC's Lower River Steward, Alicea Charamut, was appointed by Connecticut's Governor Malloy to the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ is a nine-person council that works independently of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Duties are to prepare and submit to the Governor an annual report on the status of Connecticut's environment with recommendations for changes to state laws and programs. The council also advises other state agencies and investigates citizen complaints.

This appointment adds to the 24 others held by CRWC staff.



SPRING 2016

Remembering Chuck

Charles (Chuck) Connington, a long time CRWC member and volunteer, passed away in August, 2015. Chuck and his wife Anne have been CRWC members for nearly 30 years. CRWC was a favorite organization of Chuck's father and



Chuck was a dedicated CRWC volunteer and will be missed

Chuck noted that was part of the reason he was a member of CRWC for so long.

Chuck began volunteering with CRWC in 2007. Until 2009, he worked with CRWC River Steward, Andrea Donlon, testing water temperature, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity at multiple locations during the summer and fall. From the time CRWC's Water Quality Lab was built in 2010 until early 2015, Chuck adopted the Barton Cove boat ramp in Gill, MA. Every week from late May to early October he collected a water sample and brought it to the lab where it would be tested for bacteria levels. Often, Chuck collected his sample before playing tennis, an activity he enjoyed into his final days.

Chuck was a top-notch volunteer. He was consistent, friendly, and always willing to offer a helping hand. We enjoyed getting to know him over the years and will miss his presence in CRWC's water monitoring program.

CRWC is just one of many organizations that were blessed to receive Chuck's time and support. We are honored that his family has selected CRWC as a recipient of donations that can be made in his memory.

Nature Notes: Beaver

The usual image of a beaver is an animal that lives in its lodge in the center of small pond behind its stick dam. However, beaver also live in riverbank burrows with no dam. Dams are built to enlarge the underwater habitat but the deep water of a permanent river pool provides plenty of storage for winter food and underwater lodge access. The riverbank dens (average 27 cubic feet) have several tunnel exits with at least one above the high water mark and another below the low water mark.



The beaver is the largest rodent in North America. The scientific name, *Castor canadensis*, describes the castor glands located near the base of the tail. Castor is a strong-smelling, oily substance the beaver spread by preening to waterproof their fur. They may reach 4 feet in length and weigh 70 pounds including tail. Beavers live up to 12 years in the wild, taking only one mate for life. A litter of three or four kits is born each year in May or June.

The heavy brown coat keeps the animal comfortable in all temperatures. Its compact body is ungainly on land but is perfectly adapted to water. A transparent membrane over the eye allows it to see well underwater. Their nostrils and ears close for underwater swimming. The beaver's hind feet are large and webbed with five long clawed toes. Its forepaws are dexterous and can carry the sticks, stones and mud they use in their dams. Their well-known sharp teeth grow continuously and they can even gnaw on twigs and plants while under water. The beaver's ability to change the landscape is second only to humans.

Originally published & adapted from Upper Valley River Steward David Deen's "River Currents" column. Is there a topic you want to know more about? Let us know and we may cover it here. editor@ctriver.org

Make Every Day Earth Day

Take advantage of one of the easiest and most convenient ways to support your rivers! CRWC is a member of EarthShare, a nationwide federation of the country's most respected environmental and conservation charities. You can make a gift to CRWC by payroll contribution through EarthShare New England's workplace giving program. To find out more about how you and your workplace can get involved, contact Jessica Wozniak at Jessica@earthshare.org. You can also visit EarthShare New England online at: Earthsharenewengland.org.



EARTHSHARE NEW ENGLAND: ONE ENVIRONMENT...ONE SIMPLE WAY TO CARE FOR IT.

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Out About

WATERSHED-WIDE

Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline Would Impact Our Rivers



Proposed route of pipeline, including alternate route into NH.

Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan, has proposed a new natural gas pipeline in this region. The Northeast Energy Direct project would involve the construction and operation of approximately 418 miles of new pipeline and other infrastructure in five states. In January, CRWC wrote to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in opposition to the project. Several organizations, including the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, have put forth good arguments that the pipeline is not needed. We believe the impacts of the project will be huge, both during construction and operation, and difficult or impossible to manage properly.

Within the Connecticut River watershed, CRWC estimates there are 115 river/stream crossings proposed. The majority of these river crossings will be in coldwater fisheries or high quality waters, including two separate Wild & Scenic Rivers. The project will also impact over 250 acres of public drinking water supply land in CT.

CRWC is following the approval process as it goes through FERC. More information available online at Kindermorgan.com/pages/business/gas_pipelines/east/neenergydirect OR Nofrackedgasinmass.org/nedapplication

Working Together for a Healthy Long Island Sound

The Connecticut River watershed contributes 70% of the freshwater and, by some estimates, 13% of potentially harmful nutrients entering Long Island Sound.



Excess nutrients, like nitrogen, create algae blooms that harm fish and other wildlife.

That means all of us upstream share the responsibility to make the Sound healthy again. But first we need the best

possible clean-up plan.

The current plan is outdated and will not meet the legal requirements for the Sound. CRWC was pleased to add our name to a petition that the Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency asking them to make a better plan that considers current conditions and climate change, in order to make a legally defensible roadmap for this nationally important waterbody.

Thanks to the great work by CFE, EPA has responded with a draft strategy to reduce nutrients, including those coming all the way from MA, VT, and NH. The most significant part of this strategy is the requirement to develop nutrient limits that will have both local and regional impact on making our rivers and the Sound healthy. This isn't everything we were looking for, but it's a long overdue response by EPA. We will continue working to get strong standards in place that are grounded in biology as well as working directly with cities and towns that have pending pollution discharge licenses including Holyoke and Springfield, MA.

VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

A new dam? Not if we can help it.



A new proposal will add hydroelectric turbines to this dam and add another dam just downstream.

Grafton Hydro has submitted a proposal to build a new hydroelectric dam on the Mascoma River in Lebanon, NH and retrofit an existing dam with hydropower turbines. This area is popular for fishing and whitewater paddling. Many whitewater paddling groups have filed to be intervenors in this case along with the town of Lebanon, the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Park Service.

CRWC joined the Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee (MRLAC) and Greater Upper Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited (GUVTU) in filing for intervenor status with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). We will stay involved as this project develops and keep you updated. SPRING 2016 5

MASSACHUSETTS

Is the Clean Water Act coming to Massachusetts?

Massachusetts is one of only three remaining states that have not accepted the authority to run the many programs that make up the federal Clean Water Act. This means that since 1972 the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been writing and enforcing the permits limiting pollution to the waters of Massachusetts. The state has the authority to set the goals and standards for Massachusetts' waters and the state monitors our waters to determine if they are meeting our goals. And even though the state has permitting authority under state law, they do not issue or enforce the permits that implement the federal law.

This dual system creates overlapping authority and duplication. The Baker Administration has recently announced they will be asking the EPA to transfer their authorities to the state, as provided for in the Clean Water Act.

This change is a significant opportunity but also raises important questions. Will the MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) do as good a job enforcing permits as EPA? Will the legislature provide the right funding to ensure MassDEP creates a strong program of standards, monitoring, permitting, compliance, technical assistance and enforcement? We are cautiously optimistic that this effort could transform the MassDEP water program into something great. CRWC is a member of the advisory group put together by the MassDEP, so we are paying close attention.

CONNECTICUT

Coppermine Brook Wants Its Water Back

Portions of Coppermine Brook in Bristol, CT ran dry last fall. Most rivers and streams have low-flow conditions in fall due to less rain. But, adjacent to Coppermine Brook, there are multiple public drinking water wells and a surface water diversion.



80% of CT water diversions are not reviewed, resulting in streams being sucked dry.

Even if these water withdrawals are contributing to the low-flows of Coppermine Brook, there is very little anyone can do about it. Why? Streamflow regulations do not take groundwater withdrawals into consideration. Seem crazy? Absolutely.

Current laws require any diversion of water that exceeds 50,000 gallons per day (ground or surface) must apply for a 5-25 year permit. However, for diversions registered prior to 1983, the registrant has rights to divert the amount of water originally registered in perpetuity. Of the 2,000+ diversions in the state, 80% are registered and 20% are permitted. This means that 80% of the water diversions in Connecticut are not subject to any kind of environmental review. Is there enough water for all the registered diversions or enough left over for the fish? In this system, it doesn't matter.

Coppermine Brook has water flowing again thanks to recent rain and snow. However, dewatered streams will continue to be a problem unless state agencies, legislators, water utilities, and environmental groups are willing to work together to solve this glaring oversight.

Improving River Recreation via Hydro Relicensing

CRWC continues to work with stakeholder groups and government agencies in the relicensing of five hydropower facilities on the Connecticut River. Thanks to many of you who responded to our survey about recreational use in this section of river. You want more river access, toilets and trash receptacles, and new hiking and nature trails along the river. We'll make sure your feedback is heard during the relicensing process.

Final study reports are coming back from the power companies about how these structures impact our rivers. CRWC will review and comment on these reports and work toward the best deal for our rivers and all of you who use our rivers.

Interestingly, GDF Suez has put FirstLight, owner of Turners Falls Dam and Northfield Mountain pumped storage, up for sale. Potential buyers are touring the facilities. What this means for relicensing isn't entirely clear. CRWC will be working to ensure that the sale doesn't compromise options for relicensing the facilities over the next 30-50 years.



You can have a say in how 5 hydroelectric plants will operate in the future.

It's not too late to have a say! Join us March 5 for The Power of Water / The Power of Words presentation at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls, MA. Or invite us to bring this FREE presentation to your group. You'll learn all about the relicensing and have a chance to submit your official public comment on what you want for your rivers. For more information, contact Colleen Bent at cbent@ctriver.org or 413-772-2020 ext.206. The Power of Water / The Power of Words is supported by a generous grant from the Putnam Foundation.

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Thanks for joining us and welcome along!

As the newest members of our river family, you join a community of people committed to protecting the Connecticut River watershed. The following new members joined us between July 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015.

Elisabeth Alden June Aleck Rachel Andres Beverly Austin Glen Ayers Paul Benjamin Peter and Nancy Bent Bodett & Company Inc. Keith and Karen Borgstrom Jonathan Bouton and Judi Simon-Bouton

Heath and Mary Boyer Kathie Breuninger Casey Brown and Lisa Berry

Ben Bulkelev

Booker and Janet Bush

Robert Cairl **Curtis Canning** Sarah Carter Dodie Carvalho Annie Chappell Lavinia Clav Gloria Cristelli

Crowell Foundation Matt Darrow

Victoria Dickson and

David Ahlfeld

Jim and Annemarie Dina Donovan and Meggin Eastman Glenn English

Andrew Erickson Donald and Donna Fisk Maureen Flannery Patty Gambarini Jason Gerrol Josee Goldin

Scott and Sonya Gray-Wulff

Al Griggs Jody Gross Margo Hablutzel Ciara Hayden Tracy Hightower Mike Hoffman Gretchen Hurlburt John and Nomi Stadler Michael Jacobs Liz Jacobson-Carroll Anne M. Janeway Jonah Keane

Shaun and Patricia Kenney

Tim Kipp Carrie Kistner

Thomas and Kathryn Kucab

Michael Leff

Deborah Levheim Geoffrey Lister Geoff Lobenstine **Bob Ludwia** Sue MacKenzie Janet Marano Marcy Marchello

Dave McDonald and Dita Varleta

Gregory Melville Wade Mergen Cordelia Merritt Mitch's Marina **Emily Monosson** Joan Monroe Susan Morrello and

Michael Mauri

Nathan Salwen **Emily Nichols**

Beth Notar Mickey Nowak

Randy and Storme Odell Michael Packard

Pete and Sophie Rogers

Suzanne Rogers

Lance Parker Jim Perrv Rhonda Pruzinsky Your donations help plant trees along our rivers and many other great projects.

Susan Roman

Wisty Rorabacher and Judy Draper

David Ruderman Sandra Sonnichsen

Ian Sorrell

William Spademan, Mary Link

and Emi Link

Robert and Diann Speth

Robert Stern Shelley Steuer

Kristen Sykes and Fred Beddall

Claude Tellier Peter Tomb

Melinda Underwood

West Hill Energy and Computing, Inc.

Peter Westover Bruce and Greta Wilcox Nathan Woodruff Thomas Wright Allen Young

Gifts in honor:

Alicea Charamut, from Rosemarie and David Rhodes All those who are working to make a difference in the health of our planet and its inhabitants! from Allyson Gillette

Andrew Fisk, from Lavinia Clay Andrew Fisk, from Maria Fernandez Bob Sutherland, from Dotty Janke Dana Gillette, from Tracy Hightower Dr. Andrew Larkin, from Curtis Canning Hanna Sylvia, from Josee Goldin Laura P., from Geoffrey Lister Marion Griswold, from Carla Cooke

Mary Link, from Gregory Melville

Pat Sharron, from Michael Dynia

Peter Anthony Mazen, from Alan and Marianne Lazarus

Ron Rhodes, from Tim and Cathy Claflin The Holt Family, from Rachel Andres

The South Branch of the Sugar River, Goshen, NH, from Sandra Sonnichsen

Gifts in Memory:

Allan Belanger, from Paula Belanger Bruce Conway, from Glenn Conway Chuck Connington, from Carolyn Griswold Chuck Connington, from Douglas Stotz Chuck Connington, from Julia Heard Chuck Connington, from Kellie Sisco

If you joined during this time and don't see your name or you prefer a different listing, please contact Marion at 413-772-2020 ext. 201 or mgriswold@ctriver.org.

Not a member yet? You can join us in working together for our rivers. CRWC commits to spending your donation wisely and efficiently to protect and restore our rivers. You can donate online at <u>www.ctriver.org</u> or contact Marion (above). Thank you!

"Your generous support and recent increases in the number of supporters has attracted increased support from foundations and others," said Lora Wondolowski, chair of CRWC's development committee. "It shows that CRWC is a growing, thriving organization-- foundations, companies, and other donors want to support innovative, growing organizations that are doing good work."

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Farms, Floods & You continued from page 1

The grant required a match and alone, the O'Donnells did not have the required resources. Ron worked with them to identify potential funding sources and helped with grant writing. Donations from CRWC members like you, additional grant funds, and the O'Donnell's in-kind contribution of farm equipment made this project possible.

Last October, a crew planted 240 native trees and shrubs along the Connecticut River, protecting Trinity Farm from further erosion for decades to come. "We do things with a long-term inter-generational approach," noted Rob O'Donnell. "CRWC puts this into action, preserving the quality of land and river for generations to come. CRWC came through in a way that far exceeded our expectations. We hope to do more with CRWC in the future."

PROTECTED FARMS = CLEANER RIVERS

This is just one of many farms and river banks you have helped. Thanks to your generosity, CRWC has planted more than 11,000 native trees and shrubs along local rivers since Tropical Storm Irene four years ago. So far, \$40,000 has been spent helping nine small farms cover the cost of implementing projects like tree plantings, invasive plant removal, and others that directly improve water quality. In 2016, three new farms will receive an estimated \$75,000 for similar projects.

Over the next five years, even more of this work will be possible thanks to the \$10 million dollar grant awarded to

CRWC and six partners by the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program. Matched dollar-for-dollar, \$20 million will fund pollution reduction projects on farm and forestland throughout the Connecticut River basin.

Thanks to the many CRWC members, project partners, and funders – New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Dextra Baldwin McGonagle Foundation – for supporting these projects and making our rivers cleaner.

You can learn more about Trinity Farms at <u>Facebook.com/</u> TrinityFarmNH

Atlantic Salmon and Atlantic Sturgeon continued from page 1 of years. However, the size of fish found in recent capturing projects indicates successful spawning in both 2013 and 2014. It was possible that these juveniles were parented by Hudson River sturgeon. But genetic testing verified these are Connecticut River natives. Great news!

CRWC works in all four river states for a cleaner, healthier river to support these fish and many other wildlife that call our rivers home.

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Individuals like you have helped to transform the Connecticut River from "the best landscaped sewer in the nation" into a nationally-recognized treasure. Since our founding in 1952, CRWC members have come together to form a powerful force for positive environmental change in New England.

Please join us today.

Yes! I want to help protect and preserve the Connecticut River and its watershed.

☐ I'd like to become a sustaining member with a monthly gift of \$
☐ Enclosed is my gift of \$
Payment method: □Check □Visa □Mastercard
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City, State, Zip
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Checks: payable to CRWC.
Donate online: www.ctriver.org
☐ Send me more information about making a bequest, gift annuity, or

other legacy gift and joining the Long River Society.

Donate today to help plant more trees that protect our riverbanks and farms from floods.



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Upcoming Events

We've packed 2016 with fun & educational events about our rivers. Here are some coming soon. **Visit our online calendar for more information, www.ctriver.org/news-events, or call 413-772-2020.**

PROJECT NATIVE FILM FEST

Saturday, March 5, 2016

Tower Theaters; South Hadley, MA

CRWC is proud to sponsor this FREE event, packed with award-winning environmental films. Tickets are required but admission is free. More info at Projectnative.org.

THE POWER OF WATER / THE POWER OF WORDS



Saturday, March 5, 2016; 1pm

Great Falls Discovery Center; Turners Falls, MA

Learn more about the relicensing of five hydropower plants on the CT River and have a say in how they operate in the future. Participants will be able to submit public comment, which will also be part of a public art piece to be installed at the Vermont State House and other locations around New England.

CRWC OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, March 16, 2016; 4-6pm CRWC Headquarters; Greenfield, MA

We invite you to join us to celebrate World Water Day. Drop in for a few minutes or stay for a few hours. We'll provide the refreshments. Hope to see you there!

HISTORY UNDERWATER

Saturday, April 2, 2016; 1pm

Great Falls Discovery Center; Turners Falls, MA

Annette Spaulding is an avid CT River scuba diver. Hear about her underwater adventures and discoveries including the Native American petroglyph she recently found and the larger one she's still searching for. Nolumbeka Project will give further details about the Native American history in the region.

THE CONNECTICUT: NEW ENGLAND'S GREAT RIVER

Saturday, April 23, 2016; 1pm Keene Public Library; Keene, NH

Join Adair Mulligan to discover the history and natural beauty of our great river. She explores the many issues involved in managing the health of this major river and how citizens have created a vision for its future. Q&A with CRWC staff to follow.

Valley Gives Is Back!

Valley Gives returns this year on **May 3**! You can help CRWC win cash prizes by making your online donation as part of Valley Gives – a 24-hour online giving event. This is a fun way to help your rivers and make your donation to CRWC go further. Learn more at www.ctriver.org/valleygives.

WORLD FISH MIGRATION DAY

Saturday, May 21, 2016

World Fish Migration Day is a one-day international event to raise awareness on the importance of open rivers and migratory fish. CRWC will join the fun with multiple events along the Connecticut River. See our online calendar for details: www.ctriver.org/news-events

ANNUAL SHAD BAKE

Saturday, June 4, 2016; 3-6:30pm

Connecticut River Museum; Essex, CT

Stop by CRWC's table at this fun annual event. Great food & beautiful river views...what's better?

CRWC ANNUAL RIVER CELEBRATION 2016

Saturday, June 25, 2016

Brunelle's Marina; South Hadley, MA

Join fellow river friends, CRWC members, staff & trustees at this annual event. We will kick off the summer with a fun day celebrating our rivers. Details coming soon! www.ctriver.org/celebration

20TH ANNUAL SOURCE TO SEA CLEANUP

September 23 & 24, 2016

Visit www.ctriver.org/cleanup for more information about this fun and meaningful river cleanup event.



Where in the Watershed?

Can you guess where this photo was taken?

HINT: This is an underwater petroglyph.

Send us your guess in the enclosed envelope or email where@ctriver.org. All entries received by March 31 will be entered for a prize! Winner will be announced in the next newsletter.

