

Fact Sheet/June 2002

Woonasquatucket River



AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS

www.epa.gov/OWOW/heritage/rivers.html

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative was created to advance the goals identified by the communities. The initiative has three objectives: natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. No new regulatory authority is created as a result of the initiative. Likewise, no direct federal funding is available to the initiative. Existing federal authorities and programs are used to assist the community partners in implementation of their goals.

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What Makes the Woonasquatucket River Special?

- The headwaters in Gloucester and North Smithfield offer opportunities for preservation of the natural riparian and wetland buffers protecting the water quality of the river.
- The river powered the industrial growth of Providence and RI and features many historic sites and buildings.
- Restoration of the river has regional implications as it merges with two other rivers to form the headwaters of Narragansett Bay, one of the largest salt water estuaries in the nation.
- Economic development pressures offer opportunity to link environmental preservation with smart growth and development.

What are the Long Term Goals?

- Return the water quality of the river to fishable and swimmable by 2020.
- Create a contiguous greenway and wildlife habitat along the length of the river.
- Identify and protect environmentally critical land parcels.
- Preserve and/or restore historically significant buildings and sites.
- Improve public access to the river and enhance opportunities for recreational activities.
- Support economic development opportunities and identify and promote positive growth patterns in the watershed.

Progress/Goals for the Future

What Partnership Progress Has Been Made?

- Released the *Woonasquatucket River Asset Map*, a publication highlighting the natural, cultural, historic, and recreational assets within the watershed.
- A Woonasquatucket River Riparian Buffer Restoration Inventory, was funded by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and overseen by RIDEM, with opportunities for riverbank restoration throughout the watershed.
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funded a \$11,500 Five Star Restoration grant for a restoration project at a Brownfields Showcase site in Providence.
- North Providence Post Office Square, where the old post office is being relocated onto a parcel closer to the River and with transportation features to benefit the senior housing complex and community.
- The WRWC, with support from the RI Foundation, produced watershed signs to be posted at the watershed boundaries in each of the six communities.

What EPA Actions are Planned for 2002-3?

- Implement the RI Woonasquatucket River Watershed Plan and commit to address key environmental actions outlined in the plan
- Undertake wetland restoration projects and work with RIDEM to pilot 2-3 projects based on wetland restoration inventory.
- Reduce bacteria, nutrient and metals loading to the watershed by finalizing the levels allowable for the river.
- Complete Allendale Dam reconstruction and next study phase at Centredale Manor Superfund Site.



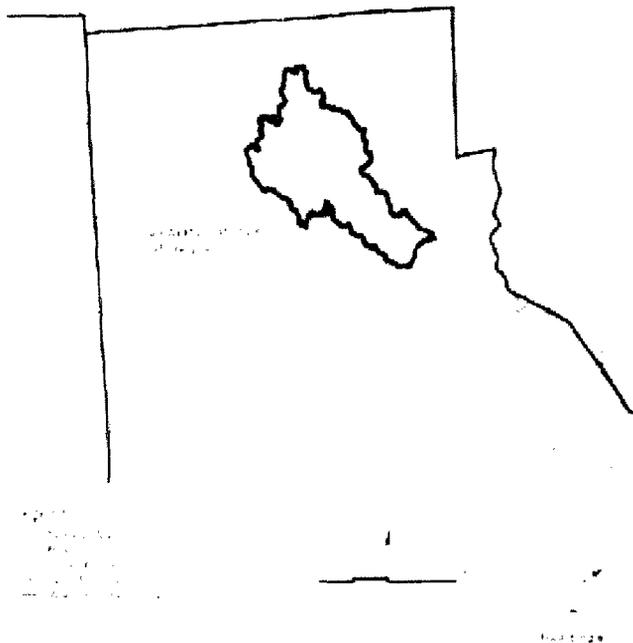
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What is the American Heritage River Initiative?

- ▶ A community-based program utilizing the vision and partnerships within the watersheds to target opportunities for change and improvement.
- ▶ Designated rivers receive federal assistance for up to five years in the form of refocused programs and technical assistance.
- ▶ Rivers to demonstrate tangible gains in economic revitalization, environmental restoration, cultural and historic preservation and recreational improvements.

Who are the Partners?

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council • Town of Glocester • Town of North Smithfield • Town of Smithfield • Town of Johnston • Town of North Providence • City of Providence • EPA New England • US Fish and Wildlife • US Army Corps of Engineers • Federal Highway Administration • Housing and Urban Development • Economic Development Agency, Dept. of Commerce • US Geological Survey • Federal Emergency Management Agency • National Marine Fisheries Service • National Park Service • USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service • USDA Forest Service • USDA - Rural Development for RI • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service • USDA Farm Service Agency

What is the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council?

It represents a broad coalition of communities and residents working together to reclaim the river as a natural asset, celebrate its historic legacy, and promote economic development as compatible and complementary initiatives.



New England

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