



2016-2017



Along the Goodwin Trail: T to B. A woodland meadow, local dignitaries and board members at trail dedication and remnants of the past along the trail. P. Young

Richard H. Goodwin Trail Opens



Official Ribbon Cutting at the newly restored pedestrian bridge over the Eightmile River on the Richard H. Goodwin Trail. L to R, Art Carlson (East Lyme Conservation Commission), Chuck Barszcz (National Park Service) and Rob Smith (ERWSCC, E. Haddam Land Trust & Conservation Commission). *Photo by Humphrey Tyler*

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Chairman's Column:

With the dedication of the Goodwin Trail this past June, fourteen miles of forested habitat are now open for hiking. From East Lyme to East Haddam this mostly uninterrupted trail system shows off the Eightmile River watershed as a peaceful place to immerse our-

selves into the natural world. This coordinated effort between the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee, the watershed towns and the Town of East Lyme was promoted as one way to showcase this multifaceted landscape. To think that here in near-
continued on next page

Chairman's Column continued



On the Goodwin Trail

P. Young

2015-2016 Financial Report

Income

NPS Federal Funds

Annual Funds:	\$56,000
Cost-Share Grant*	\$7,300
Cost Share Grant * (carry over)	\$10,000
Total:	\$73,300

Expenditures

Operating Costs	\$45,702
Subcommittees	
-Education	\$2,433
-Project Review	0
-Mon. & Science	\$1,611
-Protection & Mgt.	\$940
-Executive	\$3,960
Cost Share Project	\$10,000
Other Projects	\$2,624
Total	\$67,270

*NPS Cost Share Grants can extend over multiple years

coastal Connecticut you can hike fourteen miles with hardly a hint of civilization is a testament to the watershed's largely unbroken forested landscape. For those of us who live within the Eightmile River system it is literally the nature of these surroundings that make it is so beguiling. And for those living outside the watershed the Goodwin Trail provides a regional resource for nature exploration.

Another way to look at the Goodwin Trail is to think of how it showcases the needs of the thousands of other species that inhabit this watershed. I read in Newsweek recently that according to the World Wildlife Federation the earth has lost almost 60% of its wildlife populations within the last 40 years because of human activity. What a startling and disturbing statistic. Our wildlife requires large blocks of open space to supply their life cycle requirements collectively resulting in a balance in nature. From top predator to microorganisms, there is interconnection between them all. As these connections are broken through habitat loss, species begin to drop out and because of their interdependence on one another a cascading effect of species loss sets in.

It reminds us of the adage of thinking globally and acting locally. The Eightmile River watershed with its 40,000 acres cannot by itself provide sanctuary enough for the long-term survival of all of our native flora and fauna, but it's a starting place. And as adjacent watershed groups, like the Salmon, continue to raise awareness about the importance of natural systems, our area of southeastern Connecticut stands out as a valuable refugium for our native flora and fauna.

It is the primary goal of the Eightmile committee to assist and facilitate management practices that foster a compatible relationship between all species inhabiting this river ecosystem. Which brings us back to the Goodwin Trail because here you can experience these habitat blocks and their connections with one another. Walk the trail and notice how you move through the system of uplands and outcrops, wetlands and waterways, different zones of forest and vegetation and how they are all connected. The Goodwin Trail shows you all the parts and how they merge into the whole. It's a great walk and an education as to how nature is put together. *Anthony Irving*

SMALL GRANTS, EASY PROCESS!

Sometimes a small infusion of cash at just the right time is all that's needed to get a great idea off the ground. With that in mind, the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Coordinating Committee has created a Community Small Grant Program. If you are an educator, a community leader, a civic group organizer...really anyone ...with an idea for a program or project that supports education and outreach to the local community about our amazing watershed, and if \$50 to \$300 would make your idea happen, we want to hear from you. Visit our website at www.eightmileriver.org and click on Eightmile River Small Grant Application on the home page, to find out the types of programs that would qualify, and you can fill out a simple application. We have a world-class resource right here in our backyard and it's also a fabulous classroom. Let's work together to take advantage of it.

Ed Bills Dam Removal Restores River Life

Elizabeth Robinson, Eightmile River Land Steward, The Nature Conservancy

After several years of planning The Nature Conservancy—partnering with American Rivers, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and several private land owners—completed the removal of the last re-

riverine ecosystem. Through a great deal of careful engineering and hard work the East Branch River channel was restored, providing access to an additional ten miles of the East Branch River for migratory fish. Sally



Newly restored riverine habitat.

maining dam on the East Branch of the Eightmile River.

Removal of the nearly 80-year-old dam at Ed Bills Pond began late September in 2015, as the first breach of the structure was created and water again flowed unencumbered under the bridge on Salem Road. As the project continued the pond underwent a remarkable transformation back into a

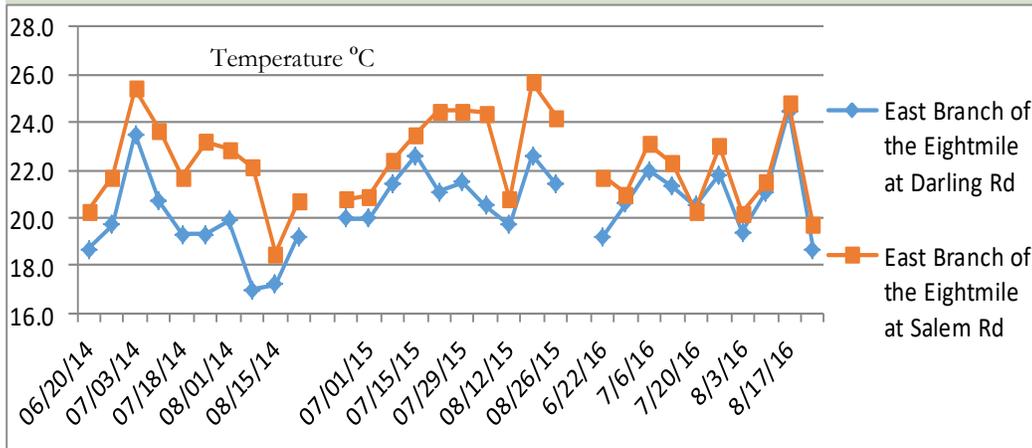
Harold, who serves as the director of river restoration and fish passage for the Connecticut chapter explains:

“Dam removal and fish-way construction help rebuild native migratory fish populations by providing access to upstream habitats critical for spawning.” Monitoring this past Spring showed the success of the project. Fluvial specialist species (those requiring swiftly flowing water) including long-nose dace and fall fish were already seen exploring the newly restored channel.

P. Young

A community tour of the project and tree planting took place in early October of 2016. Over 100 native saplings and tublings were planted along the river banks, helping to further restore the habitat and prevent erosion.

Immediate Temperature Improvements: Comparing the last three summers of data above the dam (blue line) with below the dam (red line), 2016 summer results showed critical improvements in water temperature. For full data report visit: www.eightmileriver.org



Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating

Committee Members

Anthony Irving, Chair

Town of Lyme

Bernie Gillis

Town of East Haddam

David B. Bingham

Salem Land Trust

Anthony Griggs

Town of Salem

Eric Belt

Town of Salem

Linda Bireley

Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Richard Chyinski

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Parker Lord

Town of Lyme

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Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Paul Armond

Town of Lyme

Rob Smith

East Haddam Land Trust

Mary Augustiny

Town of East Haddam

Susan Merrow

Town of East Haddam

Kim Barber-Bradley

Town of Salem

Jamie Fosburgh

National Park Service

Eric Thomas

CT DEEP

Elizabeth Robinson

The Nature Conservancy

Staff

Patricia Young

Program Director

Lyme Forest Block Recognized as an Important Birds Area

Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Important Bird Area Program Coordinator
Audubon Connecticut

This past summer, Audubon Connecticut, in partnership with Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection recognized the Lyme Forest Block as an Important Bird Area (IBA). This 60,000 acre forest block includes wooded areas in Salem, Lyme, East Lyme, Old Lyme, Colchester, and East Haddam that are important to the globally vulnerable Cerulean Warbler, near threatened Wood



Cerulean Warbler

Laurie Doss

Thrush, and a variety of other forest nesting bird species. The area also supports a variety of bird species listed on Connecticut's Threatened and Endangered Species List and overlaps

with the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Watershed.

Public recognition benefits IBAs by increasing landowner, local community, and visitor knowledge on the value of a site to birds. Once engaged, people make efforts to prevent disturbance to birds and their habitat, and partake in stewardship. Recognition of IBAs can build and strengthen community pride and provide leverage in attaining funding for monitoring, education, and habitat management. It can also spur the conservation of lands within or near IBAs and collaboration on projects. Lastly, IBAs have the support of Audubon's network of state offices and sanctuaries, chapters, and constituents. Public recognition of an IBA carries no regulatory authority and conveys no legal status, instead however, it encourages volunteer stewardship of local natural resources.

The Lyme Forest Block is a landscape-level Important Bird Area. Landscape-level IBAs are different from many previously recognized IBAs in their size and in the number of landowners. Any landowners that are within the boundary of these landscapes are eligible for the benefits of recognizing their properties as part of the IBA. For more information about landscape-level IBAs and to register your property as part of the Lyme Forest Block IBA, visit: <http://ct.audubon.org/conservation/important-bird-areas>.

Since 85% of our region's woodlands are privately owned, large blocks of forest, like the Lyme Forest Block, may have hundreds of landowners. Small actions by individual landowners can have a significant impact in maintaining large blocks of high quality habitat for birds. Here are some tips for managing your property with birds in mind:

Around the home, plant native vegetation that provides fruit, seeds, nectar, and hosts butterfly and moth larvae for birds to eat all year round.

Maintain or encourage a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees on your property. Conifers provide protection from the elements and predators in the winter months.

Along woodland edges, encourage the growth of vegetation of varying heights, from grasses and wildflowers, to shrubs, to small trees. This will create habitat for a wide variety of birds.

Promote a dense understory and midstory of native trees and shrubs that provides nesting and foraging habitat for species such as the Wood Thrush.

Retain snags and downed deadwood and create brush piles. Woodpeckers nest in holes in snags; while downed deadwood provides protection for ground nesting birds.

Learn more about invasive plants and develop a plan for monitoring and control.

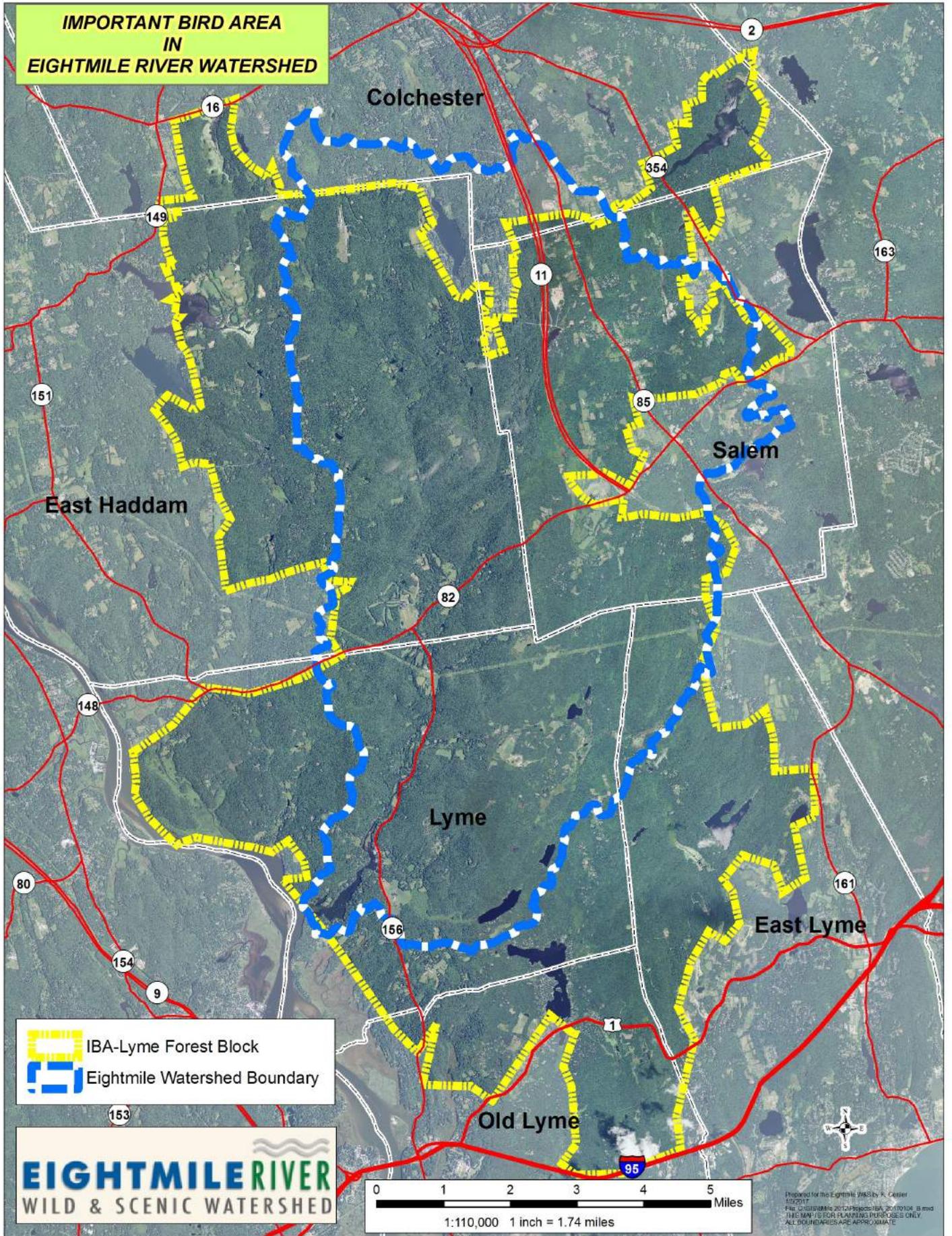
Promote a diversity of forest age classes from very young (<20 years; <10% of the property) to very old (>20 years; >75% of the property) across the property and landscape. Cerulean Warbler nest on the horizontal branches of mature trees, but forage in canopy gaps with younger vegetation.



Wood Thrush

A. J. Hand

**IMPORTANT BIRD AREA
IN
EIGHTMILE RIVER WATERSHED**



 IBA-Lyme Forest Block
Eightmile Watershed Boundary

**EIGHTMILE RIVER**
WILD & SCENIC WATERSHED

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
1:110,000 1 inch = 1.74 miles

Prepared for the Eightmile IBA by R. Capper
10/2017
File: C:\GIS\IBAs\2012\Proj\IBAs\20170104_IBA.mxd
THE MAP IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY
ALL BOUNDARIES ARE APPROXIMATE

Bugs in Our Water....That's a Good Thing?

Pat Young, Program Director, Eightmile River Watershed

Well to be a bit more precise, finding certain types of benthic macroinvertebrates in our local streams is a good thing, a very good thing. Every fall volunteers and students working with the Three Rivers Community College and ERWSCC, head out to our streams, brooks and creeks to conduct riffle assessments. Developed by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, this type of assessment uses riffle benthic macro-invertebrates (aka water bugs) to verify stream health.



A Roach-like Stonefly-A Riffle Dwelling Macroinvertebrate with a "0" Pollution Tolerance Rating

Certain species of insects, especially those in the stonefly, caddisfly and mayfly families, are not tolerant of pollution. So when a number of different species from these families are found in the collection sample it tells us the water quality is good or even excellent. The water bugs are collected in well-oxygenated riffle habitats by using an aquatic sampling net and turning over and gently scrubbing the rocks immediately in front of the net. Six sites in the same or adjacent riffles are sampled as part of the collection protocol. The contents of the net are then emptied into a container and the bugs are then sorted by type into white ice cube trays using tweezers. Each type is then identified and several representatives are preserved in a voucher and sent to the State DEEP lab for verification.

This type of assessment is done in the fall throughout the

state and the results are used as part of a biennial assessment to determine if a stream segment is meeting its aquatic life support goals. As with many watersheds, a primary threat to water quality is stormwater run-off also referred to as non-point source pollution. Non-point source pollution can include nutrients, pesticides, oils, salt, sand, sediment and other waste products that are discharged via stormwater or failing septic systems. Annual assessments allow us to monitor water quality to ensure our local streams are healthy.

This year 11 stream segments were assessed in the Eightmile River Watershed, including two brooks in Salem which have never been sampled. Final results should be available in spring of 2017, but even with drought conditions we can report that we found a variety of stoneflies, caddisflies and mayflies.



Three Rivers Community College Students at Ransome Brook in Salem with ERWSCC Board Member David Bingham and Toby the Dog.
P. Young

Salem Community Trail: A new bridge over Harris Brook hand built by dedicated volunteers expands the multi-use trail system that extends from Music Vale Road up to the town complex. Clear span bridges built above the FEMA flood zones minimizes riparian habitat impacts, channel erosion and potential flooding.
Photos courtesy of Sue Spang



Protecting Headwaters

By Andy George

The Colchester Land Trust acquired the Bulkeley Hill Preserve in August 2016. This new Preserve is a 115-acre parcel with frontage on scenic and rural Bulkeley Hill Rd. It is bounded on three sides by residential development and on one side by 15 acres already preserved by the Colchester



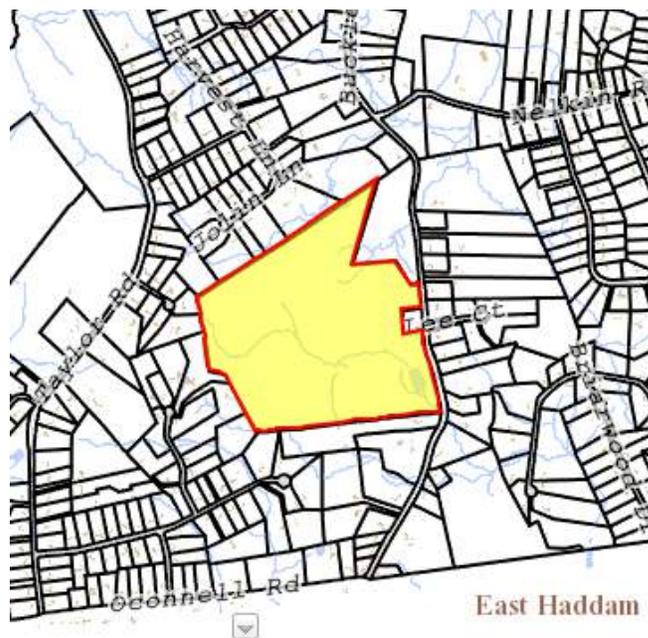
Land Trust. The land was offered to the Land Trust for a bargain sale. While this parcel primarily consists of upland hardwood forest, it also features a 23-

acre wetland system, a pond, vernal pools and intermittent streams that provide habitat for a diverse population of wildlife. The Bulkeley Hill Preserve is located in the headwaters for BOTH the Eightmile River and Salmon River watersheds, offering further protection to downstream habitat. As the preserve sits just north of Lake Hayward it is key to helping protect the lake as well. The long term manage-

ment plan is for it to become a community forest, open to the public with access to hiking trails and outdoor education.

The Colchester Land Trust currently has a capital campaign going to raise \$850,000 to protect 200 acres in Colchester and to repay a loan for the Bulkeley Preserve. They are about halfway to their goal. For more information or to contribute, please visit the website.

www.colchesterlandtrust.org



Community Events: As part of its commitment to the community ERWSCC was pleased to be able to present a variety of programs in 2016 and planning is already underway for 2017 programs.



- **Preserving Forests** with New England Forestry Foundation
- **FrogWatch USA** with Mystic Aquarium
- **Designing Stormwater Treatment Systems** with East Haddam Middle School
- **Stream Bug Program at Devil's Hopyard** with Trout Unlimited and Groton Middle School
- **Summer Family Programs at Devils Hopyard**
- **RiverFest 2016** with local and statewide conservation groups





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Go WILD on the Eightmile

Three Great Ways to Stay Connected

- **Visit our Website at www.EightmileRiver.org**
- **Call us at 860-345-8700**
- **“Like” us on Facebook
at Eightmile Wild & Scenic River Watershed**



Alewives in the Eightmile Photo by DEEP Inland Fisheries, Diadromous Program