



www.epa.gov/OWOW/heritage/rivers.html

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative was created to advance the goals identified by river communities. The Initiative has three objectives: natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. No new regulatory authority is created as a result of the Initiative. Likewise, no direct federal funding is available to the Initiative. Existing federal authorities and programs are used to assist the community partners in implementation of their goals.

► Woonasquatucket River Navigator Contact

Johanna Hunter,
(617) 918-1041
hunter.johanna@epa.gov

► Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC)

Jenny Pereira, Director
(401) 861-9046
jpereira@woonasquatucket.org
www.woonasquatucket.org



Customer Call Center
888-372-7341
www.epa.gov/region1

Fact Sheet/Spring 2005

Woonasquatucket River



What Makes the Woonasquatucket River Special?

- The headwaters in Gloucester and North Smithfield offer opportunities for preservation of the natural riparian and wetland buffers protecting the water quality of the river.
- The river powered the industrial growth of Providence and RI and features many historic sites and buildings.
- Restoration of the river has regional implications as it merges with two other rivers to form the headwaters of Narragansett Bay, one of the largest salt water estuaries in the nation.
- Economic development pressures offer opportunity to link environmental preservation with smart growth and development.

What are the Long Term Goals?

- Return water quality of the river to fishable and swimmable by 2015.
- Create a contiguous greenway and wildlife habitat along the length of the river.
- Identify and protect environmentally critical land parcels.
- Preserve and/or restore historically significant buildings and sites.
- Improve public access and awareness to the river and enhance opportunities for recreational activities.
- Support economic development opportunities and identify and promote positive growth patterns in the watershed.

Progress/Goals for the Future

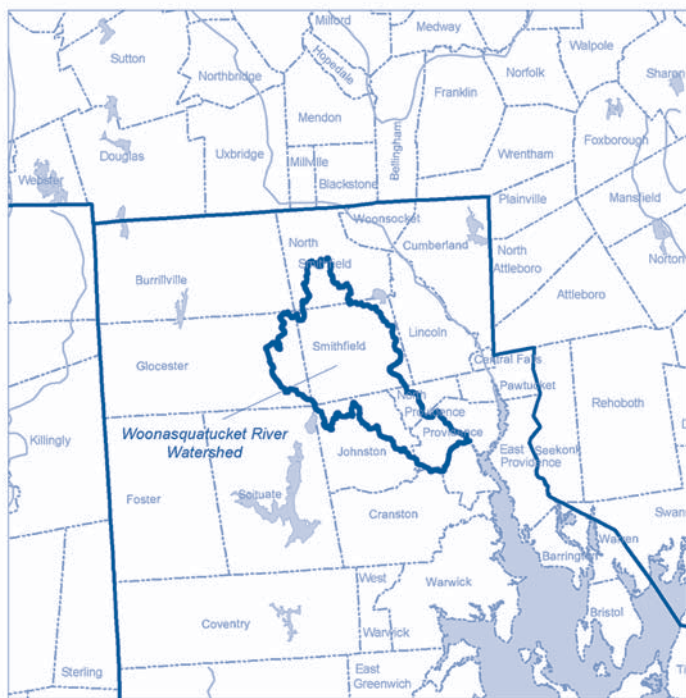
What Partnership Progress Has Been Made?

- Identification of riparian and wetland habitat restoration opportunities along the river (grants from US Forest Service, EPA, URI, RI DEM) including funding for 3 projects in 2005.
- WRWC partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service of RI (USDA) to work directly with public and private land owners on river issues.
- Over 50 acres of abandoned waterfront was restored and construction started on a 5.5 mile bikeway linking neighborhoods and parks in the Riverside Mills area of Providence.
- In Providence, RI DEM and WRWC recently completed an EPA Smart Growth grant to develop measures to integrate Brownfields initiatives, neighborhood priorities and river protection measures into the Providence Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- Designated the Woonasquatucket as an EPA/Army Corps Urban River Restoration Initiative, partnering these agencies with communities on river restoration including the potential for future fish passage along the lower dams of the river.

What EPA Actions are Planned for 2005-6?

- Two Brownfields sites (Riverside Mills and Melissa St. Landfill) will be restored for public use. Riverside Mills Park will be completed in 2006.
- Commit to key environmental actions outlined in the WRWC Watershed Action Plan.

Woonasquatucket River



Legend

- Surface Water
- Rivers
- Town Boundary
- State Boundary
- Watershed Boundary



Data Sources: Political boundaries from MassGIS, ConnDEP, and RIGIS at 1:24,000. Surface water from NHD at 1:100,000. Watershed boundaries from RIGIS at 1:24,000. June 20, 2002

AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS



www.epa.gov/OWOW/heritage/rivers.html

What EPA Actions are Planned for 2005-2006? (continued)

- ▶ Undertake wetland and riparian restoration projects and work with RI DEM to pilot projects based on wetland restoration inventory and riparian work.
- ▶ Reduce bacteria, nutrient and metals loading by finalizing the levels allowable for the river (TMDLs).
- ▶ Work with WRWC and other stakeholders on the development of recommendations for cleanup at the Centredale Manor Superfund site.
- ▶ Partnering with other agencies for additional projects such as fish passage and river redevelopment along the Woonasquatucket.
- ▶ Support environmental education initiatives.

Who are the Partners?

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council • Town of Glocester • Town of North Smithfield • Town of Smithfield • Town of Johnston • Town of North Providence • City of Providence • EPA New England • US Fish and Wildlife • US Army Corps of Engineers • Federal Highway Administration • Housing and Urban Development • Economic Development Agency, Dept. of Commerce • US Geological Survey • Federal Emergency Management Agency • National Marine Fisheries Service • National Park Service • USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service • USDA Forest Service • USDA-Rural Development for RI • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service • USDA Farm Service Agency • RI Department of Environmental Management • RI Department of Transportation • Rhode Island Audubon Society • Coastal Resources Management Council

What is the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council?

In 1994, work began on the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project, a program focused on the restoration of the river and abandoned public land in inner city neighborhoods in Providence. In 1997, staff of the Greenway Project began working with all of the communities in the watershed in a successful campaign to secure the federal designation of the Woonasquatucket as an American Heritage River. The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council formed out of this grassroots effort in 1998, and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 2001, with the mission to encourage, support and promote the restoration and preservation of the Woonasquatucket River watershed as an environmental, recreational, cultural, and economic asset of the State of Rhode Island.



Customer Call Center 888-372-7341 • www.epa.gov/region1

Note: EPA New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.

Printed on 100% recycled/recyclable paper with a minimum 50% post-consumer fiber using vegetable-based ink

EPA 901-F-05-010