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Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council  
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# Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

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## Ongoing Projects

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## Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project is a program of the Watershed Council to promote the development of a bicycle path, restoration of parks, and the reclamation of Brownfields for public use. Since its inception, 52 acres of public land have been restored for active and passive recreational use, and construction will begin on the off-road bicycle paths in 2004. Please visit the [Greenway Project](#) page for more information.



Bikes await riders in Olneyville Square.

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## Freshwater Wetland Restoration



A collaboration of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM) and the University of Rhode Island Department of Natural Resources Science began in the summer of 1999 to identify and prioritize wetland sites for future restoration. This project is funded by the EPA and has two phases.

### Phase I:

- Development of restoration site identification methods, using:
  - Current and historical aerial photos, RIGIS data, field surveys
- Development of [site nomination form](#)
  - To involve watershed residents and to benefit from local knowledge base
- Review of proposed methods by watershed and wetland restoration stakeholders

The Watershed Council Office is at  
27 Sims Avenue  
Providence, RI 02909  
(next to The Steel Yard)  
Tel: 401.861.9046  
Fax: 401.861.9038

If you have questions or comments about this site please contact  
Bruce Hooke

If you have questions about the activities of the Council please contact our Director,  
Jenny Pereira

## Phase II:

- Identification of sites in the entire watershed
- Prioritization of identified sites
- Feasibility studies at selected high-priority sites
- Feasibility study (ecological, economic, administrative)
  - e.g. cost estimates, logistical concerns
- Development of a Freshwater Wetland Restoration Plan for the entire watershed
  - Including site recommendations, potential funding sources, etc.
- Creation of a web site that focuses of freshwater wetland restoration in Rhode Island
- Collaboration with watershed residents, wetland restoration stakeholders, and other restoration programs throughout the project

Read the [Project Overview](#) (PDF Format - [about PDF format](#))

For more information, please contact:

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Rhode Island Department of Environmental  
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### Riparian Buffer Development Project



A grant from the U.S. Forest Service and collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management made it possible for the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council to hire a consulting firm, Kleinschmidt Associates, to:

- Identify potential riparian sites along the river
- Inventory and prioritize riparian restoration opportunities
- Select appropriate demonstration site
- Implement demonstration site restoration

These objectives will be carried out over the coming year and are scheduled to be complete in October 2001.

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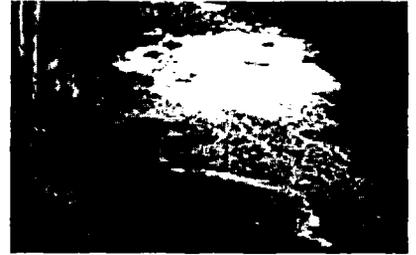
### **Centredale Manor/Woonasquatucket River Superfund Site**

Remedial actions to address dioxin contamination in the Centredale Manor area, and downstream from this area, continue under the guidance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and others. For details see the separate page we have set up just for this project: [Centredale Superfund Site](#)

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### **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)**

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a calculation of the amount of pollutants that a water body can assimilate and still perform all its functions. Development of a TMDL for the Woonasquatucket will help us to regulate and monitor the health of the river and to identify problem areas.



The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) ordered a complete assessment of stretches along the river as well as pond and reservoir sampling and this task was completed by a consulting group earlier this year.

DEM, with cooperation from EPA and the Urban Rivers Team undertook to map stormwater outfalls and identify dry weather discharges. The results of that study are still pending.

A public meeting is scheduled for January to discuss the progress of the TMDL schedule.

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### **Unnamed Streams Project**

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council in partnership with Audubon Society of Rhode Island is trying to identify names for the unnamed streams in the watershed. To view a map of the named and unnamed streams in the watershed [click here](#). If you know the name of any of the unnamed streams in the watershed please contact us.

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### Overview



The Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project is a catalyst for renewal along the Woonasquatucket River in Providence. The green linear park will revitalize a major hidden natural resource on the West Side of the City and become a destination for neighborhood residents and people throughout Providence and Rhode Island. A bicycle/pedestrian path will link recreational areas, green spaces, destination sites, and the neighborhoods of Manton, Hartford, and Valley, as well as Olneyville and Smith Hill (Enterprise Community neighborhoods) to Waterplace Park in downtown Providence.

The Greenway and restored parks will provide needed urban recreation areas, address local transportation needs, and promote restoration of abandoned industrial sites and impaired riverbank habitats. The Greenway will also provide economic reinvestment opportunities in the river corridor.

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### History & Goals

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project was started by The Providence Plan in 1994. At the time, there were only 2.1 acres of park space per 1,000 residents, and of the three parks along the river, one was undeveloped (Dyerville Park) and one was closed (Merino Park). The Greenway Project was initiated based on the underlying theory that green spaces and active recreation opportunities are essential elements of any healthy community. Parks with active recreation programs contribute to the stabilization of neighborhoods and have been shown to prevent/reduce crime.

The project's main goals are to increase the recreational and green space available to



River Rangers work with youth to provide summer programs in Donigian and Merino Parks.

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local residents, promote economic development and reduce crime, promote river conservation and environmental action, and increase awareness of local history and river ecology.

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### **Accomplishments & Future Plans**

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project is recognized as a model community revitalization effort that will continue Providence's rediscovery of its rivers and natural resources, channeling development into some of the more disadvantaged areas of the city.

- Three parks (Donigian, Merino, and Dyerville (now Buttonhole Golf Course)) along the Greenway have been renovated and reopened, and the new Riverside Mills Park is in the process of being built.
- The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has completed the design of phase II of the bicycle path, which will begin at Riverside Mills Park in Olneyville and end at Lymans Avenue in Johnston. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2005.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has selected the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project and the State of Rhode Island as a Brownfields Showcase Community.
- The Woonasquatucket River was designated in 1998 as an American Heritage River, one of only 14 in the country. The Greenway Project was instrumental in organizing a coalition of watershed communities to work for this designation. This coalition is what became the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council.
- The Woonasquatucket River Watershed has been designated a pilot watershed project by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

The Greenway will include 5.7 miles of paths and green spaces stretching from the Johnston-Providence line to Waterplace Park in downtown Providence. The Greenway will promote economic reinvestment in the neighborhoods and on the Brownfields while developing recreational and environmental education opportunities along the river. Community plans include continued programming in Donigian and Merino Parks, as well as at Button Hole Golf Course. These three anchor parks provide a destination for residents who enjoy the Greenway.

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### **Brownfields**

There are a variety of "brownfields" within the Greenway Project area. The US EPA definition of a brownfield is "an abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and



Two Trail Mix riders from Providence pose with Senator Chafee at the Statehouse where Trail Mix 2000 culminated with entertainment and refreshments.

commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination." For more information on brownfields and on the Brownfield Showcase Community designation click here.

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### **Master Plan**

A copy of the Greenway Master Plan is available here (PDF Format - about PDF format). This is a 53 page document (1.4 MB) so it will take a few minutes to download over a dial-up connection.

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### **Virtual Tour**

[Click here](#) to go to a virtual tour of the proposed Woonasquatucket River Greenway in Providence.

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### **Partners & Funders**

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project collaborates with a broad range of partners in local and state government agencies, the private sector, the academic community, and the nonprofit sector.

The Greenway Project is funded by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Merck Family Fund, Prince Charitable Trust, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Transportation, The Rhode Island Foundation, Citizens Bank of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the National Park Service.

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### **Get Involved**

You can make a difference! Here are some ways you can: you can help create a cleaner environment, and improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods along the Woonasquatucket River

- Write a letter
- Make a donation
- Volunteer: As we try to build stewardship of the parks and greenspaces along the

Woonasquatucket we find that community volunteers are key to our success. Past volunteers have enjoyed helping us plant flowers, paint murals, and staff the annual Greenway Festival. They've also helped us during community and park clean-ups and by donating various services to our program. If you are interested in volunteering or want to know more about our programs please email Lisa Aurecchia, or call her at (401) 274-3889.



American Heritage River Mural above Routes 6 & 10 in Providence.

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### **Resources**

We provide slide shows about the Woonasquatucket River and the Greenway Project to interested parties. The slide show is adaptable based on your group's needs. In the past we have presented at schools, community centers, senior centers, and other community locations.

We have brochures and display boards that can be set up at your organization or event to showcase to inform the public about the Greenway Project and about the Brownfields along the Woonasquatucket River.

We offer river tours to small groups who are interested in going out and seeing the Woonasquatucket first hand and learning more about the Greenway Project in the field. These tours depend on the availability of funding for transportation and the availability of our staff to lead these tours.

For more information on any of the above resources please email *Lisa Aurecchia*, or call her at (401) 274-3889.

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