



Westport River Watershed Alliance

Our mission:

Working together to protect and preserve the Westport River Watershed now and for future generations.

2018
Annual Report

Photo: Mark Goulding

Photo: Mark Goulding



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Dear Members and Friends:

2018 proved both challenging and rewarding. It was challenging because we maintained and expanded programs, projects and initiatives while at the same spending considerable time, energy and resources thinking about and planning our future. Led ably and adroitly by board member Marilyn Packard-Luther, WRWA board and staff members as well as volunteers devoted much of the year to renewing our Strategic Plan. Marilyn welcomed ideas and opinions from all parts of the WRWA community: leaders, staff members, friends, supporters, volunteers and the broader Westport River watershed community. Our reward: knowing the 2019-2024 Plan had been authored by an extraordinary team that reflects a broad cross-section of values and concepts that will serve us well for the foreseeable future.

River Center construction began as 2018 came to a close. We are indeed fortunate to be working with an extraordinary team: DSK architects of Concord and Dartmouth, MA and Page Construction of Stoughton. After nearly five years of planning, fund raising, securing needed legislation, permits, permissions, and searching for often-elusive pathways to approval, we are thrilled finally to be “doing something”. Reflecting on the experience, we have learned first-hand that success depends heavily on strong, creative professional partners, patience and an ever-present sense of humor.

All 2018 WRWA events achieved attendance goals and exceeded financial targets. Jeremy Grantham, keynote speaker at the 2018 Annual Meeting, was overwhelmingly well received. After posting Jeremy’s presentation on the WRWA web site we experienced the highest number of “hits” ever recorded. And since 2016 monthly River News circulation, both email and USPS, has doubled.

2019 promises to be a “Watershed” year (pun intended) as we plan for and move to the River Center new offices and resources at the Head of Westport. The updated Strategic Plan will guide renewal of our commitment to sustain and improve the health of the Westport River Watershed and the communities it connects. Our strong finances will enable us to continue and selectively expand investment in WRWA science, education, and advocacy programs, and in our community engagement initiatives. Most of all, we hope you will join us at upcoming events to celebrate our renewal and sustain successful partnerships.

“Bottom line”: Healthy finances, both operations and endowment (see Charts)



Tom Schmitt
WRWA President

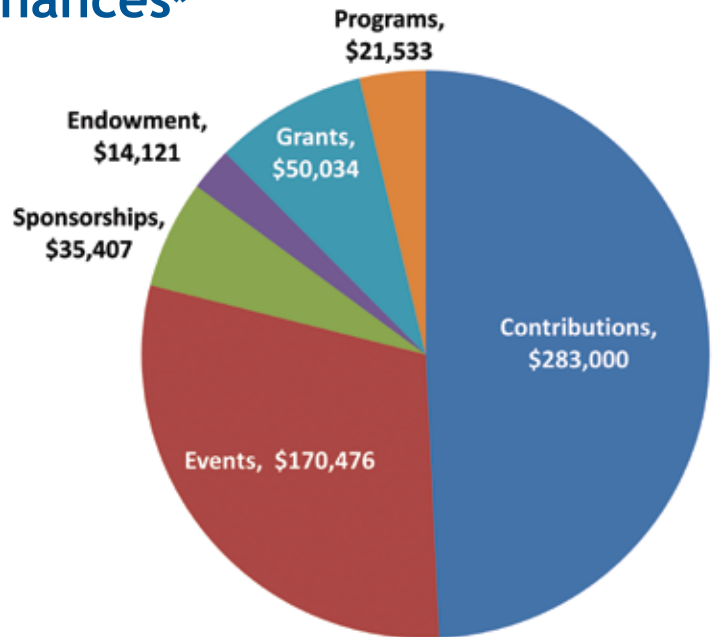


Deborah Weaver
Executive Director

Westport River Watershed Alliance 2018 Finances*

Sources \$574,571

- Education Revenue Up
- Exceeded all philanthropy goals
- Endowment spending at 2.5%



Uses \$461,796

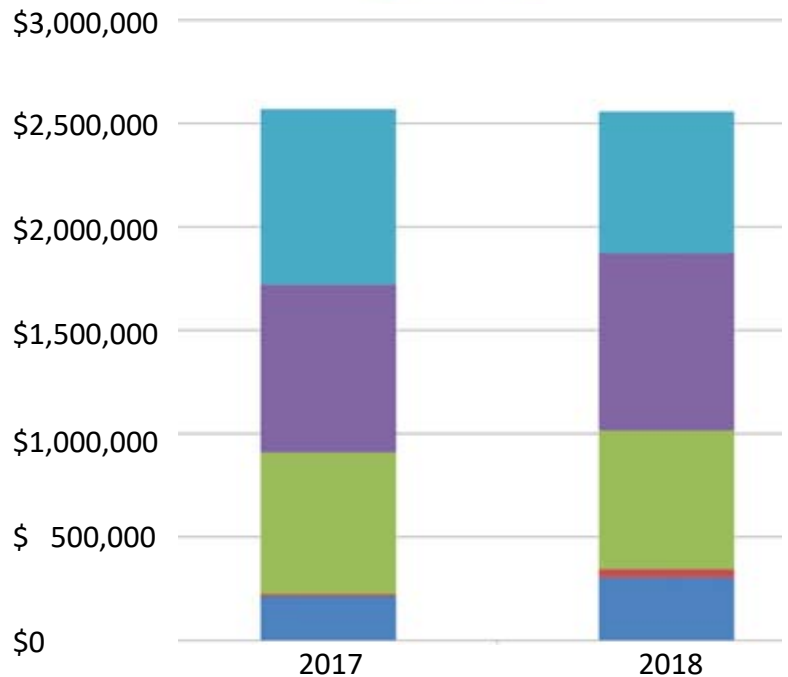
- Personnel costs down
- Event costs lowered
- Science Project spending increased



Assets

- Overall assets up \$75K
- Operating Account up \$90K
- Endowment down \$15K
- Great Staff
- Committed Members
- Generous Donors

- River Center Pledges & Grants
- River Center Accounts
- Endowment
- Fixed Assets
- Other Current Assets



*Unaudited

2018 Education Programs

Over 2,300 school children in grades Pre-K-High School participated in WRWA's Watershed Education Program (WEP). Our award-winning program enhances the existing school curriculum with hands-on, science lessons and field studies. WEP's main goal is to build a sense of local stewardship for our amazing natural surroundings. 2018 was an amazing year for the WEP Program, which continued to improve throughout the year by completing the following accomplishments:

- WRWA hosted 2 part-time Commonwealth Corps volunteers to build on our education and outreach programs. Our service members, Bailey Sweet and Ryan Nuttall, have brought so much positive energy and enthusiasm to our educational programs.
- WRWA continues to expand and update our curriculum with the latest science topics, adding lessons on the plants of the vernal pool, animal vision, fossils and the life cycle of the frog. Each year we add lessons requested by teachers to help cover science frameworks as part of the school's curriculum.
- The education staff created a new activity guide to encourage students and family members to learn more about the coastal habitats in Westport. "The Kid's Guide to Amazing Shoreline Activities" will be going out to students starting this spring. This project was funded by a grant from the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust, administered by the Bank of America as a Bank of America N.A., trustee.
- Fifth graders at Westport Middle School planted the 19,000th dune grass seedlings as part of the Dune Restoration Project. Students also researched the plants and animals that are adapted to survive in the dunes climate.
- WRWA has continued the successful partnership with the Westport Historical Society to provide a field study for 6th grade students at the Head of Westport. The field study taught students about how wetlands help protect the Westport River and the history behind the land use at the Head.
- Again this year, WRWA received funding from BayCoast Bank to host 2 local college interns to assist with our education and water quality monitoring programs. Our two interns, Page Veazie and Bailey Sweet, were a great addition to our education team.
- Summer science education programs were almost completely booked for the 2018 season. We hosted seven weeks of summer programs, reaching over 100 participants ages 3 to 16 throughout the season. We partnered with the Westport Cultural Council to offer 8 student scholarships to attend the summer program and created the Gay Gillespie Summer Scholarship fund that will sponsor 4 full scholarships for participants in the summer of 2019.



2018 Science and Advocacy Programs

Currently, the most dominant problem affecting the Westport River is pollution, most significantly from nitrogen and pathogens (fecal waste). Both branches of the river, along with numerous tributaries, are considered impaired waters by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) due to the high existing levels of bacteria and nitrogen. WRWA has been measuring bacteria levels in the River since 1991 and providing our data to the state. We test the Westport River weekly from June-August. 2018 results for the River are below. Basically we continue to see elevated fecal coliform bacteria levels during wet weather events. This summer was no exception.

WRWA Water Quality Results 2018								
Test Dates	Head of Westport	Doctors Point	Hix Bridge	Cadman's Neck	Westport Point	West Branch near 448 River Road	Charlton Wharf (mouth of River)	Rainfall in last 48 hours (inches)
6-Jun	110	590	470	30	4	2	2	0.98
13-Jun	12	22	12	4	2	2	2	0.00
20-Jun	52	2	4	4	2	2	2	0.11
27-Jun	60	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.11
5-Jul	202	2	6	6	2	2	2	0.00
10-Jul	78	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.00
18-Jul	290	-	36	12	2	2	2	0.49
24-Jul	130	18	8	2	2	2	18	0.20
1-Aug	188	2	2	2	2	8	2	0.00
8-Aug	196	30	16	6	2	4	6	0.00
15-Aug	430	4	2	2	2	2	4	0.00
22-Aug	140	4	8	14	4	8	8	0.03
29-Aug	78	2	2	2	2	2	18	0.00

Numbers indicate colonies of fecal coliform bacteria per 100 mL of water
 Numbers in **RED** exceed Massachusetts threshold for swimming (200+ per 100 mL)
 MA threshold for shellfish is 14+ per 100 mL and for drinking water is 0 per 100 mL

In 2018 WRWA had several other projects in addition to our routine monitoring. We also continue to work with the Buzzards Bay Coalition to monitor and measure nutrient (nitrogen) levels in the River.

- WRWA sought out salt marsh ecologists and experts for a “Salt Marsh Degradation Study of Westport River.” Dr. Patrick J. Ewanchuk, Providence College, and Dr. Catherine M. Matassa, University of Connecticut, conducted a series of descriptive and manipulative experiments in both branches of the River to better understand why our local marshes are disintegrating.
- We continue to work with the Coastal Systems Program (CSP) UMass Dartmouth (SMASST) on a project funded by a grant from the US EPA Southeast New England Program for Coastal Watershed Restoration. This was the second year of a 4 year project using the Westport River and Cockeyeast Pond as a natural laboratory to measure how oysters improve water clarity and potentially reduce elevated nitrogen levels which destroy marine wildlife habitats.
- We are deeply saddened at the passing of long-time volunteer and former board member, Catherine Williams. She was a longtime WRWA supporter, an environmental advocate, water quality monitoring volunteer and Baywatcher. We’ll miss Catherine’s passion, energy, and willingness to engage people in the protection of the River and our local environment.





2018 Giving

In an effort to acknowledge the many ways our contributors support WRWA throughout the year, members are listed according to their total annual giving. Gifts in this total include memberships, Annual Fund contributions, matching gifts, memorial contributions, endowment gifts, Summer Gala contributions (excluding auction purchases) and other donations from January 1 - December 31, 2018. Every effort has been made to ensure that these are accurate and inclusive. If you see an error, please contact the WRWA office.

\$15,000—\$30,000

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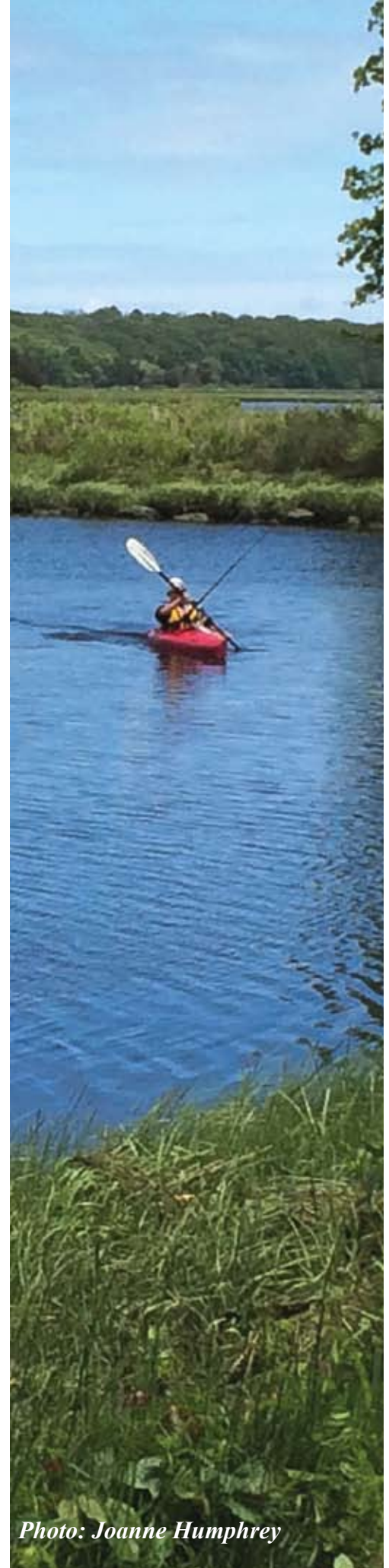


Photo: Joanne Humphrey



Oars and Paddles Art Show



Our winter art show in 2018 continued the theme “Oars & Paddles” This was our fifth annual event, hosted generously by the Dedee Shattuck Gallery for two weeks, from February 24 through March 10. We collected old wooden oars and paddles, and gave them to area artists whose skill and imagination transformed them into beautiful works of art.

The gallery was once again packed for the culminating silent auction and reception. Our keepsake program booklet was a big hit.

In conjunction with the Oars & Paddles art show, we hosted another sellout Brushes & Brews art event, with artists Barbara Healy and Pam Clarkson offering a two-hour workshop to create a lovely painting of a familiar Westport water scene on March 3rd. Our thanks to Buzzards Bay Brewing, Westport Rivers Vineyards and Ten Cousins’ Pizza for providing refreshments.

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 Sarah Tappen Windham
 Corey Windham
 Helen Richmond Woodhouse
 Yufei Xiao
 Cindi Zembo
 Yue Zi



WRWA's 2018 River Day Festival took place Saturday, June 9th at the Town Landing at the Head of Westport on a warm early summer day. This free, family-friendly festival in celebration of the Westport River drew over 700 community members and visitors.

The poster contest winner was fourth grader Stephanie Boza, whose artwork depicted the theme of "River Families."

Over 40 exhibitors and vendors presented at the event including area nonprofits, local farmers and environmental companies.

Activities included: fish T-shirt printing, wee boat building, stilt building, face painting, live Raptor show, native American demonstration with Donna Mitchell, live music by The Spindle Rock River Rats, and environmental awareness activities by WRWA.

2018 River Day Sponsors

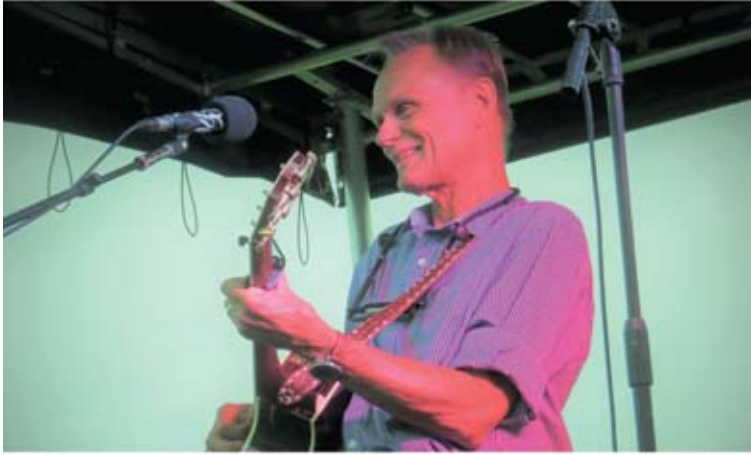
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Summer Concert at the Westport Rivers Vineyard



Our third annual summer concert at Westport Rivers Vineyard had another packed house, with over 750 guests enjoying the music of **Jonathan Edwards** and the **Pousette-Dart Band** on a beautiful July evening.

Co-presented by the Narrows Center for the Arts in Fall River, the concert was sponsored by DSK Architects and Planners, Buzzards Bay Brewing and Westport Rivers Vineyard & Winery, with additional support from Lees Oil Company and Ralco Electric.

This event has become something that many people look forward to each summer, with top-tier musicians performing in a distinctly Westport setting, overlooking the expansive fields of grapevines and greenery within the watershed.

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2018 Summer Gala



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Special thanks to Sam Mundel and Andy Paige for hosting the event on Frog Hollow Farm. Thanks to Tom Kirby, Olde Dartmouth Farm for composting all the event materials.

2018 River Center—Capital Campaign Supporters



“Even miracles take a little time.” - Pablo Casals

It’s been almost five years since the inception of the River Center. What a ride it has been negotiating the various stages to be where we are today. It feels like a miracle. 2018 was exciting as we heard that the Town received the Seaport Grant that will fund the physical improvements on the Head Landing that will include restoring the actual landings for boaters, installing benches for visitors to relax and enjoy the river, and most importantly constructing a safe parking plan for the Landing.

DSK, our architects have fully engaged WRWA staff in creatively planning use of the building’s spaces. Most importantly the first floor public space will be a welcoming area where the community can learn first-hand about the river and watershed.

Final permitting hurdles were jumped in mid summer and in the interest of not adding to the busy season at the Head, we put off construction until the fall. At this time we are well underway. Expected occupancy , should “Old Man Winter” behave, is the end of July. We are indebted to our donors who have moved us closer to our goal. We *look forward to having the entire community come forward and get us over the finish line.*

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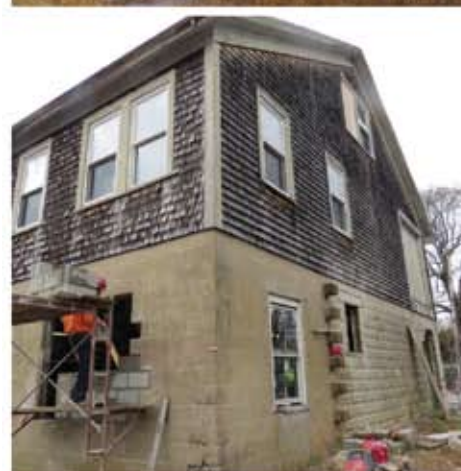
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The Westport River Watershed Alliance (WRWA) is a nonprofit environmental education and advocacy group, formed in 1976 to protect and conserve the natural resources of the Westport River and its 100-square mile watershed located at the entrance to Buzzards Bay in southeastern Massachusetts. The Westport River watershed includes the communities of Westport, Dartmouth, Fall River and Freetown in Massachusetts, and Tiverton and Little Compton in Rhode Island. WRWA has established itself as a leader in the environmental grassroots movement of New England, and is considered a role model for other similar organizations.

WRWA's Guiding Principles

- A healthy watershed with its natural beauty is an asset for the entire community.
- Recreational and commercial use of the River is part of our heritage and culture.
- Human activity has a major impact on River health.
- A clean River and clean drinking water are linked.
- Science guides our actions and advocacy for the watershed.
- Building collaborative relationships with government and community groups helps to achieve shared goals.
- Educating our youth ensures the continuation of responsible stewardship.



Westport River Watershed Alliance

1151 Main Road
P.O. Box 3427
Westport, MA. 02790-0703

508-636-3016
508-636-8884 (FAX)

<http://westportwatershed.org/>



Photo: Greg Stone