

## Fall 2017 Newsletter

### The Main Source of Local Water Pollution? It's Something We Can All Help Reduce

By Lisa Stuart

The number one cause of pollution in our local waterways today is storm water runoff, which we can all help decrease, starting in our own backyards. As land development for residential and business uses increases, more and more open space is covered with lawns and impermeable surfaces like buildings, driveways, parking lots and roads. In rainstorms, runoff travels across these surfaces picking up contaminants such as fertilizers, pesticides, oils and gasoline that then wash directly into the Norwalk River, its tributaries and ultimately Long Island Sound. Development that does not properly plan for runoff threatens water quality in our rivers as well as area wells.

Residents can take action in their own yards and by adding their voices to the call in their towns and statewide for smart development that requires rain gardens, permeable paving and storm water treatment systems. At home, consider unhooking downspouts that connect to the town drainage system and installing a rain garden to help the water penetrate deeply into the earth. Decreasing the amount of lawn and increasing the native trees, bushes and other plantings around your home is another way to help. These longer-rooted plants filter water and help recharge aquifers that feed wells and reservoirs.



Photograph courtesy of Louise Washer

***At Merwin Meadows in Wilton, above, storm water runoff is channeled directly into the Norwalk River bringing with it contaminants from the parking lot such as oils and gasoline from cars.***

**Need help assessing your property to see how you can reduce storm water runoff?  
Please contact us at [info@norwalkriver.org](mailto:info@norwalkriver.org).**



**Thanks to Everyone Who Came to the Butterfly Walk Along the Pollinator Pathway at Keeler's Ridge Meadow in Wilton!**



## More Pollinator Pathway News

**We Are Thrilled to Announce the Launch of the Ridgefield Pollinator Pathway**  
Sponsored by NRWA, Woodcock Nature Center, Ridgefield Conservation Commission and Ridgefield Garden Club. To get involved, contact us: [info@norwalkriver.org](mailto:info@norwalkriver.org).



*Photograph courtesy of Dilshad Dinshaw*

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Wilton High junior Dilshad Dinshaw (above left) decided to help declining monarch butterfly populations by planting milkweed and raising awareness about the importance of the plant in the life cycle of the butterfly. She worked this summer at the pocket garden along the NRVV that NRWA volunteers installed in April.

## Pollinator Pathway Events

**Saturday, Sept 30. Butterfly Habitat Restoration Event on Public Lands Day.** Volunteers needed! 10AM-1PM. Corner of Simpaug Tpk and Danbury Rd., Ridgefield.

**Sunday, Oct 8. Butterfly Habitat Restoration at the Pollinator Garden Along the Norwalk River Valley Trail.** Volunteers needed! 10AM-1PM. Sharp Hill Road and Autumn Ridge, Wilton.

**Friday & Saturday, Oct 13 & 14. Visit the Pollinator Pathway Table at the Wilton Garden Club Flower Show "Art in Bloom."** 1PM-5PM Friday & 10AM-4PM Saturday. \$10/person. Old Town Hall, 68 Ridgefield Rd, Wilton.

**Saturday, Oct 21. Visit the Pollinator Pathway Table at the Wilton Library Innovation Day.** 1-5PM. Wilton Library, 137 Old Ridgefield Road.

**Saturday, Nov 4. Mason Bee Hotel Making Workshop.** 1-2:30PM. Woodcock Nature Center, 56 Deer Run Rd, Wilton.

**More events, information and registration at [norwalkriver.org/events/](http://norwalkriver.org/events/)**



Thanks to Tom Medve for leading our first *Mason Bee Hotel Workshop*.

Next workshop November 4, Woodcock Nature Center.



*Photographs courtesy of Jackie Algon*

## Featured Native Plant: Goldenrod

By Louise Washer

These days most people know goldenrod doesn't cause allergies—the true culprit is ragweed, which blooms at the same time. What many don't know about are the numerous benefits of this easy-to-grow, fall-blooming meadow wildflower. There are over 100 species of goldenrod flowers, but generally this perennial is a tall, slim plant (4 to 5 feet on average) topped with fluffy, golden flower spikes. There are 29 types in New England, all of which are native, according to New England Wildflower Society's *gobotany.com*, an unrivaled resource for identifying plants.

One of those 29 species is likely to sprout up in your yard or garden if you stop mowing or weeding an area. Canada goldenrod appeared in a shady area of my yard in Norwalk, and, to my delight, also in a sunny section of lawn-turned-meadow. A hearty plant, goldenrod spreads rapidly (which can be a negative in gardens), is drought and deer resistant, and grows almost anywhere, though it prefers sun and well-draining soil. Consider cultivating goldenrod near your garden since it draws "bad" bugs away from garden plants.



Photograph courtesy of Louise Washer

The best reason to include goldenrod in your yard, though, is the important role it plays in the life cycles of birds, butterflies and bees. Four types of butterflies—the monarch, clouded sulfur, American small copper and gray hairstreak—rely on the nectar of the very common Canada goldenrod, for example, and the plant's wildflower seeds are a vital food source for songbirds.

*Trails of the Norwalk River Valley and Vicinity*  
Available at NRWA events or at [Norwalkriver.org](http://Norwalkriver.org)

### Membership Form

Becoming a member helps NRWA continue to protect local water quality, hiking trails and wildlife habitats.

Riparian Society	Membership
Steward \$1,000+	Supporter \$50-\$99
Protector \$500-\$999	Friend \$30-\$49
Patron \$100-\$499	Other \$_____

My company has a matching gift program (company name)

### DONATE ONLINE AT [NORWALKRIVER.ORG](http://NORWALKRIVER.ORG)

Or mail your tax-deductible Annual Membership gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to NRWA, Inc. P.O. Box 197, Georgetown, CT 06829. Please make check payable to NRWA, Inc.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive updates and events info. My email is \_\_\_\_\_

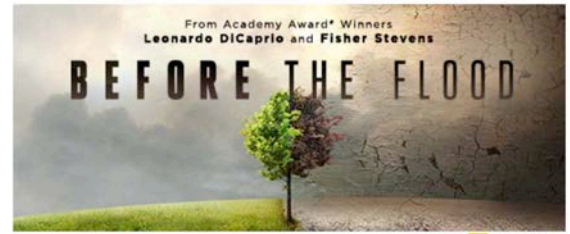
## News Briefs

### Good News on Efforts to Preserve Plum Island

This federally owned Long Island Sound island which is internationally recognized as vital and pristine bird and other wildlife habitat now faces threats of development. The good news is that both the US House and the Senate recently passed separate bills that would protect Plum Island temporarily. The Plum Island Coalition, of which NRWA is a member, is working to lobby Congress to agree on one bill that would protect the island permanently. More information and ways to get involved are available at the Preserve Plum Island Facebook page.

### 2017 State Environmental Legislation Results Are Available at CTLCV.org

There's good news, like the passage of HB 7221 **Access to Water Planning Information (F.O.I.A.)**, and bad news, like the failure of the Senate to vote on HB6329 **A Ban on Fracking Waste** in CT. Check the CT League of Conservation Voters website to see how your representative voted on these and other important environmental bills.



Proudly presented by



Screening Followed by a Q & A with Academy Award®-winning Filmmaker Fisher Stevens

**Sunday October 1, 2017**  
Ridgefield Playhouse

Doors open at 6:30 | Screening at 7:30  
admission: \$10 youth/student/senior: \$5



Fisher Stevens,  
Producer and Director,  
*Before the Flood*

Buy online: [woodcocknaturecenter.org](http://woodcocknaturecenter.org)

*Proceeds benefit programs in community conservation at Woodcock Nature Center and the Norwalk River Watershed Association*

Supporting Organizations



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