

Pootatuck Watershed Association, Inc

Member Newsletter

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Greetings and Thanks

Welcome to the PWA and our inaugural issue of the Newsletter. Through your membership dollars, and the strength your enrollment gives our new organization, the PWA is pursuing many activities that will benefit every resident of Newtown. The knowledge that a healthy community depends upon clean and abundant water is our belief and a message that must reach everyone. Thank you for your support.

Concern for watershed health can come from many places and the PWA is pursuing efforts on every front. Clean drinking water, clean healthy waterways for wildlife and human enjoyment, open space and wetlands preservation as well as securing a vibrant future for our community are all issues that we can relate to.

Please pass the news along to others so that we may continue to grow and ensure that clean water is a topic at the forefront of every discussion and decision affecting the future of Newtown and the Pootatuck Watershed.

Warmest regards,

James Belden, President

Activities Update

We're keeping our promise and moving ahead! The PWA has gone right to work on efforts that fulfill our stated objectives.

The PWA has been involved in a new agreement between the Town of Newtown, the US Geological Survey and the local water company for the commencement of an Aquifer Study. In short, this study, the basis of which not updated since the 1970's, will analyze the condition of, and affect of future uses on, the Pootatuck Aquifer. This is necessary for understanding and protecting our drinking water and sustaining in-stream flows.

Town-wide water quality sampling paid for by PWA funds and our partners. The first sampling was conducted in June and a second sampling event took place in September. This program will test water

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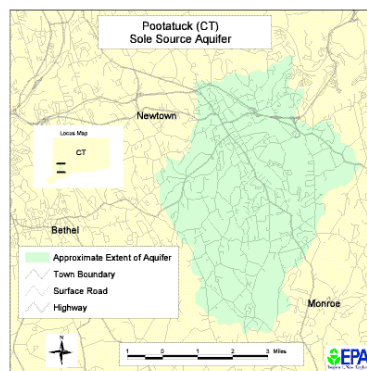
quality at critical sites across Newtown. Samples are tested for levels of various important items such as e-coli, phosphorus and nitrates. We hope that a partnership with the Town, the Department of Health and others, will allow for a permanent program that will test local waters twice a year at a minimum. Please refer to the June 9, 2006 article in *The Newtown Bee*.

Public outreach efforts, such as our May 9th kick-off event, participation at the annual Pootatuck Duck Race, the Newtown Necomers Club kick-off event, Holmes Fine Gardens' Autumn Bazaar and involvement with the schools on environmental projects, allow the PWA to educate regarding the importance of clean and abundant water. Currently we are also helping to develop an educational presentation for school and adult audiences.

The PWA is a member of the Roots For Newtown coalition. This group started off by being the lead float in Newtown's 2006 Labor Day Parade which was surrounded by over 40 volunteers whom gave away 3,000 spruce tree saplings and educational materials along the route. Together we will be pursuing more environmental and educational projects.

Protection and restoration of wetland, watercourse and buffer zones are of paramount importance to water quality and public health. The PWA is working hard to address issues where there are existing concerns while being proactive in raising concerns that may come from future threats. Our members are encouraged to voice concerns and bring them to our attention.

Watersheds and Aquifers



The largest of several aquifers within the Pootatuck Watershed and the Town of Newtown, the primary Pootatuck Aquifer has the Sole Source designation. Aquifers are confined to smaller areas which are recharged with water falling within and processed by the entire watershed. Soils and vegetation are the mechanism by which water is cleaned and slowly returned to the ground for eventual use as drinking water and supply water to rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.

The Safe Drinking Water Act gives EPA the authority to designate aquifers which are the sole or principal drinking water source for an area, and which, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health. After a Sole Source Aquifer is designated, no commitment for federal financial assistance may be provided for any project which the EPA determines may contaminate the aquifer through its recharge area so as to create a significant hazard to public health. An additional benefit of designating an area as a Sole Source Aquifer is the increased public awareness of the nature and value of local ground water resources. Local residents and businesses may be more willing to protect an aquifer through local action if they learn their drinking water originates from a vulnerable underground supply.

The EPA defines a Sole Source Aquifer as one which supplies at least 50% of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer. EPA guidelines also require that these areas have no alternative drinking water sources(s) which could physically, legally, and economically supply water to all who depend on the aquifer for drinking water. There are only 15 such designated aquifers in the New England region.

Volunteer Opportunities

This section will notify of specific projects when scheduled where we will call for volunteers. Projects may range from physical labor on a restoration or tree planting project to performing some scientific sampling or analysis work.

Currently our greatest need is for volunteers that wish to become involved in the activities of the Board and Committees. If you have a particular interest or vocation that may be helpful please contact us to volunteer. General categories include Membership/Fundraising, Environmental/Scientific/Water Quality Analysis, Regulatory and Governmental issues as well as Special Projects.