



The Stream Watcher

Spring - March 2009

StreamWatch Mission

Protecting and enhancing our watershed through chemical, physical, and biological monitoring, restoration, appropriate action, and education. Volunteers are the key!

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The Watershed Association Turns 60!



The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has reached an important milestone in 2009 - we're celebrating our 60th Anniversary! From our humble beginnings in 1949 when a handful of concerned citizens banded together to help fight soil erosion and promote environmentally sound land use practices, to the Watershed Association of today -

making the "CASE" for clean water and the environment through Conservation, Advocacy, Science and Education - we've been protecting your water and your environment for six decades. We are your environmental voice.

With the loyal support of friends like you, we've evolved from one of the very first watershed associations in the nation into one of the country's largest and most successful watershed groups - and now we want you to share in our success! We're celebrating with "60 Events for 60 Years" combining speakers, how-to sessions, and fun-filled activities for children, families and adults. Visit <http://www.thewatershed.org/news/> and click on the "Spring 60th Calendar of Events" to learn more. Be sure to mark your calendar for these great programs and events, and don't miss one of our first 60th Speakers, Jeff Rotman (see details below).

Underwater Worlds: A photographic journey

7:30 p.m. Friday, March 20, Watershed Reserve

For 60 years the Watershed Association has been protecting your water and environment, and for 30 years award-winning underwater photographer Jeff Rotman has been capturing the wonder of our underwater worlds on camera. From sharks to sea anemones, join him for a book signing and pictorial tour of his global underwater adventures. Contact Nancy Apple at (609) 737-3735 x10 or napple@thewatershed.org to RSVP.

UPDATES AND HAPPENINGS



In the fall of 2008, the Watershed Association participated in World Water Monitoring Day, an international education and outreach effort that builds public awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world by engaging citizens through basic monitoring of their local water bodies. As part of World Water Monitoring Day, 73,000 people in 70 countries monitored their local streams and lakes and entered the data in an online database. The Watershed Association became a partner to raise awareness about the event and entered data collected by StreamWatch volunteers on a select group of sites on the Beden Brook, Stony Brook and Millstone River. The World Water

Monitoring Day 2008 report was recently released, which includes StreamWatch data and our outreach efforts. Visit www.wemd.org to view data and see the *Year in Review* report.

This January, the Watershed Association welcomed our new and returning mayors into office with a letter describing water quality in their town, accompanied by StreamWatch data. Armed with the chemical and biological health of the streams in their town, municipal officials can make more informed decisions on land use planning and local ordinances. The Watershed Association is available through our Municipal Assessment program to work closely with municipalities, providing guidance and recommendations on how to protect and improve water quality. We look forward to another productive year of protecting clean water in our watershed.

MAKE A DATE WITH YOUR LOCAL STREAM

Save the date for the 2009 Watershed-wide Stream Clean-ups! We are planning our third annual watershed stream clean-ups and hope to build upon the success of previous years. In 2008, we partnered with nine municipalities to remove five tons of trash from local waterways. In 2009, we hope to expand the number of towns, bringing people together from all parts of the watershed in a united effort to clean up our lakes and streams. Clean-ups are currently scheduled for April 25th and May 3rd, and we hope to add more on April 26th and May 2nd. Participating municipalities include Hightstown Borough, West Windsor Township, East Windsor Township, Franklin Township, Cranbury Township, Millstone Township, Monroe Township and Plainsboro Township. We hope to also partner with Hillsborough Township, Hopewell Township, Lawrence Township, and Princeton Township to conduct clean-up events there as well. Stay tuned for more information, or contact Rick Anthes at (609) 737-3735 ext. 30 or americorps@thewatershed.org to find out how you can get involved. We hope to see you there!



Shad in our 'Shed?

by Jim Waltman, Executive Director

Carl Alderson and Dave Bean are passionate about American shad. Alderson is a fisheries biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Bean works for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. The two are convinced that shad and their cousins in the herring family can be restored to the Raritan River Basin, including the Millstone River and its tributaries.

Shad are anadromous, which means that they spend most of their life at sea before migrating up rivers to spawn. To survive, they need both healthy freshwater and marine habitats and free passage between the two.

The fish are harmed by ocean pollution, polluted runoff in streams and rivers, and dams. Overfishing has become a larger and larger problem as ocean trawlers consume more and more fish. With shad stocks crashing throughout much of their range, fisheries biologists are seeking opportunities to make more spawning habitat available for the fish. To do so requires breaching dams, constructing "fish ladders" around dams that cannot be breached, and improving water quality.

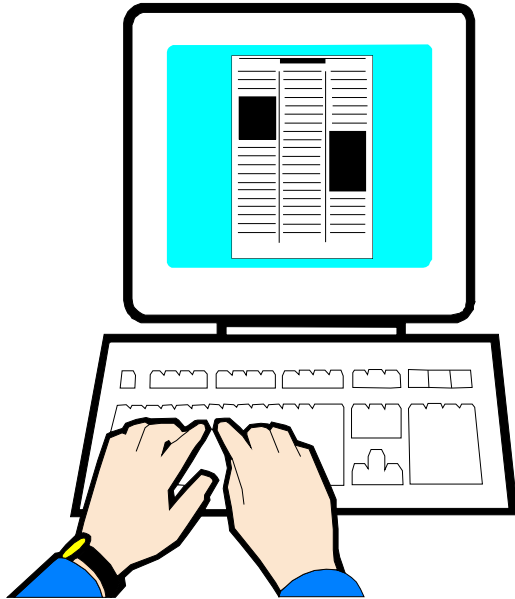
Currently, four dams prevent shad and other migratory fish from returning in any significant numbers to the Millstone River. The Calco Dam, a 206-foot former utility structure that extends five feet out of the water, is located on the Raritan River about two miles downstream from the Raritan's confluence with the Millstone. The dam currently blocks most shad attempting to make their way up the Raritan River, although a 15-foot wide "notch" in the dam allows some fish to pass when river flows are high. Two miles away, the Raritan's Island Farm Weir blocks most shad that make it that far, although some fish make it through a fish ladder over the dam. Smaller dams at the Weston Causeway and at Blackwells Mills block shad that make it past the first two obstacles (although I've met people who swear that they've seen shad in the Millstone further upstream).

Alderson and Bean think shad would do fine in the Millstone River, assuming that current impediments to their migration can be removed and that the water quality in the river does not deteriorate. They've asked the Watershed Association to help investigate the feasibility of restoring shad to the Millstone, and I have enthusiastically agreed. If approved, the feasibility study will investigate the removal of the Weston and Blackwell Mills dams to provide passage for shad and other fish, taking into consideration sediment contamination upstream of the dams and potential affects on wildlife, water quality, water quantity, flow, and adjacent wetlands.

Something happens to a river when its native fish are gone. A part of the river's soul is lost too. The loss of robust American shad runs from the Millstone happened so long ago that no one even knows to mourn. Fortunately, there are people like Carl Alderson and Dave Bean who can inspire us to dream.

Shad in our 'Shed? That would be something!





The Streamwatcher is now available online at

www.thewatershed.org/wm_library.php

Click on Newsletters to view recent and past issues of the newsletter. If you would like to view the newsletter online exclusively and no longer receive a paper copy, please contact Beth April at bapril@thewatershed.org or (609) 737-3735 ext. 17.

Attention Streamwatch Volunteers!!

We want to thank you for all of your hard work and dedicated service. Come enjoy a good old fashion BBQ-complete with hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, chips, drinks and more! Mark your calendar:

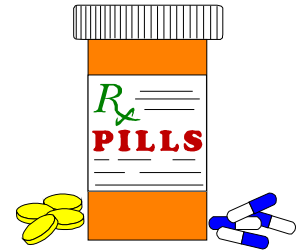
Volunteer Thank You Picnic!

Friday, June 5, 2009
5:30-7:30 pm
Watershed Reserve
31 Titus Mill Road
Pennington, NJ 08534



The Prescription for Clean Waterways

Many of us are familiar with common sources of non-point source pollution, including fertilizer, pet waste, and motor oil. Another common but often overlooked source of pollution in our waterways is over the counter and prescription medications. The proper storage and disposal of medications is important not only for household safety, but also for the health of our surface waters, groundwater, and ultimately, our drinking water. When medications are flushed down the sink or toilet, wastewater treatment facilities are unable to remove them from the water supply. As a result, these substances end up in our streams and lakes, posing a threat to wildlife and those who drink the water. For example, the US Geological Survey conducted a study of streams in Ohio in 2008. Scientists found a total of 12 antibiotic, 20 pharmaceutical, and 63 organic wastewater compounds at very low concentrations in the water, and 8 pharmaceutical and 37 organic wastewater compounds at very low concentrations in streambed sediments. These substances included chemicals found not only in medicines, but also in diesel fuel, asphalt and asphalt sealers, explosives, fragrances, tobacco, caffeine, and insect repellants.



The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has created the following guidelines to properly dispose of excess medications.

- ◆ Keep medicine in its original container. Mark out personal information on prescription bottles.
- ◆ Mix liquid medicine with undesirable substances like coffee grinds, cat litter, or dirt. Dilute pills with water, then add coffee grinds, cat litter, or dirt.
- ◆ Place bottles in an opaque container, such as a yogurt container, and secure the lid; or wrap in a dark colored plastic bag.
- ◆ Hide the container in the trash. Do not recycle.

Following these procedures will not only keep these products out of our water supply, but will also keep children safe by concealing the medications and making them undesirable to consume. In addition to disposing of unused medications, there are also programs that will take them for recycling and reuse, in the case of those that are not expired. For example, Earth911 provides information on recycling a number of products, including unwanted or outdated medications. Visit their website at www.earth911.com to enter your zip code to find recycling centers near you. Many pharmacies and local health departments also offer safe disposal programs.

For more information, contact the NJDEP Solid and Hazardous Waste Program at (609) 633-1418 and visit their website at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/rrtp/disposal.pdf>

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DATES TO REMEMBER

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|------------------------|---|
| March 20 th | Underwater Worlds: A photographic Journey. See page 1 for details. |
| March 21 st | CATs testing weekend. |
| March 28 th | BATs Identification Day from 9:30 am - 4:00 pm at the Kingsford Community Room. Remember that your macroinvertebrate sample can be collected up to two weeks before the identification day! Contact Beth April for more information or to pick up your sampling equipment. |
| April 4 th | CATs testing weekend. |
| April 7 th | CATs QA/QC Session from 6:00-8:30 pm. RSVP to Beth April at (609) 737-3735 x 17. |
| April 11 th | CATs QA/QC Session from 9:30 am to 12 pm. RSVP to Beth April at above number. |
| April 18 th | CATs testing weekend. |
| April 25 th | Stream Cleanups in Cranbury Township, Franklin Township, Hightstown Borough, Millstone Township, and Plainsboro Township. Contact Rick Anthes for more information and to volunteer at (609) 737-3735 x. 30 or americorps@thewatershed.org |
| May 2 nd | CATs testing weekend. |
| May 3 rd | Stream Cleanup in Monroe Township. Contact Rick Anthes for more information. |
| May 16 th | CATs testing weekend. |
| May 30 th | CATs testing weekend. |

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