

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2023

WATERSHED NEWS

PRWC | Protecting Water Resources for Generations

EPA Proposes Trichloroethylene (TCE) Ban

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

UPDATED ON OCTOBER 23, 2023

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a proposal to ban the use of trichloroethylene (TCE), a toxic chemical used in cleaning and furniture care products, degreasers, automotive care, and in the production of battery separators. Many communities across the country experienced TCE contamination in their drinking water supply as a result of accidental releases of the chemical into the environment. Exposure to TCE, even at low levels, has been linked to cancers, liver and kidney damage, and reproductive harm. The proposed ban would prohibit the manufacture and use of TCE in most commercial and all consumer products within one year, and the chemical would be replaced by safer alternatives.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR WATERSHED

Knowledge of this chemical is important to local residents as, according to the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), **TCE is one of the most commonly found contaminants in Connecticut's groundwater.** CT DPH has set a drinking water standard TCE of 1 ug/L (or 1 part per billion – ppb). The EPA requires regular testing and treatment for TCE in all public water systems, but for those who draw from private wells, the best way to determine if your water is affected is to have it tested by a state-certified lab. Any TCE contamination found at levels greater than 1 ug/L should be treated and reported to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). **Residents of the watershed drawing their drinking water from private wells should routinely test for this and other common contaminants to protect their health and safety.** Visit the Private Wells page on our website to learn more about testing your well water <https://www.pomperaug.org/privatewells>.



This Issue:

Proposed TCE Ban
PAGE 1

Note From the
Director &
Storm Damage at
Three Rivers Park
PAGE 2

Annual
Gratitude Report &
Fiscal Summary
PAGES 3-4

New Reports &
Upcoming Events
PAGE 5

New Faces
PAGE 6

Basics of Buffers
PAGE 7

Annual Appeal
PAGE 8

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Science Informs Stewardship Recommendations



Carol Haskins, Exec. Dir.

Watersheds play a pivotal role in maintaining the balance of our ecosystems by storing and releasing water which in turn support diverse habitats and provide for sources of clean, safe drinking water, and opportunities for recreation. Since its incorporation in 2000, the mission of the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition has centered on advocating for plentiful, excellent quality water in the Pomperaug Watershed communities through the use of science and education. We also share our knowledge and expertise with others as part of our commitment to protecting our water resources for future generations.

Over the past few years, we have focused a significant portion of our energy on collecting scientific data through research initiatives like the road-stream crossing assessments, streamwalk assessment surveys, water temperature and bacteria level monitoring, and aquatic invertebrate sampling. Later in the newsletter, you will read about some of the scientific reports that summarize our research and provide watershed management recommendations. The short list of recommended actions includes: restoration and preservation of riparian buffers; retrofitting impervious areas to allow water to soak into the aquifer; upsizing culvert and bridge crossings to support aquatic life passage and conveyance of increasing storm volumes; reconnecting the river to its floodplain by restoring historically channelized stretches of rivers.

With more extreme precipitation fluctuations and stormwater runoff being the most widespread threats to water quality, the implementation of these actions will have a lasting impact on the health and resilience of your local water systems. Over the next several years, PRWC will continue to strategically monitor watershed conditions, lead habitat restoration efforts, provide community education, and engage with policymakers to develop and strengthen guidelines that safeguard aquatic environments and drinking water supplies.

While we ambitiously work on behalf of the rivers and drinking water you depend on, we ask that you consider making a tax-deductible donation online or by mail to Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition. Every contribution, no matter the size, furthers local watershed stewardship programs to sustain clean, abundant water for current and future generations. Working together, we can make a real difference!

To donate, visit www.pomperaug.org/give or use the enclosed remittance envelope to mail a check.

When a tree falls in the river...

Flooding events in September 2023 resulted in significant stream bank erosion and a 100-foot tall tree falling into the Pomperaug River at **Three Rivers Park in Woodbury, CT**. This area experiences frequent streambank erosion due to silty-sandy-gravelly soil composition, sparse vegetative cover, and location outside a curve in the river where the water moves faster and with more erosive force. This erosion has been compounded by historic channelization (straightening) of the river and the presence of a berm that disconnects the river from the flood plain. As a result of the high flows, a segment of the walking path that runs along the river has been compromised.



PRWC is working with the Town of Woodbury to develop a near-time plan to reposition the fallen tree to better protect the vulnerable streambank and is advocating for a longer term plan to widen the riparian buffer to enhance streambank stability, help prevent damage from flooding, and improve habitat. While us humans like things neat and tidy and may think it is beneficial to remove large woody debris (LWD) from the stream channel, **there are many ecological benefits to leaving LWD in place**. To learn more about these benefits, read the CT DEEP LWD Factsheet at <https://portal.ct.gov/>.

ANNUAL GRATITUDE REPORT

Thanks to our Fiscal Year 2023 Donors

**On behalf of the PRWC Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, we extend a heart-felt thank you!
As we continue our work, please know we fully recognize and truly appreciate your generous support. Your support is recognized for gifts between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.**

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ANNUAL GRATITUDE REPORT

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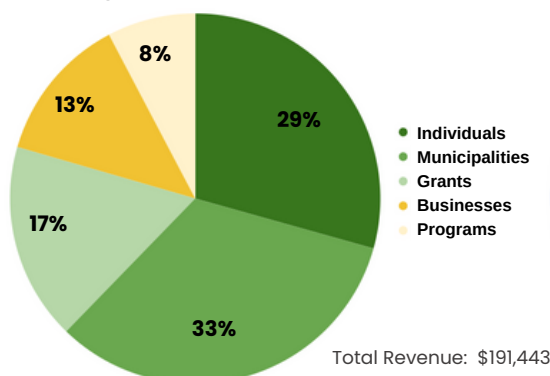
Gifts In-Kind

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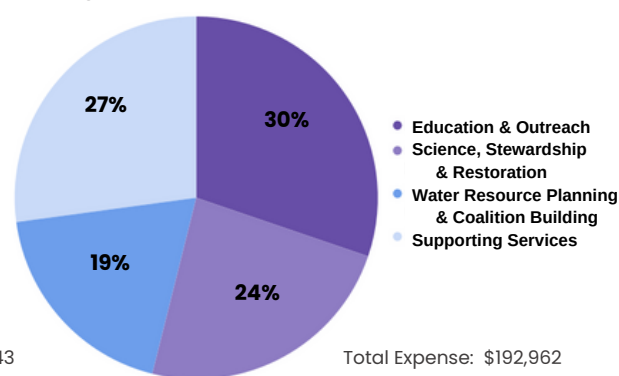
PRWC would also like to thank the towns of Bethlehem, Oxford, Southbury, and Woodbury, our environmental and community partners, and all of our dedicated volunteers. THANK YOU!

FISCAL YEAR 2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE



EXPENSE



The charts displayed summarize our revenue and expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Each revenue category is critical to the balance for the overall funding required for us to be successful in our mission. The expense summary shows how we utilize that funding support for our core areas of work.

You'll see that your financial support truly makes a difference and comes with our heartfelt appreciation!

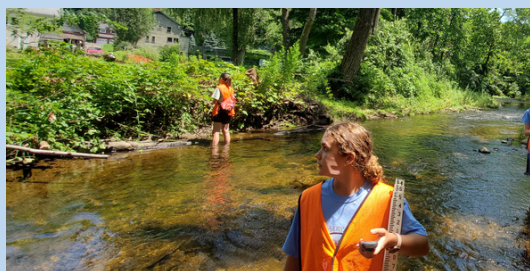
NEW SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

Culminating three years of research by PRWC staff, interns, and volunteers, new reports have been published and are available to view online at <https://www.pomperaug.org/scientific-reports>.

Over the winter and coming spring, PRWC will be hosting presentations to share the findings and recommendations from these initiatives with the community. Please join us to learn more about the health of your local rivers and streams and steps you can take protect and improve their conditions.

Town of Woodbury Road – Stream Crossing Management Plan

Details the results of all Woodbury Road-Stream Crossing Assessments completed by PRWC from 2020–2023.

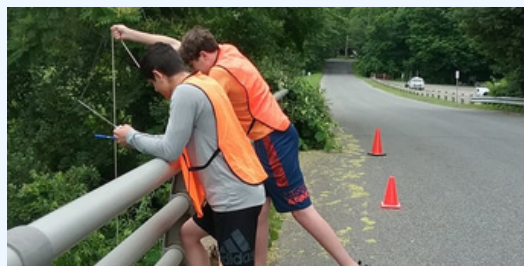


Weekeepeemee River Stream Walk Survey Technical Memo

Details the findings for the visual field investigation completed by PRWC over the full length of the Weekeepeemee River in Summer 2021.

Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Technical Memo

Details the results of stream monitoring data collected by PRWC from 2019–2022.



Pomperaug River Watershed Based Plan Addendum & Implementation Strategy

Details best management practices recommended to improve the health of local rivers based on results of recent watershed assessments.

**STAY UPDATED ON OUR UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS BY VISITING US AT
[WWW.POMPERAUG.ORG/EVENTS](https://www.pomperaug.org/events)**

4 NEW FACES ON THE PRWC TEAM



1

Olivia DiPalermo

We are thrilled to announce that one of our 2023 Dr. Marc J. Taylor Interns joined our staff team full-time in the role of Community Engagement Coordinator in early November. Olivia has a professional background in horticulture, park stewardship, and environmental science. She earned her bachelor's degree in history and environmental studies from Binghamton University and is in the process of earning her master's degree in energy and environmental management from the University of Connecticut. Olivia has a great passion for environmental conservation and education and is excited to continue supporting the work of the PRWC.

2

Amanda Kopec

Amanda Kopec joined PRWC part-time as Bookkeeper in Spring 2023. With a robust background in customer service, office administration, and payroll services, she earned her bookkeeper certification from Naugatuck Valley Community College in January 2022. Amanda also shares a concern and love for the environment, its preservation, and using its resources in an intelligent and safe way. Outside of the PRWC, Amanda works for the City of Trumbull, where she lives with her partner Steven and their growing family.

3

Jesse Langer

Jesse recently joined our Board of Directors to support the conservation and education goals of the PRWC. Jesse is a partner at the law firm Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., where he practices in the areas of administrative proceedings, energy and utilities, real estate development, and employment. Prior to joining private practice, Jesse clerked at the Connecticut Appellate Court. He received his bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University and his JD from the University of Connecticut School of Law. Jesse is also active in the community, as a commissioner on the Town of Middlebury Economic Development Commission and a member of the Grants & Allocations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Western Connecticut. Jesse lives with his wife, Chloe, and two sons in Middlebury and enjoys views of the Pomperaug River from his in-laws' home in Southbury.

4

Diane Fountas, MD

Mentored by Dr. Marc Taylor in medicine and in his environmental endeavors, Diane has a great passion for conservation. As a true water enthusiast, she loves swimming, sailing, and fly fishing. Diane joined our Board of Directors to carry on Marc's tradition of protecting our water resources and helping to educate others. Diane worked in private practice in pediatrics for nearly 20 years before going on to run the Health Center at the Taft School for another 10 years. Having retired from this form of medicine, she now teaches medical students at the Frank Netter School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University and is a medical consultant for the Child Abuse Intradisciplinary Team of Greater Waterbury. Diane earned her undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and was among the second class of women to start as freshmen at that school. She moved to CT after earning her MD from Dartmouth Medical School and has made Woodbury her home.

THE BASICS OF BUFFERS

& Tips for Your Property

As 2023 comes to a close, please consider adding a riparian buffer to next year's landscaping plans!

WHAT IS A RIPARIAN BUFFER?

The EPA defines a riparian buffer zone as a vegetated area adjacent to a stream or wetland. Riparian buffer zones are effective in trapping and filtering out pollutants in stormwater runoff (sediment, nutrients, chemicals, and bacteria) before they enter into our waterways.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

By collecting stormwater runoff, riparian buffers are essential for preserving water quality throughout the watershed. Riparian buffers can also help minimize the impacts of flooding, protect against streambank erosion, and serve as essential habitat for a variety of species. Planting a native buffer can be a great way to promote biodiversity within the watershed and to protect your property against storm damage.

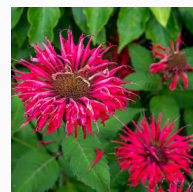
For those who own property near a river or stream, especially where agriculture is present, consider planting native trees, shrubs, and other vegetation in areas where the land and water meet. **The USDA recommends riparian buffers to extend a minimum of 35 feet from the stream edge.** If you are unable to plant something new, consider establishing at least a 10 foot "no mow" zone instead. Any buffer is better than no buffer!



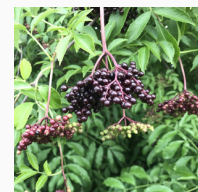
**WHAT
CAN
I DO?**



CONSIDER PLANTING...



**Bee
Balm**



**Black
Elderberry**



**Silver
Maple**

For more information on native buffer plants, visit the **Native Plants for Riparian Corridors in CT Guide** at <https://seagrant.uconn.edu/>



Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition

39 Sherman Hill Road, C103

Woodbury, CT 06798

info@pomperaug.org

Donor Recognition List Inside!



WATERSHED NEWS

PRWC | Protecting Water Resources for Generations

Every Drop Counts

Each time you drink a glass of water, wash your hands, prepare a meal, walk past a tree, or watch the rain fall, you're experiencing the importance of water. Whether it is supporting human consumption or ecological functions, water is an essential ingredient for life.

Your year-end gift to PRWC helps protect the rivers you love, your drinking water and the water you use every day.

Your financial support makes a difference. Donations may be made online, by phone, or by mail (remittance envelope enclosed).



www.pomperaug.org/give