

Pomperaug Plantation History Project Collaborators

Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition

www.pomperaug.org

203-267-1700

Southbury Historical Society

www.southburyct.org

Old Woodbury Historical Society

www.woodburyct.org

Bethlehem Historical Society

www.ci.bethlehem.ct.us/

Gunn Memorial Historical Museum

www.gunnmus@biblio.org

Southbury Public Library

WWW.SouthburyLibrary.Org

Woodbury Public Library

www.biblio.org/woodbury/

Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust

www.flandersnaturecenter.org

Glebe House Museum & The Gertrude Jekyll

Garden www.theglebehouse.org

Connecticut Landmarks – Bellamy-Ferriday

House & Garden

www.ctlandmarks.org/bellamy.php

Watertown Land Trust

www.watertownlandtrust.org

South Britain Historic District Commission

Woodbury Historic District Commission

Steep Rock Association

About the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition

The PRWC is a forum for stakeholders and the community to discuss issues in a non-regulatory environment; and to educate the public, government (local, state and federal) and business communities about the importance of a healthy river system and our collective role in its protection.

Mission: We use science to ensure availability of high quality water in the Pomperaug Watershed by protecting the river and the aquifer.

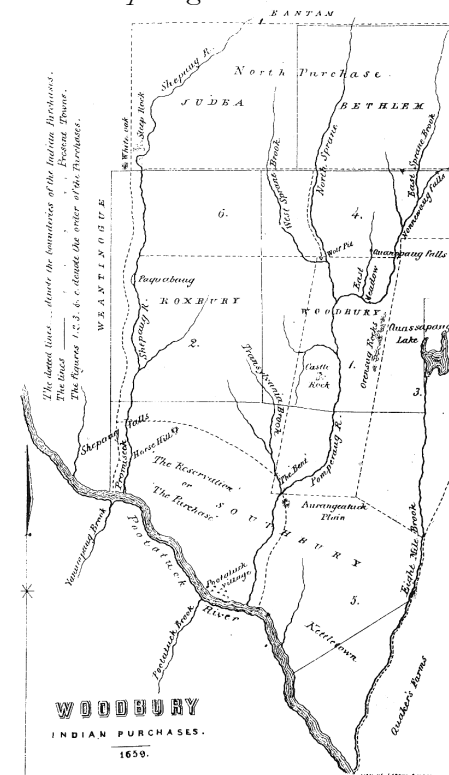
The Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition was formed by residents of Bethlehem, Woodbury, and Southbury CT in 1999 to protect the quality and quantity of water in the Pomperaug Watershed--a 90 square mile area that provides both water and recreational opportunities for thousands of residents.

The Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition was created because responsibility for the watershed is divided among towns and state agencies with no agency responsible for the entire watershed. The Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition is working to create a partnership between local governments, businesses, environmental organizations and private citizens and regional, state and federal agencies to insure the health and vibrancy of the Pomperaug Watershed.

Pomperaug Plantation History Project

A collaborative history project to examine the role of the river in the historical development of the

Pomperaug River Watershed



It's hard to achieve intimacy with a river without at least a passing knowledge of many things: geology, hydrology and hydraulics, animal and plant biology, entomology, climate change, land use, economic and political power, human settlement and migration patterns.... Each element has its own distinct part at play, and each conditions the others in a ceaseless dynamic of change, every bit as protean as the flow of the river itself.

– George Black, The Trout Pool Paradox

Brief History of the Watershed

Native Americans used the Pomperaug Watershed for millennia before the arrival of English settlers, fishing, hunting and farming throughout the area. In the Colonial period during the early 1670s, religious dissidents from the Stratford Congregational Church, moved to the watershed, calling it the Pomperaug Plantation. This was the earliest settlement in the northwestern part of Connecticut. The watershed's boundaries are very similar to the original boundaries of the Pomperaug Plantation, thus illustrating how history and science interact.

The Pomperaug Plantation eventually became the town of Woodbury, and in turn was further subdivided to include the towns of Southbury, Bethlehem, Roxbury and Washington. Renowned for its beauty, much of it as a result of its water resources, the region has been a fertile ground for farming, small industries and other businesses, and cultural, artistic and entrepreneurial innovators.

Because of its unique and complex geology, the watershed region has been studied extensively for at least 100 years. The PRWC is carrying on that tradition. Until now the research has largely been confined to understanding the traditional science of the region. Now, however, it is recognized that no scientific study of an area can be truly complete without an understanding of how human activities have interacted with natural resources through time. In addition, we are beginning to understand that developing a true commitment and investment in an area requires that people have opportunities to connect to it in multiple ways.

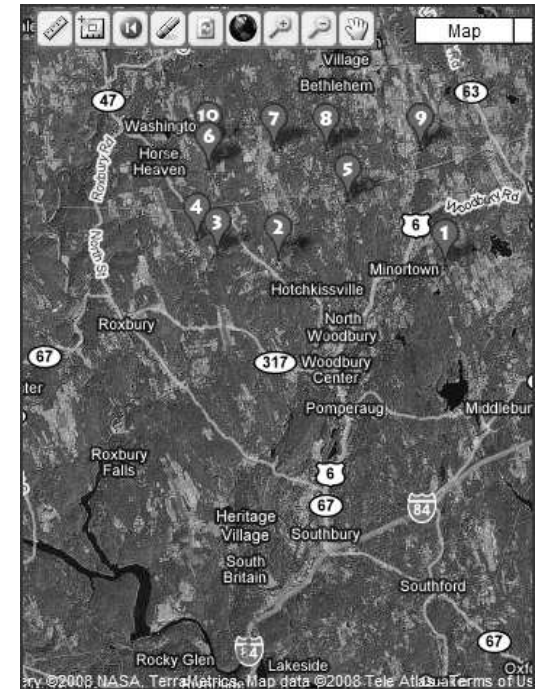
Overview of the Project

Most of us are thus isolated from the land by which we live and so are in danger of losing contact with a fundamental part of our humanity. In addition, this isolation breeds misunderstanding of land, which can lead to mismanagement of our resources. . . . Many of the environmental mistakes of the 20th century --- polluted wells, flood damage, farmland loss, destruction of plant and animal habitat, to name but a few -- have been compounded by the distance we have placed between ourselves and the land we live on.

- Michael Bell, p3, Introduction to The Face of Connecticut.

Eight local historical organizations, land trusts and libraries have joined together to form the *Pomperaug Plantation History Project* which aims to increase our understanding of the natural history of the region through a better understanding of its social, cultural and economic history. The project will take place in several phases, with Phase One being a survey of the industrial history of the region. Using the advice of scholars who have made significant contributions to the interactions of environmental and cultural history, we will use documentary source material and physical evidence to create a comprehensive picture of the evolution of industry in our 90 square mile area. This phase of the project will culminate with an exhibit, a brochure, and a plan for the next phases of the project, which are expected to look at agriculture, transportation, recreation, and other topics. The sites will be mapped using our web-based interactive tool.

Web Based Map of the Watershed Showing historical and environmentally significant sites



PPHP is using a version of Google Maps. Icons shown on the map can be opened to provide photos of the site with text description or links to other web sites. See us on the web at www.imrivers.org/pomperaug

The lay of those lands, the flow of water through them, the growth of forests and meadows upon them, their long cultivation by human inhabitants - all went to form a place with a particular range of ecological opportunities and limits. Different cultures made different things of those possibilities, but what each did was conditioned both by the land's bedrock nature and by history. The land's nature includes its history.

- Brian Donahue, The Great Meadow