



French River Log

Volume 4, Number 1

March 1, 2009

Welcome to the March 1, 2009 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.

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Source to Sea Beginning Soon



After more than a year of planning, the kickoff of the Last Green Valley's Source to Sea Program is now only weeks away. Events include paddling, walking, and other activities scheduled throughout the Thames River Watershed from April through June. Since we're close to the headwaters, and the general progression is downstream, our events are early. All paddling events require pre-registration. The event leader will be responsible for determining if the experience of paddlers is appropriate to the water conditions.

Saturday, April 18 North Oxford, MA

The Wild French River: Greenbriar Park Canoe/Kayak Launch Dedication and French River Paddle

Join the French River Connection and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the dedication of a new car-top canoe and kayak launch at Greenbriar Park. Then paddle with them on a 3-mile stretch from Greenbriar to Hodges Village Dam led by U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers ranger and naturalist Jean Hixson. [Contact Jean](#) to pre-register.

Sunday, April 26 Oxford to Webster, MA

French River Paddle

Join the French River Connection on a leisurely 6-mile springtime paddle from Hodges Village to Webster North Village. Explore several coves and enjoy wildlife emerging from winter. [Contact Alan Dabrowski](#) to pre-register.

Saturday, May 2 Webster, MA

Perryville Trace Walk

Participants will greet paddlers coming down the French River and landing at Perryville. After a short history of the Perryville area, and an introduction to the French River Greenway, take a leisurely one mile round-trip stroll on the new Perryville Trace. Meet where Perryville Road crosses the French River in Webster. Due to bridge work, there is no access from the Dudley side.

Here's the [full list of Source to Sea events](#)

Leovich Landing Fundraising

We are continuing grant-writing and fundraising to buy 4 acres located at 52 Dudley Road in Oxford to serve as both a public boat launch and a trailhead on the French River Greenway, as well as a spot simply to enjoy nature on the river. Our partnership with the Dudley Conservation Land Trust, who will own the property, and an Oxford citizens' group is enabling us to reach donors in all three towns. This is a regional asset to be enjoyed by all. We need to raise \$70,000 by April 30 to purchase the property, pay associated costs, and do initial stewardship tasks. We have four major grant proposals, the largest of which is to the State Conservation Partnership Grant Program, which could fund nearly half the cost, and should be decided by mid-March.

Tax deductible donations payable to the Dudley Conservation Land Trust may be sent to 169 Old Webster Road, Oxford, MA 01540.

[Learn more here](#)



Water Quality Monitoring Time Again



It feels like we just finished our 2008 campaign, and here we are, two weeks from our first event of 2009. Over the winter, the TROLL was returned to the manufacturer for a tune-up, as we were experiencing problems at the end of last year.

Thanks to those who volunteered for this year's campaign. We have a nice mixture of veteran monitors and new recruits on our team this year, and we'll all have fun. A couple of people are scheduled to get out twice, so we could work two more volunteers in among the dates of July 11, October 10, and November 14. [Email Ken](#) if you would like to go on one of those days.

Our [2008 Report](#) is on-line. You can also look at a [map with pop-up results](#). Mostly we find reasonably good water quality, with two consistent exceptions: the lower reaches of Mill Brook (shown) and an unnamed brook near Nancy Drive.

The Perryville Trace in Winter

The Perryville Trace continues to be used for walking and snowshoeing during the winter months. After a snowfall it is very peaceful and quite beautiful, with ducks and Canada geese patrolling the ice. Often there are interesting ice formations below the dam caused by frozen spray.

The Trace has been closed twice during the winter, once in December for four days after a heavy rain which flooded part of it with runoff. It was opened February 28 after being closed for two weeks due to ice.

Records are being maintained of locations where the trail gets wet, and we will be able to remediate some of that with mostly natural materials on-site during the summer months.



French River Park Planning

The French River Greenway Steering Committee is continuing to plan for implementation of the park in downtown Webster, aided by Bacon Engineering and Paula Stahl from the Green Valley Institute. We have decided on a "simpler is better" approach, to get a park in place, and let input from the public suggest additional features. Design elements include:

- retention of the parking lot
- car-top boat launch with trail
- rain garden/vegetated swale
- sturdy, immovable tables and benches
- retention of only healthy trees
- grass area
- plantings that don't offer hiding places
- simple trail

We hope to do enough design to develop cost estimates by April.

And of course, one of our first tasks is to restart the battle against the knotweed that infests the lot.

[See a larger version](#)



Come to our Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the French River Connection will be April 8 at 7pm at the **Black Tavern** in Dudley. Built in 1804, the building is maintained by the Black Tavern Historical Society, and is the only building in Dudley on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Black Tavern is located at the intersection of Tanyard Road and Center Road on Dudley Hill.

Join us for a review of 2008 and our plans for 2009, some good food and fellowship, election of board members, and an exciting speaker. If you're a member, bring a friend who is not on our e-mail mailing list, and they can get their first year's membership for half-price, if they join at the meeting.

Watch for more information about the annual meeting !



Final Thoughts

[Logo gear can be purchased here](#)

Watch for more on the Dam Trail Race August 8, a major fundraising event

If you like what we're doing, please [join the French River Connection](#)

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