

The *Eightmile River Watershed* News

Fall 2012

Getting Wet for the Eightmile



Students Candice Peck (Goodwin College), Kevin Reidemeister and Jordan Giaconia (UCONN) and James Lacey (Goodwin College) prepare to head out to monitoring spots along the Eightmile.

This summer with the help of four student volunteers, ten sites were monitored along the Eightmile River for bacteria and temperature changes. Ten weeks of data were collected which will be used by ERWSCC to assess water quality.



On-site field training provided by ERWSCC members Linda Bireley and Bernie Gillis.

Chairman's Column

We as a species are unlike any other in that we place great emotional value on sensory experiences. But although the delicacy and grandeur of the natural beauty of the Eightmile River landscape was one of the motivations for seeking federal Wild and Scenic designation, it was never the driving rationale. In fact this reason never officially shows up anywhere - not in our scientific studies, not in the management plan to protect natural resources and not in the bill for designation that went before Congress. Yet in all our public outreach meetings and other forums for feedback leading up to designation we constantly heard about the need to save our views and vistas, our fields, our historic structures, our feeling of ruralness and the spirit of nature that is the reason many of us live here. People's impression of and attachment to the Eightmile is grounded in their senses.

So although what we feel about this watershed is important in our personal lives, what really makes the Eightmile truly exceptional are the qualities, which for the most part, are beyond our senses. These are the underpinnings that won the Eightmile River watershed its Wild and Scenic designation as one of the great river systems in the country. Some of the Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs) identified in our application to Congress included an intact surface and groundwater hydrologic system; exemplary water quality and aquatic habitat with few sources of degradation; high biodiversity and the presence of unique ecological communities and systems; and an outstanding overall watershed ecosystem.

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- Favorite Butterfly Hike
- Open Space - Beyond Borders
- Town Initiatives
- Backyard Birding



Are you RiverSmart?

Ever Thought About Using Permeable Pavement?

What? Permeable Pavement? Isn't it supposed to be impervious? Don't we want a surface we can plow when it snows and then when it rains, for the water to drain off quickly? Well yes, we have the term right and yes, we still want a surface we can plow and one the water drains off quickly. But, what we don't want is water drain-



Pervious pavement NEMO-CT

ing off an impervious surface, such as traditional concrete or asphalt, and ending up discharging directly to our streams and ponds. Water that drains off impervious driveways, roads and parking lots picks up the pollutants that have been deposited there since the last rain washed it off. And hot?! Imagine a blistering August day, then a thunderstorm. Sure it cools things down, but it also sends a flush of hot water to our streams creating even more stress for the creatures living there.

Permeable pavement offers a hard surface that can be plowed but still allows water to infiltrate and minimizes runoff. As the water infiltrates, it travels through bedding layers and then natural ground before ending up in streams and ponds. The result is cooler and cleaner water in our streams! Like to fish? Another benefit is a more natural groundwater condition that helps keep our streams flowing in the summer.

Cost is always a consideration. While there may be a higher up-front cost with permeable pavement, it also requires less pipe, catch basins, and detention basins (and therefore less maintenance to these items). Permeable pavement is not suitable for every site, (but there are also many other permeable surface treatment options) and it must be installed and maintained properly to obtain all the benefits. But yes, it is possible to have that plowable surface, and drain it too!

For more information check out this website....

<http://nemo.uconn.edu/tools/stormwater/pavements.htm>



Porous concrete NEMO-CT

Mailbox Missing Something?



Get your RiverSmart Mailbox Decal today by taking the short RiverSmart Pledge at...
www.eightmileriver.org

Bottles and Cans and Trash – Oh My!

My morning walk in Lyme takes me along Honey Hill Lane to Mount Archer where I turn off onto Macintosh, before crossing Route 156 to Beaver Brook for a total of 2.5 miles before turning around. I've been doing this five-mile walk for over 10 years and during this time I've picked up the roadside litter of bottles, cans and garbage. Last year I got to wondering just how much stuff is dumped onto our roads. So over the past year the collected bottles and cans were counted and weighed separately from the other litter. Why separate out the cans and bottles? My theory going into this was that when folks participate in organized roadside cleanups everything collected gets treated as trash, even though most of it could be recycled. So just how much litter ends up on roadsides in the three main Eightmile River watershed towns?

Not including state roads like routes 156, 85 and 82 as well as U.S. Route 11 there are a total of 209 miles of town roads with 41 in Lyme, 120 in East Haddam and 48 in Salem. Over the one-year period of picking up roadside litter on 2.5 miles of town roads in Lyme I collected 613 bottles and cans totaling nearly 75 pounds and around 13.0 pounds of non-recyclable litter.

Now I think the walking route I take is representative of our three-town road system with part of my walk on a dead-end lane while the others are more heavily travelled to varying degrees. If we divide the 2.5 miles of road into the total for the towns and multiply that times my collection numbers this is the projected end result per year:

Total # of town road miles = 209
Total number of cans and bottles = 51,250
Total pounds of cans and bottles = 6,350
Total pounds of all other litter = 1,090

OK, this is hardly peer-reviewed science, but it is useful insight into the volume of litter that is ending up along our local roadsides each year with most being recyclable. Imagine if all this trash was picked up with most of it being recycled. And think of the result if this total included state and federal roads as well. Also in Lyme, for example, when recyclables are brought to the recycling center the town receives an average of \$15/ton – not a lot, but something.

Here are some thoughts:

- Look at the big picture. If these numbers represent just what is tossed onto our roads, think about what we can recycle in our homes and everyday life activities;
- Let's clean up our roads. They look better and it's better for the environment;
- When doing organized, roadside litter cleanups separate recyclables from other trash using different colored trash bags to easily delineate recyclables from garbage.

Remember, picking up our roadsides is a little thing, but it all begins to add up, and as the saying goes – **“every litter bit hurts”**.

-Anthony Irving

What To Do in the Eightmile

Favorite Hike for Butterflies - WALDEN PRESERVE

Walden Preserve, located on Hagen Rd. in Salem Connecticut, is owned by The Nature Conservancy and managed by The Salem Land Trust. There are over 400 acres open to the public 365 days a year. The land was threatened by development but thanks to the foresight of David Bingham of Salem the property is now permanently preserved.

There are over 7 miles of hiking trails through the preserve most of which are an easy walk. Terrain is generally flat and the trails are well maintained and clearly marked. **Fifty-seven species** of butterflies have been seen at Walden. From the parking area follow mowed trails through Bodman and Wildflower Meadows. Some of the more common butterflies, including *Sulphurs* and *Swallowtails* can be seen nectaring on the wildflowers in bloom in these meadows.

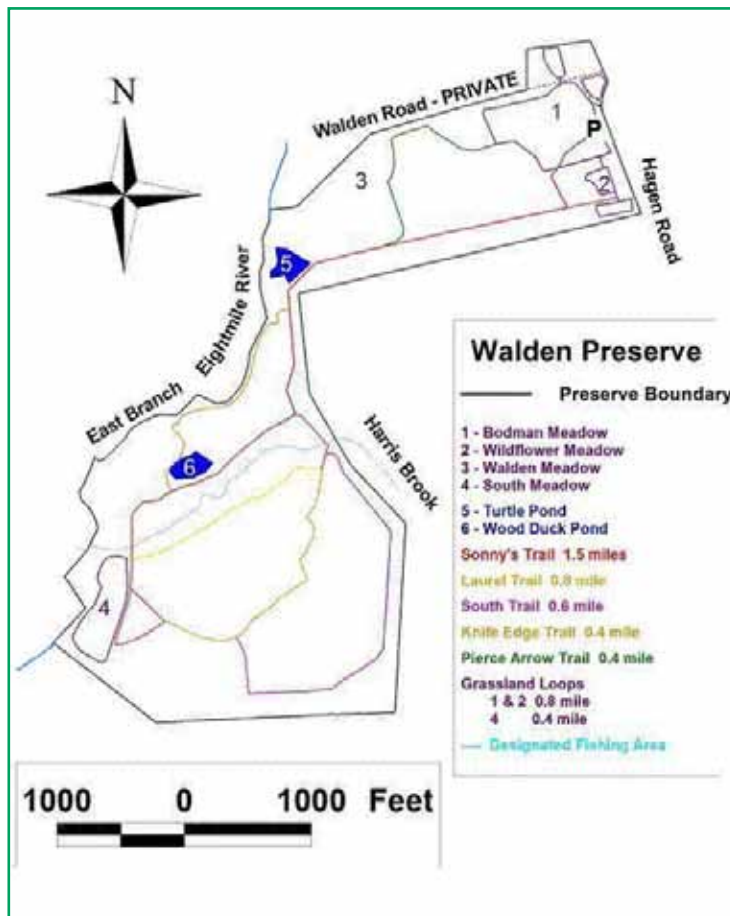
For an extended walk follow Sonny's Trail (red trail) from Bodman Meadow to South Meadow a 1 ½ mile hike. This is a mostly wooded trail that will take you past Walden Meadow, through the old gravel pit, past 2 ponds and finally into South Meadow. Along the trail many woodland species can be seen. Continue on Sonny's Trail along the east side of South Meadow, a great location for *Duskywings*, then turn west towards South Meadow and follow the trail around South Meadow where *Skippers*, *Blues* and *Satyr*s can be seen.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

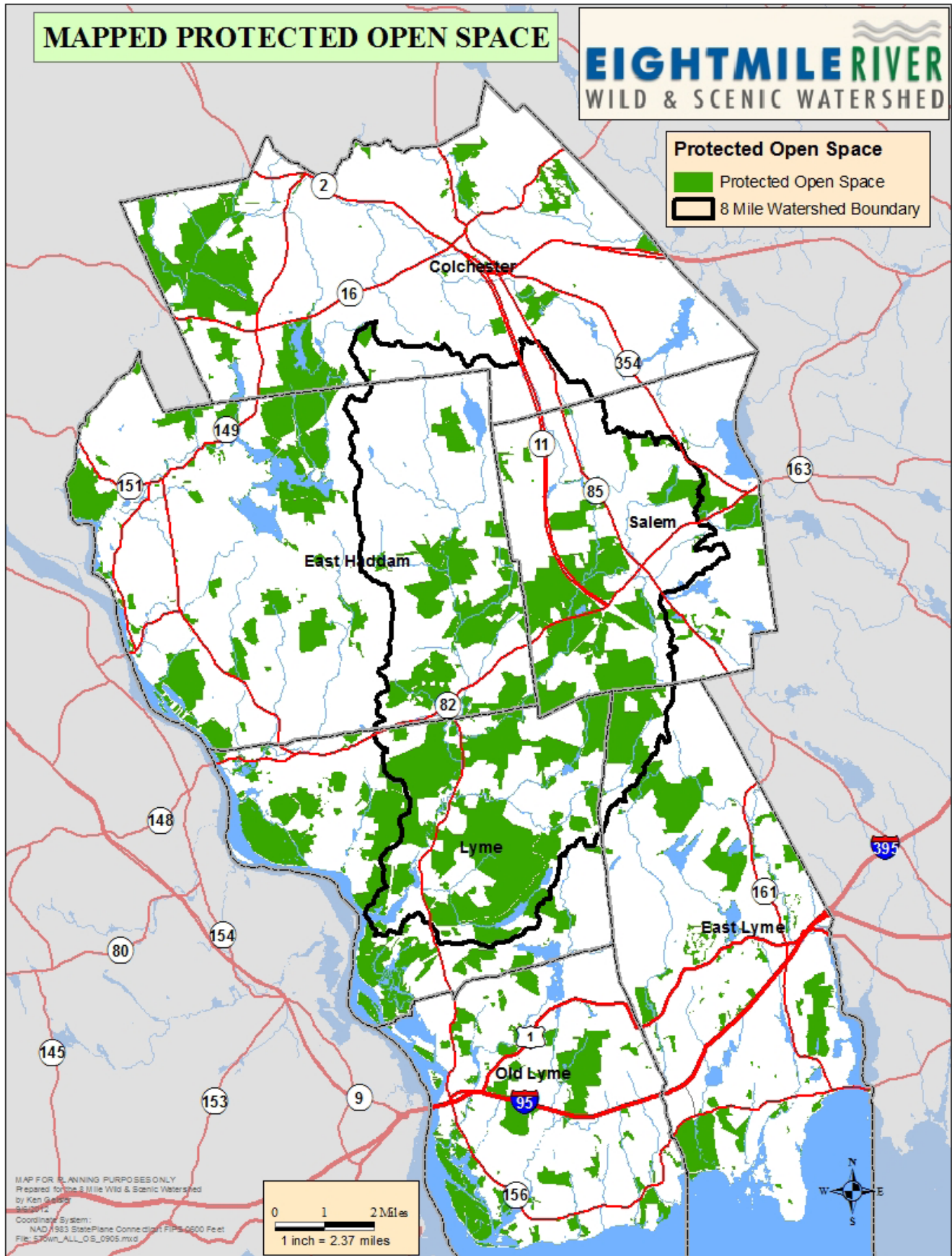
Reconnect to Sonny's Trail near Harris Brook and head back towards the parking area. On your return, take Knife Edge Trail, (orange trail) which will take you around Wood Duck Pond and above the East Branch of the Eightmile River. This trail is very narrow in places and has some steep but short climbs on old tailings from the gravel operations. The occasional butterfly can be seen here but it is one of the more interesting trails in the preserve. Knife Edge will reconnect with Sonny's Trail just before Turtle Pond. Continue on until you re-enter Bodman Meadow and then follow the mowed trail around the edge of Bodman Meadow back to the parking area.

-Richard Chyinski



Checklist for Common Butterflies of Walden Preserve

- Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
- Question Mark
- Black Swallowtail
- Eastern Comma
- Spicebush Swallowtail
- Mourning Cloak
- Cabbage White
- American Lady
- Clouded Sulphur
- Red Admiral
- Orange Sulphur
- Red Spotted Purple
- Azure
- Monarch
- Great Spangled Fritillary
- Common Wood Nymph
- Pearl Crescent
- Little Wood Satyr
- American Copper
- Silver Spotted Skipper



Looking Beyond Borders....ERWSCC periodically updates open space mapping in the watershed and has historically focused on the three main watershed towns of Salem, East Haddam and Lyme. In an effort to plan on a bit larger scale, this map was recently completed, showing parcels of protected land in the towns of Colchester, East Haddam, Salem, Lyme, East Lyme and Old Lyme. Parcels shown on this map are those considered legally protected open space. For reference purposes, the six-town area is 231 square miles and the Eightmile Watershed is 62 square miles.

~ WILD & SCENIC DESIGNATION ~

A Wild & Scenic Designation is special. It literally takes an “Act of Congress”. In order to be considered Wild & Scenic, a river must exhibit at least one Outstanding Resource Value (ORV). The Eightmile River has six ORVs, described below:

1. **Watershed Hydrology**—a natural intact flow regime well below the thresholds for degradation
2. **Water Quality**— biological indicators show very high water quality with few sources for degradation and a mostly intact riparian corridor
3. **Geology**—locally and regionally significant geologic features
4. **Unique Species and Natural Communities**—studies for rare species (regional, national and global), biodiversity and ecological communities indicate the watershed is in the top tier for the New England region
5. **Intact Watershed Ecosystem**—considered to be the most outstanding characteristic of the Eightmile is the intact, high quality ecosystem present throughout the entire watershed
6. **Cultural Landscape**—a rural watershed with winding scenic roads, historic settlements and a bucolic landscape

Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee

The Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee or ERWSCC for short is responsible for monitoring the ORVs and taking steps to address concerns as identified. The subcommittees and some of their more recent accomplishments are described below.....

Monitoring & Science Subcommittee (Chair-Linda Bireley)

- Just completed the third season working with student volunteers, local health departments/districts and DEEP monitoring bacteria and temperature changes.
- Supports Rapid Bioassessment Macroinvertebrate sampling by Three Rivers Community College for aquatic life support assessment.
- Participates in the Eightmile River Invasive Species Management Area initiatives to support invasive species identification and eradication.
- Recently initiated a field study to monitor the 136 acre burned portion of Devil’s Hopyard State Park, partnering with UCONN Extension and DEEP.

Protection & Management Subcommittee (Chair-Rob Smith)

- Completed a municipal stormwater outlet mapping project under a grant from Long Island Sound Futures Fund providing data and recommendations for stormwater management to the three main watershed towns. (see pg 6).
- Is in the process of updating open space mapping for the watershed and surrounding towns for future priority planning.
- Facilitates a multi-town planning initiative to connect hiking trails across town borders.

Outreach & Education (Chair-Sue Merrow)

- Conducts outreach programs to local and regional groups, and educational institutions.
- Hosted a regional training event for the National Park Service on Wild & Scenic policies and implementation.
- Plans and supports public outreach events to connect folks to the watershed. Check for updates on “Eightmile River Watershed” Facebook site.
- Is in the process of developing a mini-grant program for local organizations to support activities that help protect the ORVs.
- Is initiating an award program to benefit local high school seniors continuing their studies at an institution of higher education in environmental issues.

Project Review Subcommittee (Chair-David Bingham)

- Provides comments on Eightmile River Watershed resources as appropriate for local, state and federal permitting review processes.
- Assists with the review of local regulations

Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee Members

Anthony Irving, Chair
Town of Lyme

Nathan M. Frohling, Vice-Chair
The Nature Conservancy

Gloria Fogarty, Secretary
Town of Salem

Bernie Gillis
Town of East Haddam

David B. Bingham
Salem Land Trust

Eric Belt
Town of Salem

Randy Dill
Town of East Haddam

Barbara James
Town of Salem

Linda Bireley
Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Richard Chyinski
Salem Land Trust

Parker Lord
Town of Lyme

Susan Merrow
Town of East Haddam

Melvin Woody
Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Eric Block
Town of Lyme

Rob Smith
East Haddam Land Trust

Jamie Fosburgh
National Park Service

Eric Thomas
CT DEEP

Staff

Patricia Young
Program Director



We are now on
Facebook!

Check for Upcoming
Events
and “LIKE” us at
“Eightmile River
Watershed”

Management Efforts in the Eightmile Towns

A “Pulling Together Initiative” Benefits the Eightmile River Watershed

Many of the groups involved in the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee are also involved with the Eightmile River Invasive Species Management Area (ERISMA). Rather than tackling invasive species on a town by town, or parcel by parcel basis, ERISMA’s efforts throughout the watershed ensure that the right tactics are applied at the right scale. Japanese Stiltgrass remains an invasive plant of concern, and ERISMA is working hard to minimize its presence on the landscape. To that end, it is part of a Connecticut River Watershed grant project, with funding to treat stiltgrass on state-managed roads.

The Pulling Together Initiative (PTI) of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation will support projects coordinated by six separate invasive species management areas along the entire length of the Connecticut River. Stiltgrass control is in its third year in the Eightmile, with private landowners and the towns of Lyme, Salem and East Haddam cooperating with ERISMA partners to control stiltgrass on local road frontage. But, the heavier traffic and rate of speed on roads such as Routes 82 and 156 require greater safety precautions and a permit to work in the right-of-way from the State Department of Transportation.

The PTI grant will pay for 2 years of stiltgrass control on state roads in the watershed. ERISMA will conduct searches for the plant and a DOT-approved contractor will apply

a low-concentration herbicide spray to prevent plants from setting seed. By preventing seed set, the potential spread of stiltgrass is reduced. Seed readily travels along riparian corridors and roadsides, so work being done today should help keep stiltgrass from overtaking significant areas of otherwise healthy forest and stream habitat.

Do you have stiltgrass on your property? Help controlling smaller populations of this plant is available. For questions on identification and control strategies, please contact David Gumbart of The Nature Conservancy, at (203) 568-6290, or dgumbart@tnc.org.



Japanese Stiltgrass along road right of way

Eightmile River Watershed -Town News

Effective June 1, 2012, the Salem Planning & Zoning Commission adopted a comprehensive Plan of Conservation and Development, as required by the State of Connecticut every ten years. The Plan was developed by a committee of nine volunteers who worked for almost three years to fulfill the criteria necessary to guide various town boards and commissions in their respective management obligations. Community input was sought and utilized in the creation of this document. Of special interest to ERWSCC is the recommendation that Salem expand its riparian corridor overlay zone regulations from the tributaries within the Eightmile River Watershed to all perennial watercourses located within town boundaries. Community ideas and involvement will be welcome during the forthcoming process and the focus will be on protecting the high quality of all Salem’s water resources.

-Gloria Fogarty

Update on Stormwater Grant

Two years ago, ERWSCC received a \$40,000 grant administered through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund to conduct mapping and evaluation of stormwater outfalls in the three main watershed towns of Salem, East Haddam and Lyme. The engineering firm of Nathan L. Jacobson and Assoc., Inc. was hired to field locate and map all the municipal outlets then rate their need for retrofitting based on current condition and environmental factors. Over 1100 outlets were mapped inclusive of the three towns and the top ten outlets in need of retrofit in each town were presented in greater detail in the report. ERWSCC will continue a second phase of the grant to work with the towns to apply for additional funds to implement some of the changes recommended. While it’s hard to get excited about mapping stormwater outlets, they are a critical part of the road drainage infrastructure. This mapping combined with specific information about each outlet, will allow town crews to more efficiently maintain current systems and plan for improvements. The full report will be available soon at...www.eightmileriver.org

Be a Citizen-Scientist

Want to know if the bird you saw in your yard is a rarity? Log on to www.ebird.org and find out what is being reported in your area or anywhere in the US. Then add your report.

The website is located at the Cornell University Ornithology Lab. Citizen-scientists like you and me have reported almost 100 million sightings over the years, providing the laboratory with a huge data base that helps us understand bird populations, migration patterns, historical changes, and trends that help us establish and monitor policies to protect endangered wildlife.

Label your sighting as a report from your “yard,” and you can compare your sightings with all other yards being reported in CT or the nation or the world. And you can use the site to find out when birds are likely to appear in spring or head south in the fall.

I found out something amazing about the Eightmile River watershed this summer by using the website to correlate all my bird reports from the watershed, including my yard, in a “patch.” I compared our local patch to sightings in other patches (including famous birding locations and national parks). It turns out our watershed is one of the best summer birding locations reported in the state and one of the top 50 “patches” in the nation, in terms of how many species nest here and can be seen or heard in July (over 60!).

Add your reports and learn a lot about our native birds, while contributing vital data to this important database, one yard at a time! It will reinforce the conclusion that the Eightmile River watershed we live in is an oasis for threatened wildlife despite our heavily developed corridor.

- David Bingahm



Indigo Bunting



Joe-Pye-weed - native late summer bloomer
Illustration by Gail Easton www.gaileaston.com

For more **information** about the Eightmile River Watershed, please visit our website at www.eightmileriver.org or call us at (860) 345-8700

Chairman's Column continued from page 1

It is the sum of these parts, that along with a cultural landscape, which still today reflects the historic patterns and connections with our colonial past, which truly exemplify the Eightmile.

As I journey throughout the watershed I don't feel the Eightmile is necessarily any more beautiful or special than other parts of our towns. We are privileged to live in a rural landscape that still reflects the natural characteristics of structure and function that are so quickly disappearing elsewhere. But there are ongoing pressures. From 2000 to 2010 population in the three main watershed towns increased from 14,236 to 15,703 or about 10%. If one looks back at 1970 figures, population has more than doubled from 7613. The point is, if this trend continues the values that we as communities place on our environment could be seriously compromised. That is the importance of designation for the Eightmile River landscape. It gives us more tools to help protect this one place at least. To be successful, however, we need the ongoing buy-in from our communities if we are to celebrate this exceptional watershed in 50 to 100 years from now.

So the next time you admire the beauty and tranquility of the Eightmile River watershed remember that we need to keep caring and working for its protection. There is too much at stake, not just for us, but also for all the creatures that call this place home. Appealing to our senses makes good sense all around.

-Anthony Irving

EIGHTMILE RIVER
WILD & SCENIC WATERSHED

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P.O. Box 70
Haddam, CT 06438

Join Us for
Riverfest 2012
October 13, 2-5pm



printed on recycled paper

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page featuring two stylized green grass stalks with black seed heads on either side, framing a blue wavy line representing water.

EIGHTMILE
RiverFest

October 13 2-5 pm
Devil's Hopyard State Park

More info? www.eightmileriver.org