



French River Log

Volume 3, Number 4

December 1, 2008

Welcome to the December 1, 2008 edition of the French River Log, the Newsletter of the French River Connection. You are receiving this newsletter because at some point you gave us your email address and we have been sending you meeting announcements, minutes, and other information. At the bottom of this newsletter there is information about how to unsubscribe if you wish.

[Click to view this email in a browser](#) (recommended)



News From the Greenway

At the end of September, our two-year grant of technical assistance from the National Park Service Rivers and Trails program ended. Although we had to say good-bye to John Monroe officially, one of his new projects involves a canoe trail on the Quinebaug, and he will still help us a little, so we will continue to see him from time to time. His assistance has been invaluable. Thanks John!

On the left is our finished Perryville Trace trailhead sign. Through the fall months, many have enjoyed "the Trace" and it has been well-treated and stayed clean. Over the winter, we will evaluate the frequency and duration of wet spots and decide what to do about them, if anything, in the spring. Thanks to all who worked on it!

French River Park Takes Shape



Three pictures are worth three thousand words, presumably, but a few are in order. French River Park consists of 1.66 acres in downtown Webster on the river which can be reached by going behind the Post Office. The town has had plans for a park there for years, but nothing has happened "on the ground". This year the owner generously licensed the French River Connection to create a park there, consisting, we imagine, of at least a public green space and a cartop access point on the river. About half the lot is covered with invasive Japanese knotweed, which, with the permission of the Conservation Commission, we poisoned, cut, and piled up. It was then removed by the Publics Works Department, many thanks to them. Some of the crew who worked removing the knotweed on October 11 are pictured: from left, George Martin, Mike Braniff, Bill Scanlan, Scott Benoit, and Pat McGarrah. Others who helped that day or beforehand include Ken Pickren, Tom Ayau, Ed Bazinet, Luann Lafountain, Ken Butkiewicz, and Margaret Bacon. At right, Margaret, of Bacon Engineering, surveys the property. She will document the property lines, locate the trees and other features, and give us an "as-is" baseline on which to place alternate combinations of design elements, and seek public and official inputs on what French River Park should be. One thing we hope it will be is the anchor of the [Webster River Walk](#).

Community resources like French River Park don't happen without the work of dedicated volunteers, the interest of the public, and the active support of town officials. Someone has to start, and the French River Connection is proud to have that role. Thanks to all our volunteers for showing the way!

Walktober Paddling Event a Success

Seen from the old railroad trestle upstream from North Main Street in Webster, 20 paddlers complete the six mile journey from Hodges Village in Oxford on October 4. The event was the French River Connection's second public paddle of the year, and was one of the Quinebaug-Shetucket National Heritage Corridor's "Walktober" events in a month of activities throughout the Last Green Valley. The paddle was coordinated and led by Alan Dabrowski, with the assistance of Barbara Day, Tom Ayau, Tom Ryzewski, and Ken Pickren. National Grid granted the paddlers permission to land at Collins Cove. The weather was crisp at the 9am start, but with the bright sun and colorful trees, it could not have been a prettier day. Introducing the public to the river this way is an important aspect of building advocacy to preserve the habitat for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.



Last Green Valley Source-to-Sea Expedition Planned



In the Spring of 2009, the Last Green Valley has planned a Source-to-Sea expedition, "connecting the drops" from the headwaters to Long Island Sound, including approximately 70 water-borne and landside events, from April through June. A [tentative schedule of events can be found here](#). One of the first is a paddle from Greenbrier Park to Hodges Village, April 18 at 8am, which will include a kick-off ceremony and dedication of a new boat launch. The following Sunday, April 26, will feature a paddle from Hodges to North Webster, similar to the Walktober event, starting at 9am. On Saturday May 2 at 10am, there will a landside event, a walk on the Perryville Trace, including a brief historical interpretation of the area.

Upper French River Canoe Trail Inaugurated

Turn into Greenbrier Park off route 12 in Oxford and keep to the left, and you'll see a sign for a new car-top access ramp, constructed by Alan Dabrowski, Tom Ayau, Ken Pickren, and the USACE. The river was then cleared of most obstacles and a [Paddling Guide](#) developed using Google Maps features. This opens a beautiful three mile paddle through a magnificent wildlife area. Or you can just paddle around Lower Wellington Pond. There are beaver dams and snags to be negotiated on the trip which are located and described in the Guide. This is definitely a one way trip if you decide to go down the river.



When you get to Hodges Village it's a 1200 foot walk to the parking area where you would leave your car. The Army Corps has graciously offered to open the gate so you can drive down to the water to pick up your boat, but would like you to call and make arrangements ahead of time. So if you don't want to carry your boat that far contact Tim Russell at Buffumville Lake at (508)248-5697 to make arrangements.



How Dark Was It?

It was very dark at the Dark of the Moon Halloween Celebration held at Buffumville Park on October 18, so much the better for these ghoulish marshmallow peddlers. Visitors enjoyed bonfires on the beach, two scary walks, spooky stories, a carved pumpkin contest, and night sky viewing. Many thanks to all who contributed to this fundraiser: Boss Kitty Elaine Parker, Sky Guides Tom Ryzewski and Sharon Grybowski, Fire Marshall Robert Jacobsen, Pumpkin Wrangler Luann Lafountain, Sound Engineer Tom Ayau, Scary Guy Ed Bazinet, Eye Supplier Ken Pickren, Roustabout Mike Branniff, Undead Emcee/Storyteller Ken Parker, and Cooks/Food Vendors/Trail Guides/Dead Monks Walking Sheila Veideman, Tania Dency, Wendy Sposato, Caroline Drahos, Sabrina Simoes, and Lisa Lasora. Thanks also to the USACE, especially Jean Hixson, Ken Hester, and Elisa Carey

2008 Water Quality Monitoring Completed

Our Water Quality Monitoring Campaign for 2008 was completed in November, which seems like a long way from when we started in March. As in 2007, we monitored 15 sites, and we now have back-to-back years with very different water levels. Analysis and interpretation of results are underway. Needless to say, we could not have done this without our many volunteers who put in over 200 hours of service. Hats off to:

Tom Ayau	LuAnn LaFountain	Jean Hixson	Therese Beaudoin
Sandy Peterson	Fred Busch	Maryann Gagner	Tom Ryzewski
Ed Bazinet	Mark Smith	Elaine Parker	Marcia Wagner
Nancy Runkle	Sheila Veideman	Gus Steeves	Brittany Julien



The call for 2009 volunteers will go out soon. It's one Saturday for the whole season, a great family activity

The French River at Clara Barton Road

..... And Finally

French River Day: Our best yet; 27 members enjoyed a beautiful afternoon, good conversation, and a pleasant paddle on Agutteback Pond September 13.

2009 General Meetings: January 14, April 8 (the Annual meeting), June 10, November 11 at 7pm at locations to be announced. We hope to see you there. Bring a friend!

LOGO Gear: Order it here, look for cold weather items to be offered soon. Good quality, good looking items make great gifts.

Join Us! We would love to have your help on our projects, or your financial support as a member, or both. You can obtain a membership form here. \$20 and it's tax deductible! And, even better, you'll receive a beautiful French River Screensaver with over 100 images of the river and its life in all seasons.

Here's wishing all our members, friends, and their families a safe and joyous holiday season

*Ken Parker
President
French River Connection*

[Forward this message to a friend](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

French River Connection
46 Brookside Avenue
Webster, Massachusetts 01570

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

