

Fall
2018

www.westportriver.org



WESTPORT FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

WFA NEWS UPDATE

The WFA began in 1983 as a non-profit and charitable organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the waters of the Westport River, its marshes and tributaries

The WFA's Future

Since 1983, the Westport Fishermen's Association (WFA) has been the Westport River's grassroots advocate for clean, healthy water and marine habitats. Now, 35 years later, the WFA has found a strong ally in the Buzzards Bay Coalition to sustain and grow its legacy work. Although the WFA is financially stable, the issues that continue to face the health of the Westport River and its fish habitat need more than what the WFA has been able to achieve on its own. As a result, the WFA voted on October 24th to merge with the Buzzards Bay Coalition. As Jack Reynolds, WFA Board President, says "The needs of the river as far as water quality and habitat issues are no less than when we started and will continue to be an ongoing challenge as the town builds out and pressure increases. We believe combining efforts with another similarly focused organization will provide greater impact, increase capacity and ensure sustainable advocacy and solutions are brought to bear on the river's problems."

For its part, the Coalition has pledged that its advocacy, science, restoration, and land protection work in Westport will remain focused on reducing nitrogen pollution, primarily from residential wastewater, as well as restoring and protecting habitat for native migratory fish such as river herring and salter brook trout in the Westport River and its tributaries. The Coalition is also an accredited land trust, having strategically partnered to protect over 2200 acres bay-wide, including in Westport around Angeline Brook to protect sea run brook trout habitat.

"Over the past thirty years, the Coalition has worked hand-in-hand with the Westport Fishermen's Association on advocacy efforts to clean up pollution sources, protect wetlands, and preserve native fish habitat," said Coalition President Mark Rasmussen. "We are honored to carry on this legacy of action and willingness to take on the tough challenges facing the river." The Coalition will also take over stewardship of Horse-neck Point Lifesaving Station.

While it is bittersweet to end our run as an independent organization, the Westport Fishermen's legacy is strong and our advocacy and marine heritage preservation work will continue. For that we are grateful. Westport will be well represented at the Coalition, with Jack going on their Board and two other WFA representatives joining the Coalition's leadership council. WFA members will have opportunities to stay involved through the newly formed Westport Fishermen's Advisory Committee, as volunteers for the Fishermen's Clambake or the Lifesaving Station and most importantly, by becoming members or increasing your support of the Buzzards Bay Coalition. On behalf of the WFA Board, I thank each and every member, friend, volunteer and supporter over the past 35 years. You made a difference.

Tanja Ryden





WESTPORT FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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*The WFA is a non-profit
charitable 501 (c) 3
organization.*

*All contributions are
tax deductible to the extent
allowed by law.*

Lookin' Astern . . . with Cap'n Cukie

In 1982 our son was captain of the offshore lobster boat 'Jennie and Jackie'. One night 80 miles from Westport and with a full load of traps, the boat started to sink stern first. The crew barely had time to put on their survival suits and put out a mayday. The boat was almost gone when the "Captain Don" called and said they would be there in a half hour. The rescue is a story for another time, but afterwards Alice said to me "Why doesn't Paul captain a boat for us?" We soon had the offshore lobster "Glad One" which became the fishing vessel "Cee Dee". So now instead of being a swordfisherman on Sundays, I became a full time lobsterman.



In 1983, Danny Sullivan asked me if I would come to a meeting at his house to talk about forming a fishermen's organization. I did along with a few other fishermen. I am probably going to leave out someone but these are the names I remember being there. Dan Sullivan, Jim Pierce, Tom Liggin, Richard Hart, Jack Reynolds, Billy Borges and me. We decided to form the Westport Fishermen's Association.

Dan got permission to meet in the town hall basement. Men started joining us and we got down to business. With hopes of having cash, I was elected treasurer. Before long we needed to be recognized by the government and be incorporated. Richard Desjardins went to work on it and we soon were a nonprofit corporation.

I would like to name all of our presidents but my brain has been working for 93 years and doesn't know everything. Tom Liggin, Russ Walters, Dave Cabral, Jonathan Paull and Jack Reynolds. These names may not be in the proper order but thanks to Jack I believe they are all here.

Our first clambake was held on the Westport Fair Grounds owned by Walter King. Raymond Davoll was bake master. It was a fine turn out and the future looked great. Facilities were not good though so we engaged a bake at the Holy Ghost on Allen's Neck Road in Dartmouth. We were all inside of a good building and we sold out. The next year the Dartmouth police chief said because of beer and wine we had to have an officer. All he did was sit and eat our clams. We had to pay him \$26 per hour. The next year the chief said we had to have two officers because of the number of people. That's when we discovered the Little Compton Game Club. Thanks to club member Roger Wordell we have met there ever since and done very well.

One year it was noted that the river banks were cluttered with trash. I made river charts with areas defined. Volunteers worked on a cleanup day and we filled a town dump truck with dump material. We did this for a couple of years and ended when trash did not appear on the shores.

We have cleaned the river considerably by testing and finding the source of pollution under the direction of Arnold Tripp. When a farmer said he could not afford it, we bought the wire and posts to build a fence 1/4 mile long to keep his cows out of the river and brook. We worked weekends to do that. He still had a channel across the field for manure to run from his milk house. After several years of messing with this problem and still no cooperation and government agencies not willing to step up, we decided to go to court. We settled when he agreed to stop polluting the river. Instead he chose to close his business. The oyster beds were soon clean for fishing. We continued testing the river a few more years but the big polluter was no more.

Along with everything else and with the Life Saving Station and Visitor Center restored, I consider the life of the Westport Fishermen's Association has been a good one.

President's Corner: My Swansong

by Jack Reynolds

When it comes to all what the WFA has done in the past 35 years of existence it would be too easy to forget and omit a few, so I won't try. That said there's a few successes that stand out. Among them is the effort of Arnold Tripp and others to actually get shellfishing in the Westport River opened up, even on a conditional basis through the gathering of evidence to show that between rain events the water quality was good enough to allow fishing in areas. Arnold set up a lab in the basement of Town hall and manned it to get the needed data. He worked with the Division of Marine Fisheries and accomplished what we have today that allows shellfishing in the river. Another is the daunting task of saving and restoring the lifesaving station that was originally built at the west end of Horseneck Beach near 'Boat Beach'. It was eventually moved to where it is now because it used a heavy oar-powered surf boat and during times when the tide was running, which is most of the time, it couldn't be done. Historical restoration was out of character for the WFA but we thought it was a part of the maritime culture of Westport that was worth preserving.

There are still many issues to do with the productivity of the river as a natural resource. One of those that will need action in the near future is how to lessen the amount of nutrients entering the river. There is work on this front ongoing.

Seeing where this will be the last Newsletter in this format there's a few messages to our membership that are in order. The first being thanks for your past support. Without that support we never could have operated. And also we hope your needed support will continue under the heading of the Buzzard's Bay Coalition. We are not riding into the sunset, we're re-forming and planning on being bigger and better. We hope to have our annual clambake next fall as always.

One of the ongoing issues that the WFA has a big interest in is the state of the herring runs in Town. From my observations they are in dire straits. The water quality after ice-out in Cockey Pond is terrible and there was very little evidence of any herring return last spring. In the last 20 years that run had been the best one in town. The run into Adamsville is over in my opinion. The period of years when there was no viable fish passage along with the pond not able to hold water did them in. There is still a remnant population of herring spawning below the Forge Pond dam. If passage can be gained on up into Lake Noquochoke there is the potential of a huge alewife population returning from that. River herring are an important 'keystone species' that would have many side benefits (other than themselves) for the productivity of the river. Sadly we have not been too successful in remedying this situation but hopefully ongoing efforts may bring some good news soon.

So please stay interested and connected by remaining members of this new venture for the WFA and join the BBC which will continue our work to benefit the resource for years to come.

2018 WFA Continuing Education Awards

The Westport Fishermen's Association is pleased to announce two 2018 recipients of \$500 scholarships for continuing undergraduate college expenses. **Lily Gelinis** is a junior, studying Human Resource Management with a minor in Environmental Sustainability at Johnson & Wales University. **Connor Brown** is in his sophomore year at University of Rhode Island, studying biomedical engineering with an additional interest in marine science. The WFA applauds these college students for their academic excellence and interest in environmental protection. Over many years the WFA has recognized the importance of continuing support for college students and has been awarding continuing education scholarships to students entering their sophomore, junior or senior year.

The Board of Directors would like to extend their congratulations and wish Lily & Connor continued success in their college studies. The WFA would also like to recognize and thank all of our generous members, sponsors and community friends who also have donated or contributed Lees receipts to support our scholarship fund over the years.

Advocacy Updates

Here are the latest updates ... As always, if you'd like more information or want to get involved in any of these issues, call or email us.

Denitrifying Septic System Regulation for Westport on a Very Slow Track: Six months have passed since an April 5th letter from the WFA (and another one from several local organizations and prominent citizens) was delivered to the Westport Board of Health requesting that they begin the process of public hearings on establishing a town regulation to require denitrifying septic systems for new construction. The Town is already required to reduce the nitrogen levels in the river to meet the Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) that has been established for the Westport River, so proactive steps are required. The Board has finally taken up the request and plans to invite interested parties to its **December 17th** meeting to make the case, yet again, for why the Board of Health should act. The WFA encourages interested residents to attend the meeting (exact time still to be determined) and voice your support for a regulation to help clean up the river.

Meanwhile, a recent walk around the back of Boat Beach confirmed for me that Bailey's Flat is disappearing so fast that you can practically see it happening before your eyes. As scientists have documented, nitrogen pollution from individual septic systems is the single most important source of excess nitrogen in the Westport River. This excess nitrogen is contributing to shallower marsh root pack that is not sturdy enough to hold the island marsh banks. In addition to curbing new sources of nitrogen pollution, the Town should also require that cesspools and other existing septic systems be upgraded for enhanced nitrogen removal within a reasonable time period. The need for action is urgent!

Federal Stormwater Permit for Massachusetts: Following a lawsuit by environmental groups, a long-awaited federal stormwater permit went into effect for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on July 1, 2018. The permit requires cities and towns to take additional steps to protect rivers, lakes, streams and ponds from polluted stormwater runoff. Contaminated stormwater is the state's top water pollution problem.

At stake was the revised Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, or MS4 permit, which was originally supposed to take effect in July 2017. Two days before its effective date, Scott Pruitt, the head of EPA at the time, unilaterally delayed implementing the permit even though it was already 10 years overdue. A coalition of nine watershed associations, led by the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance sued the EPA, arguing that Pruitt's action was illegal, undermined protections to the environment, and put the health of Massachusetts residents and water bodies at risk. Faced with the lawsuit, EPA chose not to further delay the permit's implementation, and on July 1, 2018, allowed the stormwater permit to go into effect.

The revised MS4 permit requires towns to update their stormwater management plans, monitor outfall pipes, and prioritize cleanup of the most pressing problems, such as the discharge of untreated sewage into nearby waterways via storm drains. The permit also requires public outreach, stormwater recharge, and "good housekeeping" practices such as storm drain cleaning and street sweeping.

Read more at the Mass Rivers Alliance website: <https://massriversalliance.org/>

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The News Catch

- **NEW! Westport Fishermen's Advisory committee forming** – WFA members are invited to join this new committee, which will meet periodically to solicit input and guide the Buzzards Bay Coalition's advocacy and restoration work in Westport. The Coalition will provide annual public updates on its work at the traditional Westport Fishermen's Oyster Stew supper to be held in February. You can email Tanja at wfa@westportriver.org to sign up for this committee.

- **Lees receipts program update** – The Coalition will keep up the Lees Market receipt donation program, with proceeds to support projects in Westport. You can drop off receipts at Common Ground Coffee, 762 Main Rd. (next to Village Pizza), at the Coalition Headquarters at 114 Front St in New Bedford, or by mail to PO Box 83, Westport Pt., MA 02791.



- **Clambake Helpers for 2019** – The Buzzards Bay Coalition will be putting on the Fishermen's Bake next year. But to keep the tradition going, we need YOUR help. If you haven't already signed up for the 2019 Clambake Committee, please do so by emailing Tanja at wfa@westportriver.org. Volunteers get first dibs on tickets and we sell out every year! We are looking for people to help organize the food order, donate raffle prizes, collect seaweed or help at the bake itself. Find out what goes into putting on an authentic clambake and have some fun while you are at it!

- **Westport Dawning exhibit** – We had 862 visitors and an interesting mix of dogs visiting the Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station & the Westport Dawning exhibit this summer. A HUGE thanks goes to photographer Greg Stone, exhibit designer Chris Clarendon and our volunteer docents: Elisabeth Mundel, Larry Hookey, Anne Fitzgerald, Chris Clarendon, Paul Heywood, Howie Gifford, Don Dufault, Kiri Peirce, Greg Stone and Jack Reynolds. Kelsey Beauregard, a DCR summer Park Interpreter for Horseneck Beach State Reservation also helped out every week. If you missed "Westport Dawning" this summer, it will be on display at the Westport Town Library later this winter.



- **Carpet Cleaning Company violation in Westport** – KB Carpet Cleaning (now known as Rug Rescue) was fined by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for pumping dirty water from its cleaning trucks into a Route 6 storm drain which flows into Bread & Cheese Brook and ultimately into the Westport River. For any rugs cleaned at a building with a septic system, the company must now dispose of its water at a permitted municipal wastewater treatment plant. The company also has to keep logs of their carpet cleaning water disposal, which will be monitored by DEP. So you can help protect the Westport River from such contamination in the future, by asking your carpet cleaning company about how they dispose of the cleaning wastewater.

- **Environmental License Plates** – The Massachusetts Environmental Trust provides funding to many river, wetland and other water resources protection and restoration projects throughout the Commonwealth. A major source of their funding comes from the sale of environmental license plates. Getting an environmental plate is easy and can be done online, or in person at your local RMV office. For details visit <https://www.mass.gov/environmental-license-plates>.



View of LSS, 2018



Tony forging parts for surf boat wagon, 2009

WFA Member Updates

Stay involved!

- Join the Buzzards Bay Coalition, if you are not already a member. All WFA members and friends will get an invitation from the Coalition to join soon. Or you may visit <http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org> to donate directly.
- Sign up for the Westport Fishermen's Advisory Committee, which will meet periodically for input, planning and advocacy around local issues, with feedback to and support from Coalition staff. Any interested WFA member can join.
- Keep up with the news by subscribing to The Bay Buzz, the Coalition's monthly e-news. Anyone who currently gets the WFA e-newsletter will automatically be signed up. Of course you can unsubscribe at any time.

What about?

- The Lifesaving Station – The Coalition will assume the lease and maintain the station, including the weather station, going forward. Their staff is already excited about planning exhibits and programs to take advantage of this strategic location.
- Oyster Stew Supper – The Coalition will continue to hold this event in mid-winter and feature speakers and discussion related to coastal environmental issues relevant to Westport.
- Annual Clambake – We hope this tradition will continue essentially unchanged. However, new volunteers are needed to join the 2019 Clambake Committee and assist with the event for it to be sustainable in the future.
- The WFA road race, wooden boat show and scholarship program will no longer continue under the auspices of the Coalition.
- WFA's remaining assets, including the Clean Water Fund and endowment, will be held in a restricted fund at the Coalition to be used for Westport-based projects.
- WFA newsletter – Enjoy the photo history of WFA activities featured throughout, as this will be the last issue.
- Any other questions? Please contact us at wfa@westportriver.org

2018 Clambake – 35 years Strong!

It was a glorious Sunday in September when over 185 guests made their way to the WFA's 35th annual clam-bake. Preparations had been underway for days before, including the traditional harvesting of the rock weed from Westport Harbor on Saturday afternoon. Then early on Sunday morning the clams, lobsters, and assorted other bake foods were packaged up in the steaming crates and the fire was lit as lucky ticket holders made their way to the Little Compton Game Club. People had fun catching up with WFA members and friends, followed by a delicious meal and fabulous pick-a-prize raffle. We wrapped up with announcing the winner of this year's boat raffle. Jerry Radzwilowicz from Colchester, CT was on hand (only the second time in 17 years of boat raffles!) to pose with his new hand built Kaholo style paddle board. Jerry has never paddle boarded before, but he's going to learn now!

A BIG SHOUT OUT GOES TO:

Food & Drink Donors: Buzzards Bay Brewery, Paradise Hill Farms & Blount Fine Food

Raffle Prize Donors: See them all listed on page 7

Our great crew of volunteers!

Hope to see you next year! New volunteers always welcome. Sign up now by emailing wfa@westportriver.org



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Janice Macomber

Valerie Ottaviano (Lucky Break Pinups)

Jackie Pinheiro (Pine Tree Glassworks)

Lynda Perkins

The Back Eddy

Buttonwood Park Zoo

Buzzards Bay Coalition

Country Woolens

Gray's Grist Mill

Hay Rays

Havonlee Styles

Mass Lobstermen's Association

Osprey Sea & Surf Adventures

Riptide Oysters

Sarah Lavalley Garden Design,

Sylvan's Nursery

Tanja Ryden

Westport Marine

Please notify us of any errors or omissions!

Raffle Boat, 2011



Award for the Station, 2011



Linda Greenlaw at WFA, 2010



The Westport Fishermen's Association

WFA Community Calendar



Going forward, the best place to find out about local events is at
<http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/events/>

You can sort by town, month, host organization (anyone from Appalachian Mountain Club to the YMCA!) and other features such as free events, kid-friendly, outdoor, volunteering, meetings & workshops. So find out what is happening in your neck of the woods any time by bookmarking this site.



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