

River Voices



THE WATERSHED APPROACH

Making the transition from corridors to watersheds

by Christopher N. Brown

I am haunted by Powell. He had it right. But how did he know?

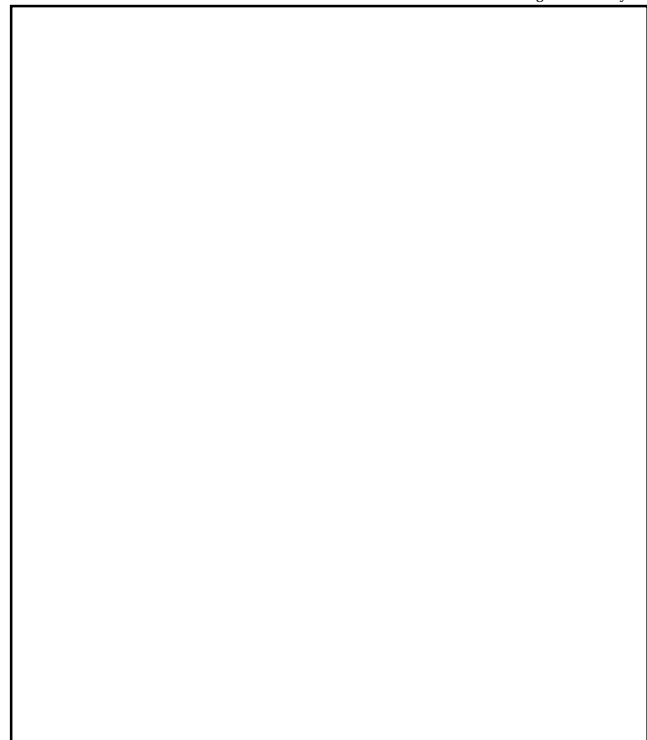
John Wesley Powell—scientist, geographer, explorer, ethnographer, and consummate bureaucrat—had many remarkable accomplishments. While his first descent through the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River in 1869 may be the most famous, his early leadership in creating both the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Ethnology and establishing the groundwork for the Bureau of Reclamation are likely the most significant historically. I have also marveled at how he was able to create very precise maps, over vast unexplored areas, without aerial or satellite imagery; he must have possessed a sixth sense for places, spaces, and directions.

But what haunts me here is the astonishing intellect and range of a mind that could comprehend the significance of not merely rivers, lakes, and watering holes, but watersheds, to a West just being settled, and then translate that understanding into proposals for action. The conceptual leaps and formulations take my breath away. Powell understood in the 1870s not only the geological, but also the political and social significance of a watershed: that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of the “community.” Was it easier to see in those days, when the spaces were undeveloped or, in those western haunts of Powell’s, where the ridges and divides are more pronounced than they are in the East? Perhaps. But I still credit Powell with remarkable insight.

Among other proposals, Powell suggested that new states, such as North Dakota and Montana, organize themselves politically around drainages—watersheds—rather than around the traditional, straight-lined counties, in order to conform to the essential fact of existence: access to water. He

continued on page 4

The Snake River as it flows through Hell’s Canyon.



Powell understood...not only the geological, but also the political and social significance of a watershed: that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of the “community.”





Contents

- 1 The Watershed Approach: 100 Years in Coming
by Christopher N. Brown
- 3 From the President
by Phil Wallin
- 8 Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
by Lisa Jo Frech
- 11 Chagrin River Watershed Partners
by Rita Haberman with Rich Cochran
- 14 The Lamprey River Experience
by Jamie Fosburgh and Cynthia Lay
- 16 San Miguel Watershed Coalition
by Gary Weiner
- 18 Johnson Creek-shed Planning
by Pat Remington
- 20 Hoosic River Watershed Association
by Jerry Schoen and Alex Brooks
- 22 River Network Publications
- 23 How to Become a River Network Partner
- 24 River Network Supporters

River Voices is a forum for information exchange among river and watershed groups across the country. River Network welcomes your comments and suggestions. River Network grants permission and encourages sharing and reprinting of information from *River Voices*, unless the material is marked as copyrighted. Please credit River Network when you reprint articles and send us a copy. Additional copies and back issues are available from our main office.

Editors: Rita Haberman, Kathleen Krushas

Editorial Assistance: Jana Richardson

Proofreaders: Kathy Luscher, David Wilkins

Design and Layout: To the Point Publications, Portland, OR
printed on recycled paper



River Network
P.O. Box 8787
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 241-3506
Fax: (503) 241-9256
rivernet@igc.apc.org
<http://www.rivernetwork.org/~rivernet>

Eastern Office
4000 Albemarle St. NW, Suite 303
Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 364-2550
Fax: (202) 364-2520
rivernet2@aol.com

River Network is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to help people organize to protect and restore rivers and watersheds.

We support river and watershed advocates at the local, state and regional levels, help them build effective organizations, and promote our working together to build a nationwide movement for rivers and watersheds. River Network also acquires and conserves riverlands that are critical to the services that rivers perform for human communities: drinking water supply, floodplain management, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and open space.

River Network's Board of Trustees

Mason Browne
Gilbert Butler
Jim Compton
Nancy Harris-Campbell
Peter Kirsch
Ken Margolis
Tim Palmer
Dan Valens
Phillip Wallin
Wendy Wilson
Rebecca Wodder

River Network staff

President: Phillip Wallin
Director of Watershed Programs: Don Elder
Program Managers: Pat Munoz, Rita Haberman, Liz Raisbeck
Riverlands Conservancy Director: Sue Doroff
Development Director: Maureen O'Neill
Administrator: Lindy Walsh
Office Manager: Jean Hamilla
Development Assistant: David Wilkins
Executive Assistant: Alison Cook
Program Assistant: Kathy Luscher
Interns: Michael Fife, Eben Hobbins

From the President

Today, I received from Bud Talbott the text of an ordinance that prohibits construction within 300 feet of his beloved Chagrin River, just east of Cleveland, Ohio. This modest, three-page legalism is the Holy Grail of watershed protection. It reminds me that a watershed organization like the Chagrin River Watershed Partners are not there just for process. They are there to *get something done* that protects the river.

All of us know that to protect our favorite river we must improve land-use practices. *And* we know that we cannot do that without engaging landowners. We've got to find common ground with farmers, ranchers, businesses and homeowners on the basic values of the river: fish and wildlife, clean water, natural beauty, public enjoyment, flood retention. And then we've got to convert common ground into common *action*, as they did on the Chagrin, so that we create a framework within which river stewardship is the rule, not the exception.

This issue of *River Voices* tells the stories of six watersheds where ordinary citizens have taken the lead to create watershed organizations. From Texas to New England, they are taking stock of the river's problems, analyzing watershed land-uses, connecting with interest groups, and starting on non-controversial projects to build a high level of trust. These organizations are not just forums, engaged in endless dialogue. They are coalitions committed to a set of basic values, looking for common-sense solutions to problems afflicting their rivers and waters.

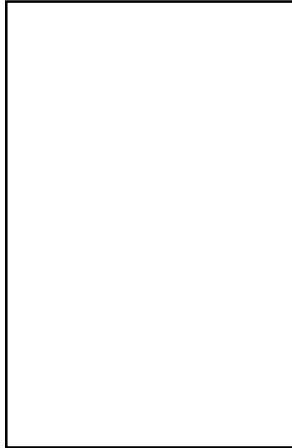
This issue is made possible by support from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program of the National Park Service. The RTCA is one of the best tools that a local citizen group has for analyzing their watershed, developing an action plan or conducting a watershed meeting.

This week, River Network staff are meeting in Fraser, Colorado, with the technical advisors for our "Watershed Science for Watershed Organizers" project. The goal: a user-friendly handbook on the principles of watershed science for activists who want to get a watershed coalition underway. Our vision and our work for the river has got to be based on good, holistic science. Without it, we can drift from issue to issue and project to project.

Those of you who are new to River Network, we urge to join as Partners and take full advantage of a very wide range of services. Together, we can build an American watershed protection movement.

Sincerely,

Phillip Wallin
President



© photo by Linda Klewer

.....
Then we've got to convert common ground into common action, as they did on the Chagrin, so that we create a framework within which river stewardship is the rule, not the exception.
.....

THE WATERSHED APPROACH

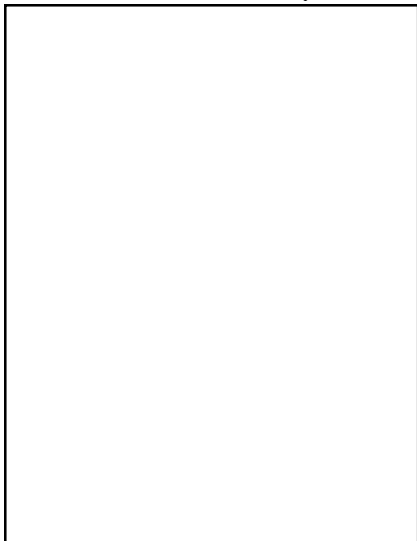
continued from page 1

proposed cooperative approaches to organizing pasturage districts and use of limited water rights that were a century ahead of their time. As Wallace Stegner says in his biography of Powell, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*:

“What he [Powell] suggested was so radical that it could not possibly have any effect on the delegates [to the Montana state convention], so rational that it could not possibly come to pass short of heaven, so intelligently reasoned from fact that it must have sounded to Montana’s tradition-and-myth-bound constitution makers like the program of a crank.”

Some have made Powell out to be the patron saint of river running (although someone who spent most of his time on the Grand Canyon trip in a chair tied to his boat hardly embodies the daredevil exuberance of a river runner). Others have portrayed him as the grandfather of river conservation (however, it is hard to reconcile this with his recommendations for damming and irrigation). For seeing the world through a lens of watersheds, though, surely Powell was a prophet.

photo: Tim Palmer



Missouri River near Loma, Montana.

We cannot all have Powell’s inductive powers, his ability to see the huge picture beyond the particulars, but we can all act on the vision he laid out: of watershed-wide conservation efforts based on cooperation, involvement of all stakeholders, and acceptance of and reliance on the facts that science and observation provide.



Historical Approaches

We have not acted on Powell’s vision until recently. As Tim Palmer documents in *Endangered Rivers and the Conservation Movement*, river conservation has been a braided channel, has had low-water marks and high, from fights over damming rivers and water rights to agreements over designating wild and scenic rivers and regulating polluters. Recent river conservation has focused on endangered species protection, multi-objective management of floodplains, establishment of river parkways and greenways, and urban stream restoration. National outrage over dams, flooding, and pollution have brought narrow, but expensive, responses by government agencies at the urging of national environmental groups. Local responses and solutions focused on river corridors have played an increasing role in river conservation.

There are good reasons for this. People identify with their local river, their creek, bayou, brook, slough, arroyo, kill, or run. Unlike watersheds, rivers have familiar names: Housatonic,

and Pestigo, and Sipsy Fork and Sacramento, to name a few. River corridors have identifiable boundaries, unlike the amorphous land mass—in fact, all the land—that a watershed encompasses.

In fact, river protection has tended to be corridor-focused. State and federal government began designating protected rivers in the early 1900s, and by the 1960s many federal and state wild and scenic rivers bills had passed; Since the 1970s, local communities have approached their rivers with corridor planning and protection. Under its Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, the National Park Service developed a “Riverwork” process to assist communities with collaborative planning for their river corridors. While this work has occurred “in the context of the larger watershed,” the focus has been the river segment and its immediate environs.

But changes over the past two decades have set the stage for a new approach. Consider:

- Conservation groups and government agencies brought forward the indisputable scientific knowledge that our river systems were deteriorating.
- Massive floods have been more frequent and more damaging throughout the nation which underscores the necessity of planning comprehensively. The floods have also raised public awareness about the interconnectedness of rivers and their watersheds. As we continue to build and rebuild in floodplains, flooding becomes an increasing problem.

- Restoration of damaged natural areas, including wetlands and streams, not simply protection of healthy habitats, has become a much higher national priority than ever before.

- The approach of taking a “systems” view of resource issues and seeking

holistic solutions (rather than resource-by-resource solutions) is not only recognized as ideal, but increasingly as the norm. Whether for water quality or Wild and Scenic values—the river corridor protection approach has just not gotten the job done.

- With escalating costs and government downsizing, we have realized that the government cannot do it all. The property rights movement has often blocked federal initiatives, making local solutions the most politically viable.

- In the past couple of years, “customer service” has been the byword in the federal government; the government is now to be in service to the public, with the public in many cases expected to lead.

- The paradigm for decision making for public resources has shifted dramatically, from agencies holding hearings and announcing decisions, to collaborative planning with early inclusion of stakeholders.

- The adage that “we all live downstream” has become increasingly difficult to ignore.

All these factors lead to the inescapable conclusion of ecology that everything is interconnected, and that solutions to environmental problems need to be “inter” in every respect: interdisciplinary, interjurisdictional, interactive. They have also led to a change in river conservation best characterized as the Watershed Movement.

Practicing the Watershed Approach

The current level of watershed-type activity is phenomenal. From Rivers Unlimited in Ohio and Idaho Rivers United to the Alabama Rivers Alliance and Amigos Bravos in New Mexico, citizen river groups across the country are adopting watersheds as their organizing unit. Some 3,000 river and

watershed organizations are listed in the *1996-1997 River and Watershed Conservation Directory*.

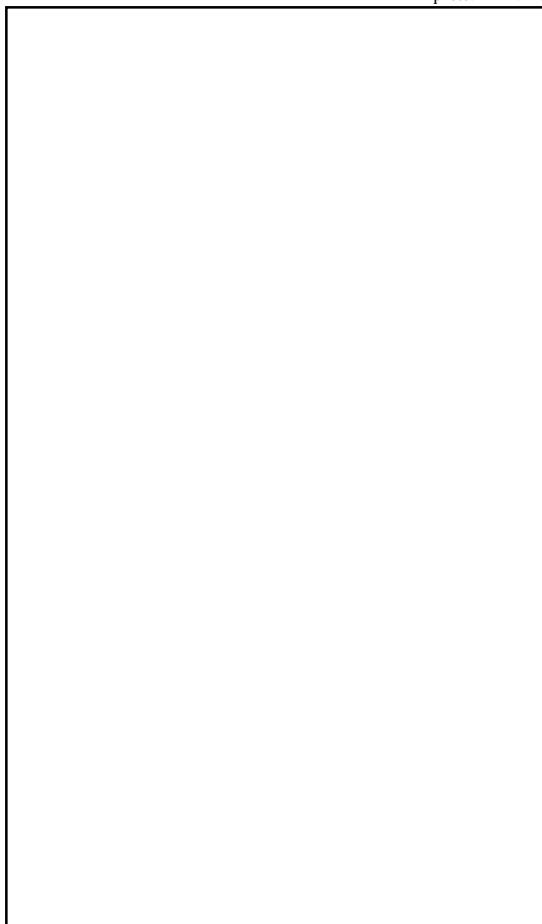
National groups such as River Network, Know Your Watershed, Pacific Rivers Council, American Rivers, Trout Unlimited, and Appalachian Mountain Club are playing diverse roles.

States such as Massachusetts, New York, Texas, and Maryland have passed legislation or established programs specifically to deal with clean water and other issues at the watershed level.

Watershed '96, a conference sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and others, drew 2,000 participants in the spring of 1996. Other federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have joined EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in organizing themselves along river basin, or watershed boundaries.

Currently, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is assisting two dozen community-based watershed efforts around the country, and the recently renamed Natural Resources Conservation Service continues its watershed activities under the Public Law 566 Watershed Conservation program. From the Columbia River basin to the Connecticut River, large watersheds are the subject of massive interagency and public-private fishery restoration programs.

So, the watershed approach is here. It is not a radical departure from river



Black River near Lake Superior in Michigan.

corridor planning, which emphasized good data, public involvement, and other techniques for at least a decade; However, it is a significant step forward for agencies, nonprofits, and communities in four respects:

- 1) **Stakeholder Participation** - The breadth and quality of involvement in planning for watersheds mirror the complexity of the ecosystem: “It’s the people, stupid”—and all of them, with all their diverse occupational and commodity and aesthetic interests. The recognition that all stakeholders—across jurisdictional lines, across traditional cleavages between business people,

continued on page 6

THE WATERSHED APPROACH

continued from page 5

landowners, and environmentalists—need to be involved in developing solutions is a hallmark of the Watershed Movement. While broader involvement significantly increases the complexity, it often leads to better, more creative, more informed solutions. Broad community participation and “visioning” processes are helping people regain a sense of place, ownership, and responsibility for their watershed and their community. At its best, such participation is characterized by “P and the 7 C’s” —Partnership, Cooperative, Collaborative, Coordinated, Collegial, Consensus-based, Community-driven, and Citizen-based. A neutral forum for discussion, education, and decision making—often facilitated by a neutral party—is crucial.

2) **Focus on Water** - While any one of many resource management issues—preserving wildlife habitat, coping with property damage from flooding, establishing wild and scenic values, encouraging tourism—may be a driving force in an effort, that effort finally focuses on the allocation, use, or quality of water.

3) **Science and the Use of a Precisely Defined Hydrologic Unit** - Scientific data are collected and analyzed at the scale of a watershed by interdisciplinary teams with members from public and private entities, and

solutions based on this science drive many aspects of planning for the watershed. This approach also brings a fresh geographic scope to the equation, as the watershed replaces hard-to-determine river corridor boundaries as our planning unit.

4) **Diverse Issues and Funding Sources** - Interrelated issues, such as water quality and recreation or flooding and historic preservation lead to multi-objective solutions, solutions that solve more than one problem at a time and can often lead to the availability of many funding sources for watershed conservation ranging from state, federal, and local governments to corporations and philanthropic organizations. Coordinated planning and implementation is needed to take advantage of many funding sources and can lead to more efficient use of funds and saving taxpayers’ money. Transportation, protection of cultural resources, erosion and flood control, recreation, and aquatic habitat restoration are only a few types of funded initiatives that can contribute to a watershed effort. Any current watershed project without funding from at least half a dozen sources is missing out.

Personally, I have not come easily to the watershed approach. I am intimidated by the potential vastness of watershed projects and the possibility that innumerable difficult land-use

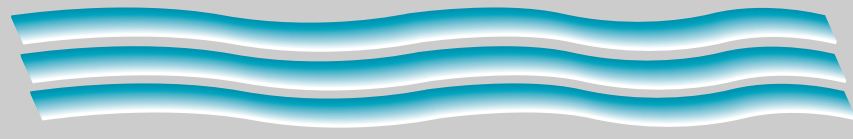
decisions can lead to paralysis. I am also bothered that watersheds do not “sing”; they have none of the place-specific poetry, legend and beauty that have inspired generations of Americans to become activists for saving rivers. Finally, deep down, I worry that the watershed approach, with its expectations of consensus-based decision making, will compromise the advocacy that is the irreplaceable engine of conservation progress. When it comes to watersheds, I have been ambivalent. As Edward Abbey described himself in another context: “a reluctant enthusiast...a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic.”

However, my desire to see a logical conservation approach coupled with the fact that numerous river and watershed advocacy groups are undertaking and participating in watershed approaches in thoughtful, energetic, and effective ways, has converted me to watershed thinking.

There will always be a place for working with the pieces—urban rivers, streambank restoration, floodplain management, protection of natural rivers—and, indeed, it may be these pieces to which people can most relate, which will inspire the affection and outrage and passion that fuel river conservation.

But I now see these pieces under a watershed umbrella. We are finally advancing Powell’s vision of a rational approach. As John Maynard Keynes said many years ago, “We will always do the rational thing, but only after exhausting all other alternatives.” 🐟

However, my desire to see a logical conservation approach coupled with the fact that numerous river and watershed advocacy groups are undertaking and participating in watershed approaches in thoughtful, energetic, and effective ways, has converted me to watershed thinking.



Christopher Brown is acting chief of rivers and watersheds for the National Park Service’s National Center for Recreation and Conservation. Chris also served as vice president and acting executive director of American Rivers.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Are you forming a watershed group? Need help organizing a resource assessment or facilitating a public planning process? Want a hand identifying and pursuing support for your project? The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program of the National Park Service works at the request of communities, governments, and non-profit organizations nationwide, providing technical assistance for conservation and recreation projects, primarily on non-federal lands. RTCA does not give out grants, buy lands, or enforce regulations, but its assistance can help strengthen your organization. RTCA has 70 staff located in more than 20 offices nationwide. Please call!

Chris Brown

National Park Service
P. O. BOX 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127
(202) 565-1200

Jack Mosby

National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 257-2650

Michael Linde

National Park Service
909 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-1060
(206) 220-4113

Peg Henderson

National Park Service
600 Harrison Street, Suite 600
San Francisco, CA 94107-1372
(415) 427-1446

Duane Holmes

National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287 IMFA-RM-S
Lakewood, CO 80225
(303) 969-2855

Alan Ragins

National Park Service
1220 St. Francis Drive
P. O. Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 988-6723

Marta Newkirk

National Park Service
10711 Burnett Road, Suite 301
Austin, TX 78758
(512) 339-9649

Jodi Hernandez

National Park Service
c/o North Central Texas C.O.G.
P. O. BOX 5888
Arlington, TX 76005-7806
(817) 695-9228

Joe Winfield

National Park Service
1415 North 6th Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85705
(520) 670-6501

Marty Sterkel

National Park Service
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 221-3201

Andre Gaither

National Park Service c/o USEPA
Great Lakes National Program Office
77 West Jackson, 9th Floor (G-951)
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 353-3487

Paul Labovitz

National Park Service
4570 Akron-Peninsula Road
Peninsula, OH 44264
(216) 657-2950

Wink Hastings

National Park Service
310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Room 100E
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414) 297-3617

Mary Mae Hardt

National Park Service
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 221-3350

Steve Golden

National Park Service
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 223-5123

Jennifer Waite

National Park Service
The King Farm 5 Thomas Hill Road
Woodstock, VT 05091
(802)457-4323

Karl Beard

National Park Service
519 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY 12538
(914) 229-9115

Burnham Martin

National Park Service
Fort Andross, Suite 210 E 14 Main Street
Brunswick, ME 04011
(207)725-4934

Robert Potter

National Park Service
200 Chestnut Street, Room 260
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 597-6477

Don Briggs

National Park Service c/o I.C.P.R.B.
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852
(301) 984 1908 x111

Bob Campbell

National Park Service
c/o Chesapeake Bay Program
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 267-5747

Peggy Pings

National Park Service c/o WVU Div. of Forestry
P. O. BOX 6125
Morgantown, WV 26506-6125
(304) 293-3721 x2446

Wallace Brittain

National Park Service
75 Spring Street SW, Suite 1020
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 331-4043

Robert Vernon

National Park Service
302 College of Design
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
(504) 388-1446

Nanticoke Watershed Alliance

Forming a grassroots watershed organization

by Lisa Jo Frech

The Nanticoke River, beginning in Delaware and flowing through Maryland, is one of Chesapeake Bay's healthiest rivers. Bald eagles, ospreys, and great blue herons are common in the skies above the Nanticoke, while the waters below—free from dams—thrive with a profusion of fish and shellfish. The Nanticoke is also a wonderful river for recreation, education, and simple solitude.

So rich in resources, it is no surprise the Nanticoke is also rich in citizen activism to protect it. Typical of many grassroots river groups, two of the Nanticoke's formed in

response to development pressures. Over the course of several years and through the collaboration of citizen groups, agencies, forest industries, farmers, and others, the efforts to conserve the Nanticoke have evolved into a successful watershed approach under the umbrella of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance (NWA). NWA's success has not come easily and is far from complete, but the story of its journey toward a watershed approach is interesting, inspiring, and full of good ideas for other fledgling watershed organizations. Below follows an account of the NWA's story.

Early Action

The Delmarva Peninsula, through which the Nanticoke flows, is under increasing development pressures. Planning and zoning is at the forefront of local issues through the Peninsula. In response to that development pressure, citizen groups formed to take action. In Maryland, Friends of the Nanticoke sprang to life. Simultaneously, upriver in Delaware, Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Committee (NWPC), coalesced in anticipation of similar crises. Each group's goals and work were and still are typical of river conservation groups.

In 1992, at the request of NWPC and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trail and Conservation Assistance program began to provide planning assistance for the conservation of the Nanticoke River and its watershed.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed by the states of Maryland and Delaware, NWPC, the National Park Service, and the Friends of the Nanticoke, expanded the project into a bi-state planning effort that promotes the river and the watershed as a treasured resource. The MOU was a starting place, and it made us think about what it was that we really wanted. A day-long symposium for local, state, and federal officials, as well as non-government groups increased awareness, reduced redundancy, and increased efficiency of the numerous Nanticoke projects.

After three years, the bi-state NWA has more than 20 contributing members, representing a broad base of interests, including Delmarva Power and Light, the Coastal Association of Realtors, Salisbury State University,

Inspired by the Nanticoke, citizen activists progressed to a watershed approach.

The partnership projects were an important piece to building trust among parties that had long distrusted each other. As we rolled up our sleeves and got dirty together working toward a common goal out in the marshes, we got to know each other a little on a personal level, which eased the atmosphere once back at the table.

DuPont, MD Department of Natural Resources, Wicomico County Farm Bureau, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, MD State Office of Planning, DE Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Salisbury Zoo, MD Forests Association, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Oyster Recovery Project, the National Park Service, and the three original citizen groups (Friends of the Nanticoke, Wicomico Environmental Trust, and the Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Committee). The Alliance is growing rapidly, the atmosphere is positive and productive, and partnerships are at the core of the Alliance's work.

Early Trouble

A positive and productive atmosphere was hardly the case in the early days of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. Inherently disparate river interests were polarized on almost all issues. The timber companies and farmers were at odds with the environmental groups, and everyone was at odds with the state natural resource departments. Getting these groups to the bargaining table was not an easy task. Everyone knew that an Alliance should be formed, but no one knew what the mission of such a group should be or how to capitalize on the common thread among such diverse constituents.

As with most if not all consortiums, particularly those that reach across state lines, fear and suspicion predominated for a long time. Forward progress of any real significance was not possible until that fear and suspicion could be addressed and shown to be unnecessary, a two-fold task. Fear gripped many players as they stepped into untested waters. Suspicion had already long been in the hearts and minds of citizens due

to copious government land regulations. Everyone assumed government officials had a hidden agenda. (It turns out they do, but those agendas aren't necessarily always threatening.) The overall answer to laying these fears aside was patience and the wisdom that comes with time. But more specifically, certain key tactics helped:

- 1) obtaining information to answer questions;
- 2) the willingness to say "I don't know" when we didn't;
- 3) tapping the source of passion within each participant that brought them to the table in the first place, which was in many cases more personal than professional; and

- 4) undertaking small projects that forced people to work together and share a success, thereby beginning to build trust.

Successful Projects

The partnership projects were an important piece to building trust among parties that had long distrusted each other. As we rolled up our sleeves and got dirty together working toward a common goal out in the marshes, we got to know each other a little on a personal level, which eased the atmosphere once back at the table. Building trust was the first payoff; these same projects are now producing valuable data, attracting volunteers, increasing awareness, and establishing credibility with supporting foundations. These projects are still going strong, with active involvement from an increasing array of constituents.

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance is currently conducting several projects involving partnerships:

- a shad restoration project in conjunction with Chesapeake Bay

Foundation and Delmarva Power and Light;

- a water quality monitoring program with Salisbury State University;

- a boat traffic study with MD DNR and Delaware Sea Grant College;

- a canoe trail with The Nature Conservancy, Chesapeake Forest Products, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation; and

- other projects including building osprey platforms, running an annual float trip, organizing cleanups, and publishing a directory of all organizations having any kind of project related to the Nanticoke River.

The Turning Point

The big quagmire for us was the issue of federal Wild and Scenic River status. Only two or three people out of 25 or so thought it was a good idea, but that was enough to scare the pants off a few others, which resulted in a year-long, hot debate, through which no other topic could pass. Those were the most frustrating days of our evolution. Looking back now, it is amazing that despite flaring tempers, we never actually lost anyone because of that debate. Losing someone in a controversy usually means giving them over to negative public relations.

The key tactics mentioned earlier eventually won everyone over to the realization that while federal status may someday be appropriate and even helpful to the river, the timing was all wrong. The entire watershed would have been divided over this issue and there would have been a blood bath. It was hardly worthwhile. Besides, there was no guarantee the river would qualify, and the process was long and difficult. Time would be better spent taking on more and smaller projects.

Settling this issue was the turning point for the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. With the table cleared and players frustrated by inactivity, we threw ourselves into writing our articles of incorporation, bylaws, applying for 501(c)(3) status, and conducting cleanups and getting publications on line. Now we were getting somewhere.

New Partnerships

Easily the most surprising and also the most effective partnership to be made within the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance was the one between the “green” groups and the local timber industry. Members of the “green” groups originally saw the timber industry as destructive to the watershed. The timber industry saw the “greenies” as radical extremists. “Green” groups now see that far worse prospects lie in store for the watershed than thousands of acres of trees, which will remain as such. The timber folks eventually came to see that not all environmentalists are foaming at the mouth. We share a passion for quiet woods and for wildlife which creates ample opportunity for us to work together.

Another gap to bridge was the one between everyone else and the government agencies. Some government agency representatives were extremely enthusiastic to help, while others were extremely hesitant. Some of them accused the citizens groups of having a closed door policy and the citizens groups weren't sure they really wanted to work with government. Only when the doors were removed from their hinges did everyone settle down to the work that needed to be done. Perhaps the “green” groups had the most to learn from this whole experience.

Our work is far from done: we have yet to bring the local Native American tribe into our fold and our vision for the river will not be complete without it;

fundraising has not yet become a strong focus of the board; we have no strategic plan; and we do not yet have the ear of our local politicians. But our commitment is very strong and our potential is unlimited. Our teamwork has been recognized by EPA, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and River Network. And now that we are united in our endeavors, our energy is indomitable.

NWA Structure

The NWA meets once a month, has a board of 12, and is composed of at least three members from each of the following: Delaware organizations, Maryland organizations, public organizations and proprietary organizations. The three founding organizations (Friends of the Nanticoke, Wicomico Environmental Trust, and Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Committee) each have one seat. Any vacancy in a position on the board is filled by the organization that originally chose the member being replaced. The replacement serves for the duration of the term of the member being replaced. The NWA annual organizational membership fee is \$100. Only organizations who are current in their dues are eligible for representation on the board.

The board has an interesting way of reaching consensus. NWA bylaws state that “an absolute majority is a simple majority of ‘Yeas’ except that every ‘Nay’ cancels one ‘Yea’.” This applies to all decisions.” This makes the negative vote especially powerful, which also goes a long way to building trust. All of the organizational functions were designed to create and maintain an open forum with an evenhanded agenda.

Lessons Learned

- No two groups or set of experiences are alike. Yet, if one ignores the lessons to be learned from others on

that basis, one is destined to repeat their mistakes.

- Accept that a crisis is sometimes necessary to facilitate growth within the organization.

- No one can be left out of the circle. If people are excluded they will eventually thwart the work of the group, so bring them in early.

- Build trust by getting busy doing the agreeable projects first and controversial ones later.

- Keep participants in one corner of the ring and the problem in the opposite corner.

- Other consortiums like NWA exist, but they are few and far between. Where they do exist they are powerful, respected, effective, and efficient organizations. Partnerships are the wave of the future. In a time of budget cutbacks and federal government shutdowns, shared resources, which include people, money, and time, are not only necessary, they make good sense.

- Be patient. It took years to build a coalition like this one.

- Coalitions allow flexibility and focus energy and resources on critical issues.

In an ideal world the NWA would eventually become obsolete. But until that world is achieved, the need for watershed coalitions will be tremendous. As yet, the true potential for them remains untapped. ➡

Part of this article was reprinted from “Nanticoke Watershed Alliance: A Case Study in Forming a Grassroots Watershed Organization,” by Lisa Jo Frech, Chuck Barszcz, and Tom Tyler.

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance can be reached at (410) 873-2102. Lisa Jo Frech is the executive director of the NWA.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners: Land Trust Spearheads Formation of a Watershed Coalition

by Rita Haberman with Rich Cochran

The tag line on the Chagrin River Land Conservancy's (CRLC) letterhead reads, "Preserving the Chagrin River Valley—We're all in it together!" Being *in it together* is one thing, and *working together in it* is quite another, but that is precisely the purpose of the Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP), a new watershed organization in northeastern Ohio. CRLC, a land trust, has led the effort to create CRWP, and they have done it with impressive speed and buy-in from virtually every key stakeholder.

The Chagrin River Watershed covers 260 square-miles along the eastern edge of Cleveland as the river flows more than 100 miles in all directions before emptying into Lake Erie at its northernmost point. Fifty miles of the Chagrin are included in the Ohio State Scenic Rivers Program. Over this relatively small watershed, some 30 municipalities and four counties create a patchwork of political boundaries. Along with this maze of multiple jurisdictions comes the associated uncoordinated land and water management. Fragmented and poor land and water management practices, coupled with intensive development pressures, have left the communities of the Chagrin with increased flooding, pollution, erosion, loss of natural habitat and species, and other problems. Along with these problems, the costs to municipalities—for flood cleanup, property and road damage, keeping ditches clean, expensive engineering projects, law suits and other problems—were growing rapidly. The CRLC initiated taking a watershed approach in the Chagrin to reverse the declining health of the river and increasing costs to its communities.

Timeline for CRWP

In fall/winter 1994, led by the board of the CRLC, concerned citizens

began meeting frequently to discuss the concept of taking a watershed approach to managing and protecting the Chagrin. The group quickly evolved into an impressive set of stakeholders, including municipalities, land trusts, county agencies and governments, state and federal agencies, district parks, schools and other organizations.

By spring/summer 1995, intense planning for CRWP's structure began. CRWP's steering committee invited national experts in to help sell the watershed approach concept and begin start-up.

In December 1995, a group of 75 representatives from these local municipalities, agencies and organizations endorsed the concept of forming a nonprofit watershed coalition with a steering committee.

In March 1996, the CRLC hired a full-time staffer to work on CRWP's organizational start-up tasks and to coordinate the development of the coalition's structure and membership, as well as land protection work.

By October 1996, 90% of the key partners—municipalities (having a significant proportion of their land within the Chagrin Watershed), counties and district parks—had joined as dues-paying members. Dues range from \$500 to \$8,000.

As of January 1997, CRWP has \$100,000 in the bank and is advertising for a full-time executive director.

Keys to Success

The CRWP steering committee attributes its quick success in developing a broad base of political and financial support for the CRWP to the following strategies:

Invite credible, visionary watershed experts to meet with your group. During the course of its formative evolution, CRWP has invited several outside experts

The Chagrin
and its
watershed

to share experiences from other watersheds and provide advice. Each CRWP meeting typically includes two parts, a presentation from an outside expert and a CRWP organizational business meeting. By combining the two, the leaders of CRWP were able to give credibility to their proposed visionary watershed approach while informing potential partners of tools and strategies applicable in the Chagrin Watershed. CRWP meetings are well attended with 70-100 representatives at each.

In spring 1995 the CRLC board invited Phil Wallin, president of River Network, to speak at their annual meeting. Wallin reinforced CRLC's notion of the necessity of taking a watershed approach to protect the Chagrin. In October 1995, Ralph Goodno of the successful Merrimack River Watershed Council in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, ►

Land Trust Spearheads Formation of a Watershed Coalition

continued from page 11

facilitated a one-day planning session to help CRWP define its roles and organizational structure. In March 1996, Bob Montgomery of Woodward Clyde Consultants gave a presentation on the Butterfield Creek Watershed Partnership. The Butterfield is a small urban watershed in Chicago with many similarities to the Chagrin. For the rapidly evolving CRWP, the Butterfield provided a specific example of a successful watershed partnership with tangible benefits addressing flooding, erosion and nonpoint pollution. In December 1996, Randall Arendt, a nationally known conservation planner, gave two well attended presentations on planning and zoning strategies applicable in the Chagrin.

Create and nurture a new and separate organization, if necessary. The CRLC is a small land trust with a big vision. They realized a couple years ago

that in order to protect the Chagrin River, they had to address issues throughout the watershed. But the CRLC is very good at what they do—protect land through acquisition and conservation easements, a vital role in conserving the Chagrin. So instead of trying to reshape the successful CRLC into an inclusive watershed organization, the land trust spearheaded the effort to create a new and separate one that would, the CRWP. With its solid track record, CRLC raised foundation and private money to hire a full-time executive director to get the CRWP through start-up, as well as expand its land acquisition program in the upper Chagrin Watershed.

Focus first on public agency and municipal partners.

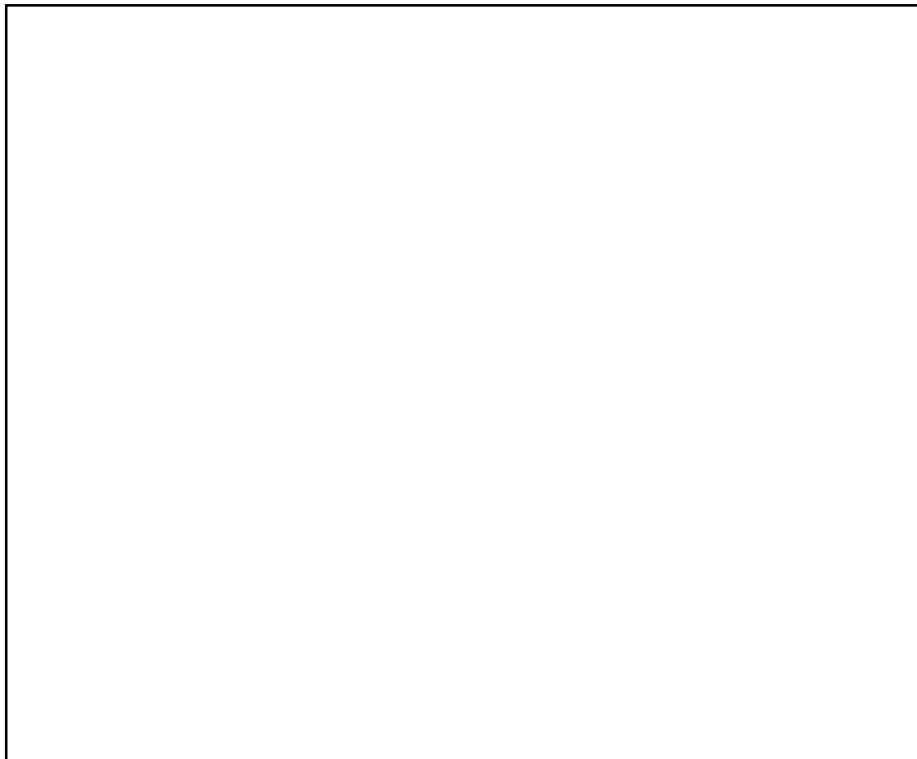
Although the vision for the CRWP is one of an inclusive watershed coalition of both public and private stakeholders, to start out, the leaders of

CRWP have chosen to focus first on recruiting public partners—municipalities, counties and district parks. Their rationale was without these public agencies, responsible for most land use decisions, the watershed partnership would not work. After public partners are on board, private organizations (five land trusts, an Audubon chapter, the arboretum, and others) will also be invited to join as partners.

Develop a strong written “case for support” based on the economics of watershed planning. The CRWP steering committee—working closely with many municipal officials, public agency leaders and others—developed an excellent explanatory document, “A Case for Supporting the CRWP.” It dispels the false choice between economic growth and environmental protection, and instead explains how success in attaining and sustaining economic health depends on recognizing the economic contribution our undeveloped environment makes. CRLC has distributed the case statement to all potential public agency and municipal partners.

Take your show on the road. In addition to sending each potential CRWP partner the case for support and a formal written invitation to join, CRWP also offered to make on-site presentations. Many took them up on the offer. This took the burden of selling the program, which costs partners \$500 to \$8,000 to join, from partners’ staff to the leaders of the CRWP. Keys to good presentations include using quality maps of the entire watershed, focusing on the potential partner’s subwatershed, and meeting ahead of time with local leaders to anticipate issues. By meeting personally with partners and addressing on-site their specific concerns and questions, CRWP has yet to be refused.

Align the interests and sell the vision. One of the most difficult aspects of organizing a proposed watershed

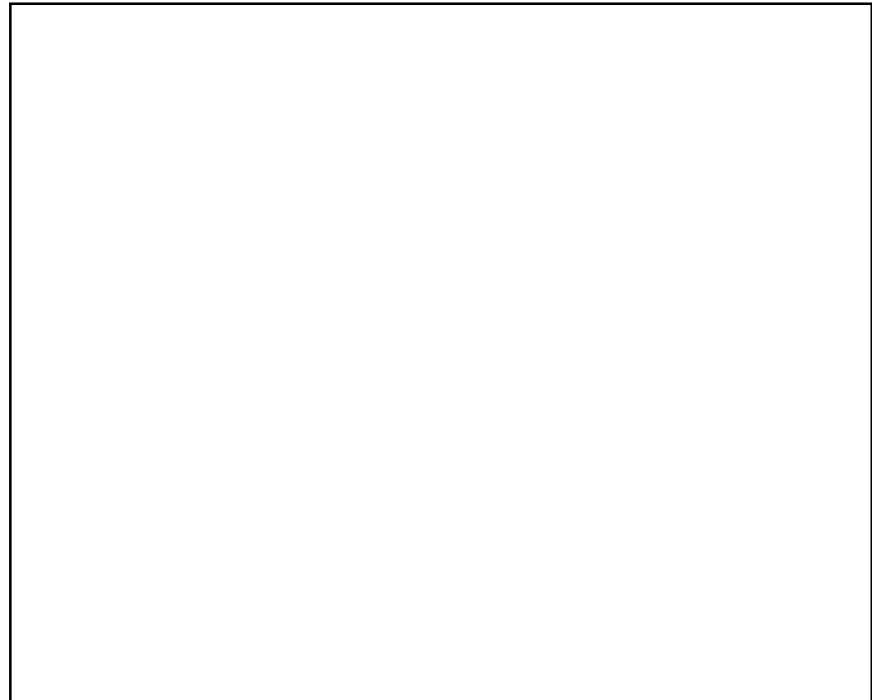


A scenic section of the Chagrin River, included in the Ohio Scenic Rivers program.

group is trying to explain what it will do. In reality what any new watershed organization does is a direct result of who is involved in designing it. One strategy the CRWP steering committee used was to make an impressive list of "What the Coalition Could Do" and let it be known that member organizations will decide on policies, programs and actions. They invited key partners to take a "leap of faith" and join in the effort. Once a few respected members joined, many others followed suit, and most of the rest eventually join to avoid missing anything.

Build a funding base from local sources. The CRWP is funded almost exclusively with dues from 20 public agency partners (municipalities, counties and district parks). CRWP also received a catalytic grant from the George Gund Foundation to help with start-up costs. With this local and reliable base of support, CRWP will be free to focus on program work instead of fundraising, like most watershed groups.

CRWP worked closely with numerous elected public officials, township trustees, park district directors and county officials to develop an equitable dues structure. Annual dues range from \$500 to \$8,000 (see sidebar). The fee is a flat rate based on assessed value per municipality. River corridor communities pay about double the dues of upland communities. Communities along the perimeter of the watershed with a very small percentage of their land in the Chagrin pay a nominal fee of \$500. Park districts and counties pay a flat fee of \$3,000. The CRWP makes a pitch for membership as an opportunity to avoid costs. "If CRWP's efforts can alleviate one serious erosion problem, avoid one large lawsuit, or decrease the damage of one disastrous flood, we will save more money than our [CRWP] entire budget for the communities of the watershed."



Development pressures, flooding and erosion are serious issues in the Chagrin watershed.

What's Next for CRWP?

In 1997 CRWP's first priority is to hire a top notch full-time executive director to begin implementing the watershed program. A big program priority is to develop quality visual and written materials that express a vision for the Chagrin Watershed, focusing on land and water use practices.

Undoubtedly, many challenges lie ahead for the untested CRWP, but it is certainly off to an auspicious start, built on a solid foundation of political and

financial support. Most likely, in a few years it will be appropriate for the tag line on CRWP's letterhead to read, "The Chagrin River Watershed — We're all in it *working together.*" ➔

Rita Haberman is a watershed program manager at River Network and co-edits River Voices.

Rich Cochran is the executive director of CRLC and has spearheaded the organization of CRWP, while protecting land in the Upper Chagrin watershed.

CRWP's dues structure:

assessed value	upland partners	corridor partners	district parks & counties
\$0-20 million	\$500	\$750	\$3000 flat fee
\$20 -50 million	\$750	\$1500	
\$50-100 million	\$2000	\$4000	
\$100-200 million	\$3000	\$6000	
\$200+ million	\$4000	\$8000	

The Lamprey River Experience

From wild and scenic to watershed

by Jamie Fosburgh and Cynthia Lay

Last year was a big year for New Hampshire's Lamprey River and the Lamprey River Watershed Association (LRWA). In November 1996, the U.S. Congress passed legislation amending the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to include 11.5 miles of the lower Lamprey in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Of equal significance, LRWA, with assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), took their first real steps to broaden their perspective from the lower river to the entire watershed.

Early Efforts

A small group of committed activists who lived on or near the river organized the LRWA in 1983. The founding members were from the lower river, which provides excellent canoeing and fishing, and naturally attracted the most interest. LRWA's early efforts focused on raising public awareness of the Lamprey's scenic, ecological, and recreational values through events and a newsletter. At the same time LRWA looked for opportunities to increase protection for the river.

In the mid 1980s LRWA began to pursue local river protection by

addressing land use policies through town boards. In 1984 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued a license for a hydroelectric plant on the river in Durham. LRWA rallied to fight the license and decided to pursue a Wild and Scenic River designation in order to keep the Lamprey a free-flowing river. LRWA added state level protection and recognition to its agenda when New Hampshire's River Management and Protection Program was developed in the late 1980s. This three-part agenda of local land use policies, and national and state protective designations has dominated LRWA for a decade, all of which focus on the lower river.

Transitioning to a Watershed Approach

LRWA has achieved great success on the lower river. Strong local policies are in place to protect the river, and, even more importantly, town boards are attuned to the Lamprey and its resources, and committed to their protection. The lower river was added to the state river protection program in 1991, and to the federal Wild and Scenic System in 1996. Local, state and federal government are coordinated with all parties bound together through a Lamprey River

Advisory Committee (LRAC) to oversee river management.

And yet, even as successes built on the lower river, so did an awareness of the larger issues within the watershed. For several years, LRWA and fledgling LRAC had become increasingly aware of upstream issues and opportunities, and had been frustrated with an inability to address them. The threats to the long-term sustainability of Lamprey River resources, including water quality, water quantity, resident and anadromous fisheries, were increasingly perceived as occurring throughout the watershed.

Despite the recognition of watershed-wide issues, substantial obstacles to broadening efforts to a watershed scale prevented any real steps from being taken. Some of the factors holding the LRWA back included:

- Pre-occupation with lower river issues;
- Energy drain: It took more than a decade of hard work to achieve the successes, and a move to a watershed scale means new communities, new riparian landowners, starting over to develop citizen support;
- The river as an organizing principle: The lower river has a natural constituency through river recreation, riverfront park areas, and a physical presence that makes it an easy organizing symbol. The upper river and tributaries are much more anonymous.
- Organizational issues: LRWA has always been an all-volunteer effort led by a small group of individuals, all of whom have ties to the lower river. LRAC is newly formed to coordinate between governmental entities and activists, and is specifically devoted to managing the lower river.

In spring 1996, commitments to overcome these obstacles began to take shape. A partnership between the

no keyline

National Park Service and Quebec Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF) made it possible for LRWA and LRAC to receive the assistance of a full-time professional intern. Taking advantage of this opportunity, they explored approaches in the larger Lamprey watershed. LRWA and LRAC developed a tentative workplan and staff profile. They hired Cynthia Lay—a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development program.

The Lamprey Watershed Workplan:

- Identify interested individuals and groups in upstream/watershed communities;
- Disseminate information about LRWA and LRAC to upstream communities and groups;
- Disseminate information, studies, and other information about the Lamprey River and its natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- Coordinate information exchange meetings between the LRWA, LRAC and identified upstream entities.
- Produce a "Watershed Profile" including: contacts; river uses, issues, and opportunities; and river protection strengths and weaknesses.

Lay's efforts began by telephoning representatives of many interests from each town, including town selectmen, planning, and zoning board members, recreation departments, conservation commissioners and individual citizens. She made visits to conservation commission meetings to discuss river issues and exchange information. One important connection made was with two nonprofit organizations active in environmental issues in the watershed—one working on preserving and connecting the large blocks of open space in the headwaters area, and one working on environmental health issues often related to the river.

"I was surprised at the number of interested people out there. Once I made that initial effort to start a discussion, there was great response and the networking became easy," Lay said.

LRAC hosted the first meeting of the LRWA, LRAC and upriver interests. They invited the two nonprofits to come to their regular meeting to continue the "get to know you" process. The meeting was highly successful, and was followed-up with an "upriver" field trip organized by Lay and hosted by an upstream group. Momentum built quickly, and issue-specific meetings and site tours were scheduled.

The group decided that producing a *Lamprey River Watershed Guide* would capture the momentum and would provide specific natural resources information on each town, as well as articles on river aspects that tie the towns together, such as river history and water quality. The *Guide* is a means of targeting interested parties and increasing participation in river issues.

Keeping It Going

At this time, energy in the watershed is high. The presence of a talented and energetic professional intern for a period of several months has generated a great deal of activity and communication, and all parties seem excited about future opportunities.

The challenge now is how to keep the momentum going. As the only entity which encompasses the entire watershed area, LRWA is the key to future success. The question facing LRWA is: what changes within their organization are going to be necessary to achieve the successes at the watershed scale which now suddenly seem within grasp?

Can an all-volunteer organization based on an activist board maintain that identity while dramatically expanding its

scope? Will a transition to a staffed organization be necessary? What sort of an organization would the LRWA like to be in two years? 10 years? 20 years? How do the individuals who have been the organization's lifeblood for so long feel about their own commitment to the river? the watershed? their communities? watershed communities? Should the LRWA function primarily as a coordinator for the other groups or as a distinct advocacy organization? or both?

LRWA and its board have yet to formally discuss these issues. Through

I believe it is human interaction, the willingness to talk to our neighbors, to hear different points of view and to communicate, that will take us the farthest toward our goals.

the outreach in the upper watershed and the production of the *Watershed Guide*, LRWA will be better equipped to make these decisions. Taking stock of what has been learned, the connections made, and charting LRWA's future steps is next.

Lay observed: "The Lamprey Watershed is an exciting place to work. I've had the pleasure of meeting many energetic and dedicated individuals and seeing their visions form a more unified thrust. This experience has renewed my faith in grassroots activism, local involvement and the power of people-to-people interaction. I believe it is human interaction, the willingness to talk to our neighbors, to hear different points of view and to communicate, that will take us the farthest toward our goals." 🐟

Jamie Fosburgh is a resource planner with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program in Boston, MA.

San Miguel Watershed Coalition

Bringing together the communities of the upper and lower river

by Gary Weiner

The one million acres of the San Miguel Watershed in southwestern Colorado include some of the most wild, rare, fragile, intact and beautiful landscapes in the world. At its heart, the free-flowing San Miguel River extends for 72 miles from high alpine headwaters above Telluride to a desert confluence with the Dolores River.

However, with some of the highest relocation and resort growth rates in the nation and a five-fold increase in recreational uses in the past decade, these landscapes and habitats are under pressure and often at risk. Previous boom periods have left the area with a legacy of destructive mining practices that have destabilized river channels and degraded water quality. Recent explosive growth coupled with a decline of traditional industries have disrupted social and economic patterns; a schism has formed between upper basin (resort) and lower basin (ranching) communities.

Origin of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition is an organization of private citizens, community groups, local governments

and state and federal agencies, who have come together to address these issues and solve problems through a multi-jurisdictional whole-basin ecosystem management process. The coalition evolved as a result of concern over the piecemeal manner in which resource problems were addressed. The fate of the San Miguel River basin was being decided one project at a time, sometimes beyond the public decision-making process and without consideration of cumulative impacts.

In early 1993, the idea of coordinating resource management efforts took form when the Telluride Institute, Inc., an environmental nonprofit organization, convened a group of individuals for the purpose of sharing information and discussing sustainable river management. This group, later named the San Miguel River Coalition, was composed of federal resource managers, elected officials, developers, and others who were engaged in activities directly effecting the health of the San Miguel River. The group eventually focused upon the river-related impacts of summer recreation in the upper reaches of the San Miguel River, and decided to pool resources to hire a river ranger. The work of this group set the foundation for the emergence of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition.

In the Fall of 1994, the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program of the National Park Service was invited to facilitate the development of a multi-objective management plan for the San Miguel River corridor. A public workshop was held near Telluride to introduce the concept and identify issues; efforts were made to ensure the participation of decision makers, opinion leaders, and other key people with a stake in river management.

Embracing the Watershed Approach

As a result of this workshop, it became apparent that the most appropriate scale for this effort was not the river corridor, but the entire watershed. There were two principal reasons why:

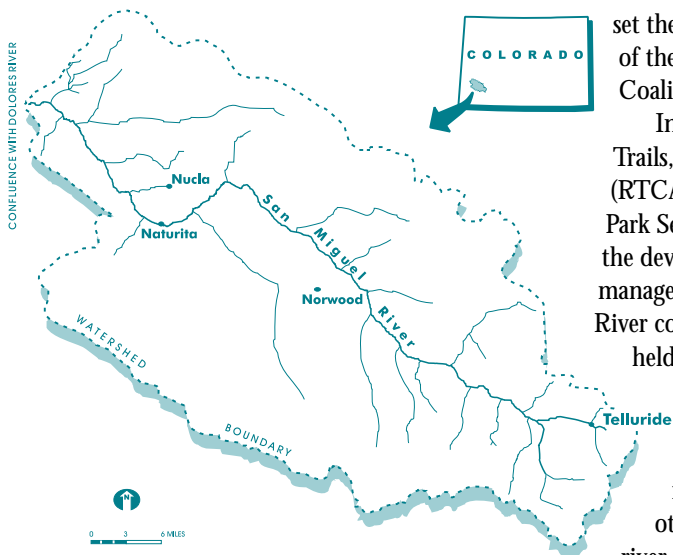
- Holistic solutions - A watershed approach brings together people with a diversity of perspectives and expertise. With the big picture in mind, solutions to specific problems will be well-founded, may address multiple areas of concern, and will be more likely to succeed.

- Community support - A watershed approach transcends jurisdictional boundaries. For the San Miguel, the watershed planning process would offer lower basin communities their first opportunity to collaborate with the upper basin in decision-making about issues of regional concern.

Support for the watershed approach to management planning was widespread due to state and federal policy shifts toward ecosystem management, as well as local concerns over the increasing pressures of growth and environmental degradation at a time when government budgets for resource management were being cut. The San Miguel Watershed Coalition was formed and a mission was established: "to develop, through a process of collaborative planning and substantive public involvement, a basinwide management plan that conserves and enhances...our communities..."

Development of a Watershed Management Plan

At this early stage, much of the energy and direction was provided by people who had been active in the River Coalition. Facilitated by RTCA and the Telluride Institute, and with strong support from the Bureau of Land Management, the Coalition developed a



community-based concept of how to conduct a watershed planning effort. Great importance was placed upon citizen involvement and responsiveness to local concerns. Rather than a singular focus upon water, the Coalition addressed all issues found to be important by watershed communities. Toward this end, three additional day-long workshops were held throughout the basin to surface issues, identify potential solutions, and engage the citizenry.

Emerging issues centered around the themes of water, natural resources, recreation, education, and community growth and preservation. Focus groups were formed to clarify issues and flesh out objectives and potential actions.

As the focus groups were meeting, a planning team formed for the primary purpose of shepherding the information generated by the public process into a planning document. The planning team was composed of people involved in day-to-day watershed management activities, including staff from agencies, organizations, and local governments. Team members had technical resource expertise and a willingness to compose a watershed management plan.

Planning team meetings provided a forum for interagency communication and information exchange about ongoing watershed projects. Team members also participated in a targeted outreach effort to meet with interest groups, elected and appointed officials, key individuals and community leaders to brief them on progress and solicit comment. The planning team served as a temporary support unit for the coalition and will eventually be replaced by a more enduring body with stronger citizen representation.

Thinking ahead toward implementation of watershed projects, a management coordination committee was established with mayors, county

commissioners, and high-level state and federal agency officials to ensure support at all levels for the watershed planning process and its results. The committee will meet only once or twice each year, but members are available for consultation and problem-solving.

Successes and Challenges

In its short history, the Coalition has been highly successful in attracting funding: More than \$200,000 in grants and another \$350,000 in in-kind services has been contributed to the project. The lion's share of the grant money came from several Environmental Protection Agency sources—a matter of being in the right place at the right time. The EPA had just shifted its focus from headwaters to community-based ecosystem protection, and the San Miguel project had high visibility at a time when money had just become available. These funds were used to leverage matching grants from other sources, including towns and counties in the basin. The large value of donated in-kind services (mostly staff time) is a reflection of the importance attached to this watershed scale project by the breadth of agencies and organizations participating in the coalition.

This financial good news has led the coalition to its next task: coming to terms with the best organizational structure to guide the watershed project, manage funds, and effectively involve basin citizens. With the recent hiring of a

The free-flowing San Miguel River extends for 72 miles from high alpine headwaters above Telluride to a desert confluence with the Dolores River.

watershed coordinator, the release of the draft watershed plan, and the distinct likelihood of securing significant grants for project implementation in the near future, many coalition members believe there is need for a more formal organizational structure to manage finances and supervise staff. Incorporating as a 501(c)(3) is a possibility, but for now, an oversight committee composed of the coalition's financial contributors will serve this function.

Perhaps a more delicate challenge is how best to implement the watershed management plan and provide an ongoing forum for coordination and communication into the future. Clearly, strong involvement from both private and public sectors will be necessary. Yet there are many ways to structure an organization in order to facilitate community involvement and make decisions. The most appropriate structure for the coalition will depend upon the role that management and regulatory authorities want the coalition to play. ◀

Gary Weiner is a resource planner with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program in Denver, Colorado.

photo: Tim Palmer

Johnson Creek-shed Planning

A model approach for Trinity Watershed

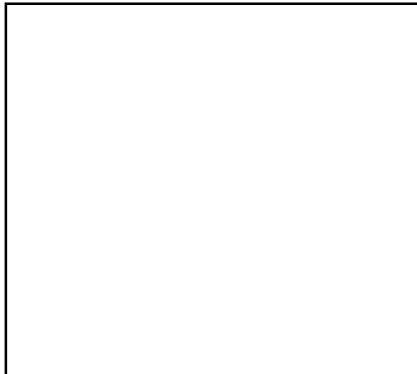
by Pat Remington

Johnson Creek, a tributary of the West Fork of the Trinity River, has meandered through the community of Arlington, Texas, without much fanfare for hundreds of years. With a main channel about 15 miles long and a watershed area of about 22 square miles, it trickles, flows and sometimes gushes through this north central Texas community. When the frequency and intensity of Johnson Creek flooding could no longer be ignored, the NTCOG (see sidebar) and National Park Service's RTCA led a community-based creekshed planning process. The result is a multi-objective management plan and a model citizen involvement process to use throughout the rest of the Trinity watershed.

Flooding

In the 1930s and 1940s, communities along Johnson Creek experienced tremendous growth. During that period many homes were built along the creek as well as on upstream properties. It continued into the 1950s when General Motors opened an assembly plant in Arlington, which prompted the building of many large residential subdivisions. Urban sprawl began to slowly limit run-off capabilities in the Johnson Creek watershed, creating

photo: James Richards Studio



Local officials confer with citizens and community leaders during the three-day workshop.

many problems for people and businesses living on or near the path of the creek. Torrential rains often transformed Johnson Creek to a highly destructive, frightening river of mud, water and unwanted debris. Damaging floods along Johnson Creek have been documented in more than 14 years since 1949, producing millions of dollars of damages along the way.

The city of Arlington requested the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reduce flood hazards. The Corps recommended a \$4.5 million channelization project. Ultimately, Arlington's city council rejected the Corp's proposal and instead formed a citizen planning committee.

Realizing that this project demanded citizen participation, in December 1995, the Arlington city council appointed a 19-member citizen planning committee to begin formulating a master plan for the creek. The committee was composed of representatives from every major interest group, the city's geographical areas, and creekside residents, many of whom have been flooded repeatedly. The Johnson Creek Citizen Planning Committee's (JCCPC) assignment was to draft a master plan for the creek corridor within one year.

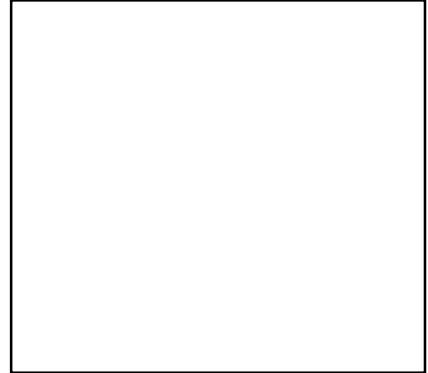
Strategies for Planning

The committee's first task was to hire an excellent consultant team to assist in resolving technical issues during the planning process. The committee chose the Johnson Creek Consortium.

Next, the JCCPC identified watershed-wide goals for the creek. What to do about the more than 60 flood-prone homes and other structures along the creek was an extremely important and heated issue. Identifying properties for buy-out and purchase price became a much discussed topic and the subject of many divergent opinions. The issue of buy-out was

delegated to the city's stormwater management committee. By diverting this issue to another committee, the

photo: James Richards Studio



Design experts collaborate with stakeholders to produce a common vision for the creek's future.

JCCPC was able to concentrate on developing a long-range, multi-objective plan for the preservation of the creek and a creative floodway management solution.

Consultants and interested citizen groups conducted tours of the creek during the following months to acquaint the community to the many possibilities offered by the creek plan. Grassroots organizations including Friends of Johnson Creek organized volunteer clean ups.

City-wide forums were held in which citizens were asked to give their visions of the creek and the possibilities it presented for recreation, natural and historical preservation and overall quality of life issues. Consensus building was at the committee's prime objective.

Ten months into the planning process, the JCCPC attended a three-day intensive workshop facilitated by the team of consultants. This workshop brought together experts from around the country. Nationally recognized hydrologists, landscape architects, engineers, and greenway planners joined with citizens from the community in several "dreamscape" sessions where each person was challenged to come up

with a creative approach to floodway management, while maintaining the natural environment and addressing the recreational and cultural needs of the community. After three days of intense work sessions, a plan emerged.

The Results

What was once a 15-mile unnoticed and, in many places, unattractive creek would become a world class greenway belt consisting of multiple detention ponds, bike paths, and expanded park and recreational facilities, including an 18-hole golf course. Five parks were redrawn or created along the creek's path, some with water sculptures and outdoor art, others with amphitheatres, pavilions and places for public gatherings. Large detention ponds became places to fish, enjoy various recreation, as well as address downstream flooding concerns. Other areas emphasized the preservation of the creek's natural environment, promoted bird and animal life and fostered the preservation of the creek's historical significance. Hundreds of citizen ideas brought forth during the first 12 months of the committee's activities and the intensive workshop were woven into the draft master plan.

One year after the formation of the JCCPC, the master plan for the creek is in its final drafting stage. After some fine tuning, the JCCPC will submit the plan to the city council. Due to the enormous size of the plan and the many projects contained within it, it will require 20-30 years of funding. The Corps has agreed to provide substantial sums of money to help the city buy many of the flood-prone homes along the creek as well as build some of the initial flood management projects. The city has also agreed to provide additional money for the Johnson Creek plan in its new, voter-approved, \$37.5 million park bond

Trinity Watershed

The Johnson Creek Subwatershed falls within the city of Arlington, a member of the the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), a voluntary organization of, by and for local governments. Its function is to help its 219 local governments work together on issues that extend beyond their individual boundaries and jurisdictions to accomplish together what they are unable to accomplish alone. This goal is well suited to addressing environmental problems by watershed boundaries rather than political delineations.

NCTCOG is pioneering an effort to lead water resource protection out of the stream corridor and into the watershed. For the past decade, NCTCOG has been serving as convener and facilitator of local governments in pursuit of a COMMON VISION for floodplain management in the Trinity River Corridor (to which Johnson Creek drains) and in reporting water quality status in the Upper Trinity River Basin to the state through responsibilities under the Clean Water Act. NCTCOG is now moving upstream into the Trinity River tributaries, and into the watersheds and subwatersheds of the Upper Trinity River Basin in pursuit of a Trinity River COMMON Watershed VISION.

NCTCOG has also been working with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program since 1991. RTCA's role in the COMMON VISION Program focuses on linking local partners to expertise and resources that further locally developed plans for the Trinity River corridor. In addition, RTCA will help involve private interest groups and facilitate public outreach efforts in support of implementing a Trinity River COMMON Watershed VISION. The structure of the program will be developed to reflect three stages in implementation:

1. Assessing current conditions in the watersheds of the Upper Trinity River Basin. NCTCOG's 1997 Annual Water Quality Management Plan will assess water quality in each of the 12 watersheds of the Upper Trinity River Basin. These watershed assessments will serve as the foundation for watershed planning.
2. Working with stakeholders to develop goals for specific watershed improvement projects. Beginning in April 1997, NCTCOG will convene watershed round tables to serve as forums for watershed stakeholders to address issues of watershed health and improvement.
3. Cooperatively implementing watershed improvement projects by local governments. Working collaboratively through the watershed round tables, stakeholders will identify and implement strategies to improve the quality of the resources in their watersheds.

The accomplishments in the Johnson Creek Subwatershed are excellent examples of the strides NCTCOG hopes to make around the Upper Trinity River Basin during the coming years: use the success from the creekshed process and export it throughout rest of larger watershed. 🐟

program. This will be the first in several bond programs to bring the master plan for the creek to fruition.

Arlington's citizens have come a long way since December 1995. They have shown that broad based community involvement projects like Johnson Creek Watershed can offer benefits for the entire community as well as the creek.

Numerous challenges lie ahead, especially financial backing, but the plan and vision built on the strong foundation of community involvement and support are in place. 🐟

Pat Remington is a partner in Remington and Jeffrey, P.C., and chairman of the Arlington Planning and Zoning Commission.

Hoosic River Watershed Association

by Jerry Schoen and Alex Brooks

Adopting the watershed approach generally stretches people and organizations, prompting them to acquire new skills, form new partnerships, and adopt different viewpoints.

The watershed approach has stretched one small watershed association in several ways during the last decade. When the Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA) was established in 1989, its primary focus was to raise public awareness of the Hoosic as a beautiful, living river, that supports wildlife and recreation. HooRWA links the many different social and political sectors within a watershed under a common purpose. New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont each possess a roughly equal share of the watershed, yet HooRWA's strength has always been in Massachusetts, particularly in the college town of Williamstown. Enlisting the enthusiasm of the rural contingent or the urban blue-collar crowd has been quite challenging—a problem not uncommon to many place-based organizations, when the

place hasn't many people and the people have not much money. With a paid membership of about 160 and no well-heeled angels stepping forward yet, HooRWA remained all-volunteer until a part-time person was hired to coordinate the group's growing number of programs.

HooRWA's Work

- HooRWA coordinates an annual Riverfest series that encourages a rediscovery and celebration of the river. Each May, a fair is held that includes: clowns, canoe rides, fishing demonstrations and food. The Riverfest series is well attended, and people later return to the river for recreation and relaxation. In spite of our industrial-age PCB legacy, the Hoosic River is becoming a popular angling destination—albeit one where fly casters and bait dunkers alike share a catch and release ethic out of necessity. Rafters and canoeists enjoy a unique feature of the Hoosic: it's one of the few rivers in America that offers a leisurely, scenic paddle through three states in the course of an afternoon.

The arts play an important role in Riverfest. Local artists spend the week prior to Riverfest constructing a series of imaginative environmental art pieces—called Riverworks—along the riverside trail, on the banks, in the riparian canopy, and in the river itself. Many of the pieces are created by schoolchildren working with an artist and scientist team. The works provide a fresh perspective of the riverine environment and of the human imprint upon it. After the festival, some pieces are removed by the artists, some are inevitably destroyed by vandals, and some endure to bemuse unsuspecting trail hikers throughout the year.

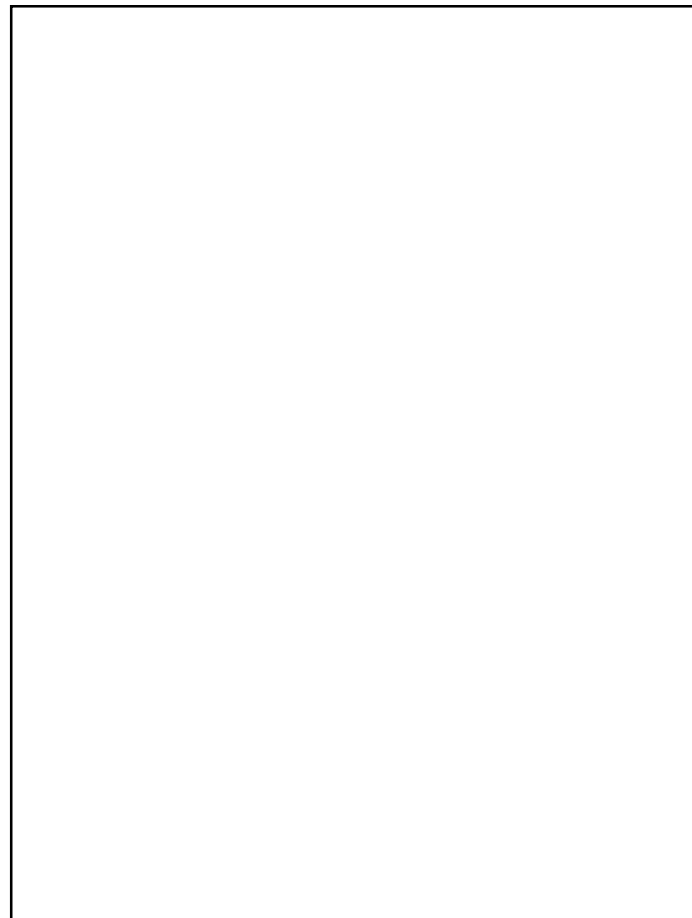
- HooRWA, with help from the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails program, produced a recreational map that highlights the river's charms, HooRWA's work on its behalf, and the ecological unity of the three-state watershed.

- HooRWA has a water monitoring program with fewer lives than the average cat, but we're catching up. At various times, we've done baseline nutrient and bacteria studies, measured the effect flood control chutes have on water temperature, assessed the impact of chemical spills on macroinvertebrate populations, and searched for mysterious coliform sources. Lately we've helped several area high schools incorporate monitoring into the curricula.

- We're also working with several organizations to establish a hiking trail linking the Connecticut and Hudson rivers along routes traveled by Native Americans centuries ago.

MA Watershed Initiative Help

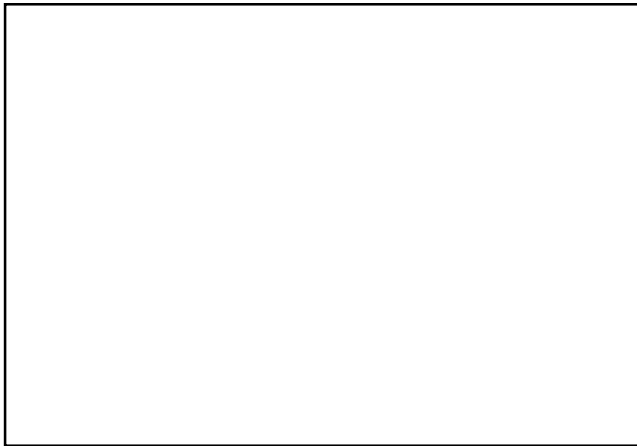
Our biggest stretch, perhaps, is finding sufficient resources to do effective work throughout the entire three-



Art pieces, displayed at the HooRWA's Riverworks Riverfest, provide a fresh perspective of the river environment and the human imprint upon it.

state area. Steady, incremental progress has been made on building membership, raising money, improving scientific capabilities, and building partnerships with towns, nonprofits, and other agencies, but with some help from the Massachusetts Watershed Initiative (MWI) that will change.

HoorWA is one of the six recipients of capacity building grants under the first round of the MWI. The MWI is Massachusetts' attempt to build informed communities of stakeholders to draft and implement comprehensive watershed management plans in each of the state's 27 basins. In effect, these local business, municipal and NGO interests - collectively called a "Watershed Community Council" (WCC) - will be the watershed managers. They will be assisted, not directed, by state and federal environmental

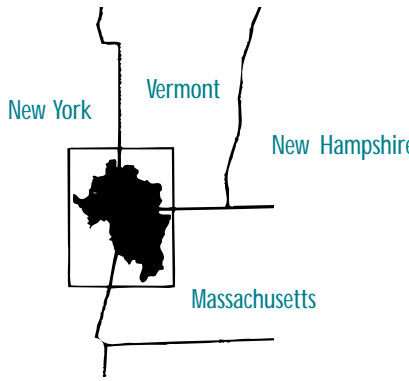


Riverfest gives many folks their first taste of fun on the river:

agencies. The capacity building awards are two-year grants aimed at cultivating organizations that can pull together the coalitions to form the backbone of the WCCs. HoorWA's coalition-building efforts involve several task-oriented partnership collaborations with:

- the county planning agency and the local conservation district on a comprehensive study of non-point source pollution throughout the Massachusetts section of the watershed;
- a local land trust and the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission to create greenways along the river;
- an interagency "basin team" of state scientists to conduct ongoing, citizen-assisted watershed assessments; and lastly
- HoorWA organizational development assistance from a local community foundation.

While these projects all focus on Massachusetts, they are providing HoorWA with an infusion of energy, dollars,



The Hoosic River Watershed

From the late 1800s to the 1970s, the Hoosic River functioned mainly as a working river. It served as a waterway to move industrial wastes and flood waters downstream. As a result, entire generations have grown up with aversion rather than attachment to the river.

The Hoosic watershed runs through classic Yankee country, beginning in three headwater tributaries in Vermont, New York and Massachusetts. It rolls towards the Hudson, in the shadow of three low mountain ranges, where America and Africa collided a few epochs back. Dairy farms dominate the lower slopes between a sprinkling of small towns and a few small cities. The hills are some of the oldest on earth, and the cities have some of America's oldest factories perched along the river banks. Both show the signs of age.

Peaks once Himalaya-high are now worn down to 2,000-3,000 foot nubs. The picturesque rolling hills attracted artists like Grandma Moses, Cole Porter, and Christopher Reeve, and are home to colleges like Williams and Bennington. The factories underwent several metamorphoses, from mills and tanneries to electrical component and machine tool producers and finally to artisan workplaces and empty spaces. The industrial decline and the Clean Water Act quietly brought the Hoosic River back to life. ➡

publicity, and partners. HoorWA intends to use this extra capacity to foster a sense of place and community among stakeholders throughout the basin. This certainly is a stretch for a small watershed organization, but it is a good stretch that will pay off for the Hoosic Watershed. ➡

Jerry Schoen is coordinator for the Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership and serves on the board of the Hoosic River Watershed Association. Alex Brooks is HoorWA's administrative assistant.

Don't miss these great sources of information produced especially for you

River Network Publications

River Voices

Missing some back issues?

Back issues still in print, 16-24 pgs. First back issue: \$3 for River Network Partners, others \$6. All additional issues with same order: \$1 each. Additional subscriptions for Partner's board members are available at a discounted price of \$10 each. Annual subscription: \$35.

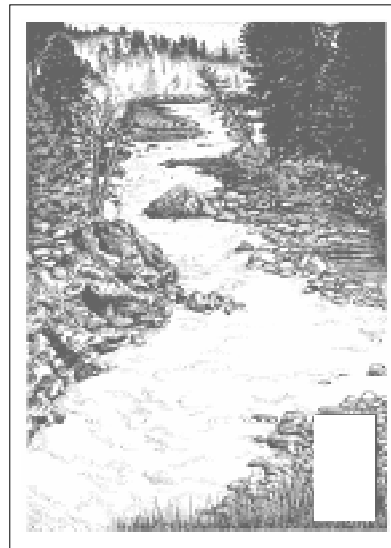
- Drinking Water Source Protection (96)
- Getting Your Message Across (96)
- Developing Your Message (96)
- Watershed Approaches (95)
- Communication Tools (95)
- Economics as a Tool (95)
- Dam Removals (95)
- Working with the Media (94)
- Watershed Management (94)
- Board Development (reprint) (94)
- Floodplain Management (94)
- 1993 National Survey Results (free) (93)
- Public Trust Doctrine (reprint) (93)
- Water Efficiency (reprint) (93)
- Business & Labor as Allies (op) (92)
- Clean Water Act (op) (92)
- "Wise Use" movement (reprint) (92)

Starting Up

A Handbook for New River and Watershed Organizations

This handbook provides information about how to run a successful organization. Based upon the invaluable experience of dozens of leaders in the river and conservation movements, its articles lay out the critical moves every newly forming organization needs to make to thrive and grow - including: choosing a name, developing your mission statement, recruiting your board of directors, fundraising, working with volunteers, working with the media, producing a newsletter, pages of river-related examples and much more!

Additionally, it provides you with specific concepts and tools for building a strong and healthy river organization with a specific focus on the watershed approach to river conservation. 1996, over 350 pgs. River Network Partners \$10, others \$25.



River Fundraising Alert

The *River Fundraising Alert* is a quarterly publication designed to help river and watershed organizations support themselves financially. River Network Partners receive the *Alerts* as a Partnership benefit.

4-8 pgs. First back issue: \$3 for River Network Partners, others \$6. All additional issues with same order: \$1 each. Additional subscriptions for Partner's Board members are available at a discounted price of \$10 each. Annual subscription: \$35.

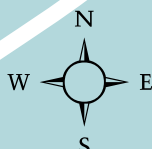
- Workplace Fundraising (97)
- Special Appeals (96)
- Fundraising Planning (96)
- Business Memberships, Part 2 (96)
- Business Memberships, Part 1 (96)
- Special Events (95)
- Major Donors, Part 2 (95)
- Major Donors, Part 1 (95)
- Retaining Members (94)
- Acquiring Membership (94)
- Board Fundraising (94)
- Guide to Membership Software (94)

By joining the River Network Partnership, we can help you navigate your river work



Since 1988 River Network has helped hundreds of river and watershed conservationists. Our vision is to have vigilant and effective citizen watershed organizations in each of America's 2,000 major watersheds. Helping river and watershed organizations through the Partnership is one strategy for making our vision a reality. Let us give you the tools you need to be effective in your watershed.

Here's some feedback from River Network Partners:



"I could not have founded this organization without the technical assistance and wonderful encouragement I have received from River Network."

Nancy Jacques
Colorado Rivers Alliance



"Thank you for the ongoing flow of helpful information. Becoming a River Network Partner is certainly some of the best money we've ever spent."

George Cofer, Save Barton Creek Association, TX



"River Network has saved me endless hours of research time."

Fred Miller, Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council, NY



"Having River Network available for advice and information on fundraising and other issues has made my job easier."

Sally Bethea, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, GA

Partnership Dues

Joining the River Network Partnership is one of the best investments you can make in protecting your river and its watershed. You'll receive valuable publications (a \$122 value), plus one-on-one advice and the opportunity to network with hundreds of like-minded river and watershed conservationists from across the country.



YES, we would like to be a River Network Partner

Citizen led, river and watershed conservation organizations are invited to join as River Network Partners. Dues is based on your organization's annual budget:*

<u>Budget</u>	<u>Dues</u>	Budget:
\$0 - \$20,000	\$60	\$ _____
\$20,001 - \$100,000	\$100	Amount dues enclosed
\$100,001 - \$200,000	\$200	\$ _____
\$200,001 +	\$300	

*Individuals and government agencies are invited to join as River Network Members. For more information on membership categories and benefits, contact River Network.

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (____) _____

For more information contact: River Network, P.O. Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207-8787 (503) 241-3506 rivernet@jgc.apc.org



NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT NO. 3470

P.O. Box 8787
Portland, OR 97207

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

River Network Supporters

Thanks for your commitment to America's rivers

NEW PARTNERS

Redwood Community Action Agency, CA
Tuolumne River Preservation Trust, CA
Fountain Creek Watershed Project, CO
Protect Our Rivers Now, IN
Middle Fork-Holston Water Quality
Committee, MD
Charles River Watershed Association, MA
Parker River Clean Water Association, MA
St. Croix Watershed Network, MN
Global Gatherings, NM
Pamlico-Tar River Foundation, NC
Rockingham County Watershed Preservation
Committee, NC
Ottawa River Coalition, OH
Ten Mile Lakes Watershed Council, OR
Lackawanna River Corridor Association, PA
Cumberland River Compact, TN
Swim for Life Rivershed Society, BC
Voices of the Englishman River, BC

RENEWED PARTNERS

Friends of the Locust Fork River, AL
Alaska Clean Water Alliance, AK
Friends of Arizona Rivers, AZ
Friends of the Russian River, CA
Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation
District, CA
Mill Creek Conservancy, CA
Sierra Nevada Alliance, CA
Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, CT
American Canoe Association - Dixie
Divisional, GA

Idaho Watersheds Project, ID
Pure Water for Kansas, KS
Kentucky Resources Council, KY
Presumpscot River Watch, ME
Nashua River Watershed Association, MA
Friends of the Crystal River, MI
Thornapple River Watershed Group, MI
Mississippi Whitewater Park Development
Corporation, MN
Medicine River Canoe Club, MT
Montana River Action Network, MT
Rio Grande Bioregional Project, NM
Trout Unlimited - Conhocton Valley Chapter,
NY
Cape Fear River Watch, NC
Oregon Adopt-A-River, OR
Tualatin Riverkeepers, OR
Willamette Riverkeeper, OR
Perkiomen Valley Watershed Association, PA
Save Barton Creek Association, TX
Friends of the Menomonee River, WI
Kinnickinnic River Land Trust Inc, WI
Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area
Commission, WI
River Alliance of Wisconsin, WI

DONORS*

Dorcas Adkins
Robert & Julia Ball
Ennalls Berl
John N. Caulkins
Hon. John H. Chafee
Julie Chapman & David Cushing

Jim Coleman
Leo A. Drey
Rob Elliott & Karan English
Environmental Federation of Oregon
Paul & Laura Escobosa
Si & June Foote
Jennie Gerard
Maureen I. Harris
Carter Hearn & Ursy Potter
David D. Hunting, Jr.
Elsie G. Jones
Warren K. Kaplan
Peter Kirsch & Patricia Reynolds
William D. Lay
Lyme Timber Company
Ken Margolis
J. Munroe McNulty
Newman's Own, Inc.
John W. Peirce
Margaret Y. Purves
Marcelle Raisbeck
Bill Robinson
Martin Rosen
Leonard Sargent
Jan Schorey
Robert Schumann
Charlie Swindells
Mac Thornton
Elizabeth B. Weedon
Suzanne C. Wilkins

* Individuals, corporations and organizations that have recently contributed \$100 or more to River Network. Foundation contributors are listed once a year in our annual report.